

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WEDNESDAY, 2nd DECEMBER: Memory Cafe from 10a.m. to 12 noon in the foyer of Westbury Grange on the first Wednesday of each month. A safe place where people who suffer from Dementia and their carers meet others and share experiences. There is a charge of £1.50 per person which includes a hot drink, cake and a raffle. For more information please contact Westbury Grange on 01908 210332.

SATURDAY 5 DECEMBER – WILLEN HOSPICE LIGHTS OF LOVE 2015 - Annual remembrance service & Christmas lights switch on. Two services - 2.30pm and 5.30pm at The Ridgeway Centre, Wolverton Mill, MK12 5TH. Show your support for your local hospice and help them raise urgently needed funds for patient care & family support. Call (01908) 303055 or email events@willen-hospice.org.uk for further information, or see their website <http://www.willen-hospice.org.uk/Support-Us/Events-Calendar/Lights-of-Love>.

SATURDAY, 12 December, 7.30pm, Parish Church: concert by Newport Pagnell Singers and Olney Brass

SUNDAY, 13th DECEMBER at 4pm: Christingle service at the Parish Church

THURSDAY, 17th DECEMBER at 7pm: Hope Outreach carol sing-along at Church of Christ The Cornerstone

FRIDAY, 18th DECEMBER at 7.30pm: U3A choir concert in the URC.

SATURDAY, 19th DECEMBER: 10-11.30am: CTNP Nativity event on the High Street and at the URC.

FRIDAY, 1st JANUARY: New Year's Day walk starting at St Luke's at 10am

For up-to-date information on events and activities check our website regularly at www.ctnp.org.uk

CTNP President: Vacancy
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Treasurer: Paul Tolley, PTMERCEDES@aol.com 01908 615729
CTNP website: - www.ctnp.org.uk



CONNECTIONS DECEMBER 2015

*God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

FINDING THE NATIVITY

19th DECEMBER



**FOLLOW THE TRAIL
ON NEWPORT
PAGNELL HIGH
STREET
From 10 -11.15am**

to find all the Nativity characters, then join the fun at the stable at the United Reformed Church for carols, gifts and refreshments.

DISCOVER:

- Angels
- Shepherds
- Wise men and much more

SHARE:

- Carols
- Refreshments
- Gift for children

Articles to the Editor, Beth MacKay
Preferably by email to beth.mackay@yahoo.co.uk 01908 612475
Copy Deadline - 20th of each month

LETTER FROM A MINISTER

WHO ARE WE TOASTING ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

If Jesus was born today where in MK would he be born? What is the modern day equivalent of a stable in Bethlehem? A stable is a smelly place harbouring animals and their droppings and not a hygienic setting for human birth into the world. Placing a baby in an animal feeding trough, a manger, would certainly attract the attention of social workers today.

If this had all happened in Milton Keynes today then maybe Jesus would be born alongside one of the bus shelters or at the back yard of a local restaurant on a crowded Saturday night. Perhaps a big MK Dons game has just ended and people are so keen to get back home on a winter night that they don't notice a teenage mum sitting by a large green wheelie bin at the back of a restaurant. This is hardly the sort of place where many would expect God to be born as Jesus into this world.

A stable in Bethlehem was a similar bus shelter type of setting where Jesus was born. What a place for the Lord of the universe to decide to enter this world!

The key thing about Christmas is that God didn't sit in heaven and look down upon our struggles. He came into the world Himself. He knows what it is like to live in the world that we live in. He came and walked the ground we walk. He endured the difficulties of the life we live and this is what makes Christmas so special. No other religion claims that God Himself came into the world in such a unique way experiencing all that we laugh and cry at in life and ultimately loving us to death – His death.

When you sit down to Christmas lunch and fill your glasses with wine drink a toast to Jesus since it is His birthday we are celebrating. Make sure you mention His name at His own birthday party!

Remember, Christmas starts with Christ!

Nick Evans
Rector of Newport Pagnell

CHRISTINGLE

SUNDAY, 13th DECEMBER, 4pm at THE PARISH CHURCH

Christingle Services have changed enormously since they first began and are now one of the most popular ways for families to look forward to Christmas. The idea began in the eighteenth century with a simple red ribbon tied round a candle to represent Jesus as the light of the world with the ribbon reminding us of the suffering he went through for us. This was mostly a service in the Moravian Church until 1968 when the Children's Society of the Church of England picked up on this idea for a fundraising event and from then it has grown into the increasingly popular Family event it is today.

At our version of the service in Newport Pagnell Parish Church, everyone assembles their own Christingle using an orange, ribbon, sweets and a candle that are all provided. The service reaches a climax as everyone stands in a circle and, as the daylight fades, the Christingle candles light up the faces of all there.



So why not come along with your children or grandchildren and start your Christmas celebrations this year in this different and exciting way! You will also be helping to support the work of the Children's Society who provide a valuable service to children, young people and their families.

We look forward to meeting you there!

