

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

TUESDAY, 2nd DECEMBER: Night Shelter at Lovat Hall begins
THURSDAY 4th DECEMBER, 6.30pm at the Well at Willen:- 'The Stones Cry Out': A film and discussion of film documenting the lives of Palestinian Christians. All welcome, can you let the well know you are coming by e-mailing bookings@thewellatwillen.org.uk

SATURDAY, 6th DECEMBER, 9.30am: training for night shelter volunteers

SATURDAY, 6th DECEMBER, 10am – 12 noon: St Bede's Christmas Bazaar

FRIDAY/SATURDAY 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th and 19th DECEMBER:

Advent 'Winter House' coffee mornings at 5 Bramley Meadows

FRIDAY, 12th DECEMBER, 11am: Eclipse festive lunch at 1 Bassett Court

SATURDAY, 20th DECEMBER, 11am: open-air nativity drama at Market Hill (nativity procession starts at 10.50am outside Parish Church)

MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER - BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE - 7.30 pm at Newport Pagnell Methodist Church, joint Methodist/URC service. The "From Darkness to Hope" Blue Christmas Service offers a prayerful opportunity for anyone who:

- Mourns the loss of life, love, relationship, job or health,
- Has worries or anxieties which overshadow the season,
- Feels isolated or alone during this time of year,
- Faces struggles in other ways.

All are welcome! This service seeks to support all who wish to gather in prayer with others who might be experiencing challenges during this holiday season, while also gently guiding us towards hope and healing. For more information contact Rev. Mindy Bell tel: 01908 614411.

THURSDAY, 1st JANUARY, 10am: New Year's Day walk around the churches (starts at St Luke's)

CTNP President: Vacancy
Secretary: Vacancy
Treasurer: Paul Tolley, PTMERCEDES@aol.com Tel. 210048

CTNP website: - www.ctnp.org.uk



CONNECTIONS DECEMBER 2014

*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; 6-7 NIV)*

OPEN-AIR NATIVITY DRAMA

Newport Pagnell High Street is the place to be on the morning of **Saturday, 20th December!** Come and join us for our **annual open-air nativity service** with people from all the local churches, starting outside the Parish Church with Mary and Joseph (accompanied by donkey!) at 10.50am followed by drama and carols at 11am at the Boots and Dolphin end of the High Street. (In the event of heavy rain on the day, the locations will be reversed and the service will be held inside the Parish Church.)

So in the midst of all the sometimes stressful activity that has for many of us become part of the lead-up to Christmas, take some time out, come and sing some carols, and help us to remind ourselves and the wider community what Christmas is really about.



Articles to the Editor, Beth MacKay
Preferably by e-mail to beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk 612475
Copy Deadline - 20th of each month

LETTER FROM A MINISTER

I love Christmas! It's such a wonderful time. I won't deny that I very much enjoy the Christmas food. My favourite is the Christstollen, the German Christmas cake, which in recent years has become readily available here. But hopefully I'll find the time and energy to bake my own this year. Like most people I also like the presents, but fortunately that's not too important, otherwise I might find it hard to accept that I receive them from Father Christmas rather than the Christkind - the Christ child - who in Germany delivers the goodies on the evening of Christmas Eve. With all the various services going on, I will be in church most of that time anyway and wouldn't be there when the Christkind comes.

What's also great is that people try to live up to the season of goodwill in the days before and during Christmas. It's lovely to see people making an extra effort to be kind and considerate to each other. I think I could cope better with Christmas starting in the shops in September, if it were accompanied by a general outpouring of love and goodness. But it's super when it's happening at Christmas.

But what makes Christmas really special for me is the time spent with my family and at church. Fortunately, the two complement each other - most of the time anyway. It's fun to relax at home with the family and to share presents and meals. And at church we celebrate the greatest Christmas gift - Jesus Christ, God's own son being born as a human being to give us all hope in an often dark world.

*Deacon Klaus Reidel,
St. Bede's Catholic Church*

FOOD FOR CHANGE ADVENT COFFEE MORNINGS



As we approach the season of giving and festivities we would like to offer you the chance to celebrate with us and contribute to this Christian Aid project which CTNP has pledged to support over the next two years. During Advent on **Friday 5th, 12th and 19th December and Saturday 6th and 13th December** we will be serving coffee and mince pies in a traditional wooden Norwegian round house, festively decorated, at 5 Bramley Meadows in Newport Pagnell from 10am until 12 noon. You can read more about the work in Burkina Faso there. Come and join us. Donations welcomed.



HELP CTNP TO RAISE £5000

over the next two years to help poor families trying to eke out a living on the edge of the Sahara Desert.

If we reach our target, the EU will match fund it by 5:1 which means that our £5000 becomes a staggering **£30,000** for this project!

TRAIDCRAFT EVENT IN SHERINGTON

Pearl Teasdale wishes to thank all her friends who supported The Annual Traidcraft Event on the 8th and 9th November this year and to those who didn't manage to get to the Event, so sent donations.

Sales, orders and donations amounted to over £1,200.

Many thanks to the many folk who give continued support year after year.

SONGS OF PRAISE

Our thanks to Rev Mindy Bell and all others who took part in the Songs of Praise service on 23rd November. Each of the hymns was chosen and introduced by someone from each of the churches which added a very personal and meaningful touch to the service. Our thanks too to the Baptist Band, the organist and the choirs from the Parish Church, St Luke's and the Limes. It was a rousing and moving service followed by an enjoyable time of fellowship with refreshments.

During the service a special collection was taken for the Food for Change project in Northern Burkina Faso which is a Christian Aid community partnership project. CTNP is aiming to raise £5000 for this project over the next two years through a variety of fundraising events (see information about Advent coffee mornings elsewhere in this leaflet). At the time of writing, the final total collected at the service was not available, but will be published in the next edition of Connections.

METHODIST OPEN DAY a great success!



A warm welcome awaited all those who visited the Methodist Church in Newport Pagnell on 19th October. Staged as part of our upcoming Bicentenary programme, the Open Day portrayed how our local Methodist Church gets involved with both local and worldwide issues and seeks to meet present day needs.

As well as featuring the work of the many charities which members support, good quality hand-made crafts, Fair Trade goods and Charity Christmas Cards were on sale, along with coffee, yummy cakes and Cream Teas!



Special events are planned throughout 2015 to mark our Bicentenary including a visit by John Wesley (alias Mark Topping) and service led by the President of Methodist Conference, Rev. Kenneth Howcroft.

Our full programme of events is enclosed as a separate document.



St Bede's Christmas Bazaar
will take place on Saturday 6 December
from 10.00am – 12.00 noon.
Everyone is welcome!

NEW YEAR'S DAY WALK AND WORSHIP

What better way of getting the new year off to a good start than by joining friends from all the churches for our popular annual CTNP walk and worship on New Year's Day morning.

We will be starting at **10am** at St Luke's church on Wolverton Road with a short act of worship. Then comes the longest part of the walk down Wolverton Road and the High Street to the Methodist Church arriving at approximately **10.35am** for another short act of worship. We then move on to the United Reformed Church at **10.50am**, the Parish Church at **11.10am** and Lovat Hall at **11.30**. Our final destination is St Bede's at approximaely **11.50am** for our final act of worship after which we will be very ready for a nice hot cup of tea or coffee which our friends at St Bede's have kindly offered to provide this year.

The theme of the worship sessions this year is 'Vision'. Do come and join us if you can. If you'd rather not do the whole walk, you can join in at any point.

Eclipse Counselling Service

(Charity No: 1111366)

Christmas Festive Lunch

Friday 12th December 2014

11am - 2.30pm

at **Eclipse**

1 Bassett Court, Newport Pagnell MK16 0JN

Come & enjoy some
delicious
Festive Foyre
with us -
Homemade cakes
Mincepies
Savouries &
much more!



Christmas Raffle
2nd hand book sale

All warmly welcome

All proceeds to Eclipse Counselling Service.
By supporting our fundraising events you can help to change the lives of
people imprisoned in the bondages of addiction.
Please ring us on 01908 211288 or email info@eclipse-addiction.org.uk
for more details.