Geoff Morris



Newport Pagnell Singers Carols & Brass Concert

12 December, 7.30pm, Parish Church, Newport Pagnell

NPS and Olney Brass join together to bring you a traditional Christmas concert with Carols to listen to and with audience participation.

Tickets £10, from Tim Daily Tel: 07711 410331, Cambourne Travel, Wilson's Olney, or from the website (just use the 'Contact us' page). This year we are raising funds for Willen Hospice.

Hope Outreach UK Christmas Carol Sing-Along Thursday, 17th December at 7pm Church of Christ The Cornerstone

Andante Choir with Roger Windmill & Ed Tomlinson
Tickets: Adults £10 & Children free. Includes seasonal refreshments! Free parking in the vicinity.

U3A Christmas Concert

Come and enjoy a Christmas Concert given by the U3A Choir on **Friday, 18th December at 7.30pm** in the United Reformed Church, Newport Pagnell .

Tickets available on 07762178379, from members of the Choir or Jennifer Mazzone (613088) at £6 each.

Seasonal refreshments will be served. There will also be a raffle. All proceeds will go to Keech Hospice Care for Children which covers the Milton Keynes area. We look forward to seeing you.

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED CTNP AT THIS YEAR'S SONGS OF PRAISE SERVICE

We had a wonderful evening with some rousing singing, lovely music and interesting and moving introductions from members of all the churches. Donations made on Sunday, with associated Gift Aid, amounted to **£515**.

This means that we have now raised a total of £2698 - towards our objective of £5000 for Christian Aid's Food for Change project in Burkina Faso.*.

Thanks too to members of The United Reformed Church who have been collecting 5p coins for the project throughout 2015. The sum collected from this will be included in the New Year report following the Advent Coffee mornings.

Our next fundraiser for the project is a series of Advent Coffee mornings which will be held in Paul and Nita Tolley's cosy and atmospheric 'winterhouse' at **5, Bramley Meadows, between 10 a.m. and 12.30 p.m on Saturday 5th December, Friday and Saturday 11th and 12th December, and Friday 18th December.**

Please come along to any of these, if you have time. Enjoy tea, coffee, mince pies, conversation and good company round a warm fire, and support the project. People who came last year really enjoyed it!



* If we reach our target of £5000 by March 2017, the EU will match fund it by 5:1 so that our £5000 becomes £30,000 for this project!

LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER!

NEW YEAR'S DAY CTNP WALK

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 aiming to arrive at St Bede's Roman 'Catholic Church by **10.30am**, then on to the Methodist Church for **10.50am**, the United Reformed Church at **11.05am** and the Parish Church by **11.25am**. Our final destination is the Baptist Church at Lovat Hall at approximately **11.50am** for our closing act of worship, after which we will be very ready for a nice hot cup of tea or coffee which our friends from the Baptist Church have kindly offered to provide this year.

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

There will be an opportunity at the refreshment counter to donate to the 'Food for Change' project in Burkina Faso if you would like to do so.

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HOLIDAY CLUB 2016

Next year's CTNP Children's Holiday Club is to be held week commencing **15th August**. The first planning meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 13th January, 8pm** at Lovat Hall.

Challenges to be conquered include the choice of theme and how to publicise. We also need to think prayerfully about how to grow and equip the team.

If you are interested in helping with the Holiday Club this year please come along to the planning meeting to find out more and encourage others to get involved too.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN NEWPORT PAGNELL EMERGENCY HELP SCHEME

This organisation was set up by Churches Together over thirty years ago and continues to support local people needing assistance with transport to hospitals and clinic appointments, using a team of local volunteers. This help is highly valued by vulnerable people in Newport Pagnell who appreciate being escorted from their home directly to their appointment and returned in a similar manner.

Drivers volunteer for whatever they are able to take on. Some only do short distances once or twice a year to the local health centre, optician or dentist. Others drive more frequently and further afield. Whatever the need, the help has always been valued and it is a great way to serve the local community. Behind the scenes are four telephone coordinators and a small group of volunteers who serve on a committee overseeing the running of the organisation. They meet formally three times a year.

We are always looking for new drivers and currently also require a new chairperson who could help lead the group. If you are interested in learning more about either of these volunteer opportunities, please contact Nita Tolley on 01908 615729 or email nitagt53@aol.com. I would be delighted to hear from you.

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WINTER NIGHT SHELTER AT LOVAT HALL

The night shelter will be running again this year and will be at Lovat Hall every Tuesday night from December through to March. The aims of the shelter are: safety and compassion for rough sleepers in the worst of the winter with a pathway to long-term accommodation. Please pray for all the guests who pass through the shelters throughout the Milton Keynes area, and for the organisers and all the volunteers involved in this project.

God of compassion, your love for humanity was revealed in Jesus, whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable and ended in the pain and isolation of the cross; we hold before you those who are homeless and cold especially in this bitter weather. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and bless those who work to provide them with shelter, food and friendship. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen