

Triangle



The quarterly magazine of the
Methodist Churches of
Wombourne and Springdale

Winter 2017

Time for verse

David Hotchkiss, editor



Hello and welcome. I think I've said everything I want to about Christmas in the last few years, from childhood memories to rantings against commercialism. Our preachers have to come up with something fresh every year, and I pray they are given new insights into familiar themes. But I sit here devoid of ideas!

So please allow me to let a poet say the sort of thing I would say if only I were a poet. The following is from my battered, treasured copy of the Oxford Book of Christmas Poems. As a dog lover currently without a dog for practical reasons, I give you **The Shepherd's Dog**, by Leslie Norris. Hope you enjoy it.

*Out on the windy hill
Under the sudden star
A blaze of radiant light
Frightened my master.*

*He got up, left our sheep,
Tramped over the moor.
And I, following,
Came to this open door.*

*Sidled in, settled down,
Head on my paws,
Glad to be here, away
from the wind's sharpness.*

Such warmth is in this shed,

*Such comfort from this
Child,
That I forget my hard life,
Ignore the harsh world.*

*And I see on my master's
face
The same joy I possess,
The knowledge of peace,
True happiness.*



Pauline and I wish all at Springdale and Wombourne the happiest of Christmases and a blessed New Year.

The deadline for the next edition of Triangle is

March 11th

Articles can be given to me or your stewards, sent by post to David Hotchkiss, or emailed to [triangle\[at\]springdalechurch.org.uk](mailto:triangle[at]springdalechurch.org.uk)

Christmas without the frills

The Reverend Teddy Siwila



At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." **Mark 1: 9-11**

Dear Friends,

Muulo, I and the boys are looking forward to our first Christmas in England and hope to get together as a family. It will be interesting to see how differently you do things here, though I am sure many things – for the good and the bad – will turn out to be much the same!

Advent is a time of preparation and waiting. We prepare ourselves for many things – including, of course, the return of the Lord in glory, and for our hearts to receive the Christ-child again at Christmas.

In our day-to-day living, we may focus too much on questions such as: Are you ready for Christmas? – by which we probably mean: Have you bought everyone presents, arranged Christmas cards and special meals? However, if we look at the Gospel of St Mark, we see he begins with the clear and sudden assertion that Jesus is the Son of God, suggesting perhaps that we can never be fully prepared. God appears here on earth – and it will always be startling, as well as being very good news indeed.

If Matthew and Luke might be said to linger over Jesus' birth and heritage, Mark surely has the gift of quickly getting to the point. His simplicity and urgency may be because it is almost certainly the earliest Gospel. But it is also a very special reminder that, as people of faith, we should not obsess over Jesus' nativity.

When every aspect of Christmas has been commercialised, and we all too easily skip over Advent's message of waiting and preparation, this can come as a bit of a relief. It is not that Mark invites us to ignore Christ's incarnation; but his simple words allow us to look beyond all those familiar Christmassy things that have built up over many generations, from turkey and tinsel to parties and presents.

Freed from worrying about the sentimentality and excesses of Christmas, what can we make of Advent? This prayer may be a starting point:

*Lord, our God, just as a single flame can light a whole room,
may this single prayer bring light into the dark places of the world,
hope in the despairing places, comfort in the suffering places,
and beauty in the wild places.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen*

I pray you all see the promise of Advent fulfilled in a blessed and joyful Christmas.

Rev'd Teddy

Don't ditch Fair Trade!

Brenda Shuttleworth reports from a guerrilla tea party



Fair Trade supporters offered tea to passing shoppers as they collected signatures

More news about our ongoing concern over Sainsbury's rebranding of their own label teas as "fairly traded". (I wrote a piece about this in the last edition of Triangle.)

A national coalition of organisations, including CAFOD (the Catholic development agency) and Traidcraft, called for a day of action on October 28th.

Rev'd Chris Collins said: "Let's have a guerrilla tea party!" So we did.

We set up a table in the central refuge in front of Sainsbury's St Mark's, offering passers-by a cup of fair trade tea, explaining the difference between "Fairtrade" and "fairly traded" and asking them to add their signature to a letter addressed to the manager at

Sainsbury's. We received a very warm response from members of the public and at the end of the morning Chris, along with a Wolverhampton representative of CAFOD, delivered the letter to the store.

We have yet to receive a response but with activists all over the country telling Sainsbury's "Don't Ditch Fair Trade", we believe that the message is getting through.



A little-known fact is that Wolverhampton has a number of small businesses which specialise in fair trade. A relative newcomer is JamCo, a company set up by two young women which makes fair trade spreads, most of which are based

on bananas with raspberry, vanilla and strawberry flavours.

Revolver World is a co-operative, now focusing mainly on selling fair trade coffees. And then there is Shropshire Coffee, which roasts its own fair trade coffees at premises in Fordhouses. (To hear this good news story from Wolverhampton and why Shropshire features, you will need to come to the supporters evening of Wolverhampton Fair Traid next September!)

Giuseppe D'Anna, manager of Shropshire Coffee, approached Wolverhampton Fair Traid, offering to supply us with bespoke ground coffee and coffee beans.

The coffee is beautifully packaged and is a partner to the Wolverhampton fair trade chocolate bar which was launched a year ago. Both



carry the label designed by Belinda Longsdon, a local artist who is passionate about promoting the good news stories of Wolverhampton.

The label incorporates the "Love My City" heart, the brainchild of Navi Aulkh, who likewise is working to promote Wolverhampton in a positive light.

The coffee will make an ideal Christmas gift, especially when partnered by Belinda's Wolverhampton mug and the chocolate bar! Now available exclusively at Wolverhampton Fair Traid.



Music man Garth returns on new tour

Christian singer-songwriter Garth Hewitt returns to Wolverhampton on his latest tour, "Against the Grain". He can be heard at Beckminster on Wednesday, September 12th, 2018 – make a note in your diary and look out for ticket details.


www.pennsingers.org.uk

O NIGHT DIVINE

Saturday December 9th
Monday December 11th

Guests
Saturday: Jo Welch
Monday: Jacob Kholi

Penn United Reformed Church
(WV4 5QP)

7.30pm **£7.50**

Tickets: 01902 338570
01902 652992

Jamboree journey for The 3Js . . .

By their mum, Wombourne steward Amanda Morris



Siblings Jakob, Jasmyn and Jorja Slater-Morris are youngsters who attend Wombourne Methodist Church and are known collectively as The 3Js. All are active members of 3rd Wombourne Methodist Scout Group, where the Jamboree Journey begins.

Since the last World Scout Jamboree in Japan, 2015, both Jakob and Jasmyn had set their sights on applying for the next one, which is to be held in West Virginia in 2019. When the information came out earlier in the year,

Jakob, Jorja and Jasmyn – The 3Js get set for travel

and applications became available, both chose to apply for this chance-of-a-life-time experience. Then came the email saying both had been chosen to attend the selection process on Sunday, July 9th, at Blackwell Adventure Camp, Broms-grove. This was an exciting but tiring day for the youngsters, involving various activities to demonstrate both team and individual skills and an interview. It was then an anxious time in the house as we awaited phone calls from the leaders. Every time the phone rang in the next couple of days we would all look at each other and hope it was the call we had been waiting for.

On the Tuesday the calls came. Jasmyn had just sat down to eat her tea when she was told she had been successful. Nearly two hours later Jakob received his. Both were selected from more than 100 to be among the 36 Scouts to represent West Mercia Contingent in the next World Scout Jamboree.

Jorja was too young to apply for this World Scout Jamboree, but in September there was another opportunity that she could try for. So, her application was sent in and, again after an anxious wait for phone calls, she heard she had been selected to attend MEDJAM18, the Mediterranean Jamboree in Malta, 2018.

So there are exciting times ahead for all The 3Js and a lot of hard work to be done to raise the necessary funds.

You can follow their journey and find out more about the fund-raising events on their Facebook page: **3J's Jamboree Journey**.

. . . and the Scout team heading west

The 3Js aren't alone – a big round of applause goes to 3rd Wombourne Scout Group, which this year has the largest cohort of Scouts selected to go on the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia, 2019.

Six lucky youngsters have been selected from more

than 100 Scouts to be part of the 36 that form the West Mercia contingent. The six are: Jasmyn Slater-Morris, Ed Moore, Matt Perks, Jakob Slater-Morris, Harry Sixsmith and Georgina Emerson. Fund raising events have begun to raise the £21,000 needed to get them all to West Virginia.

In addition to the World Scout Jamboree the group have also had three youngsters selected to attend the Mediterranean Jamboree in Malta, 2018.

Jamboree Fundraising Events

February 2nd – **Quiz, Ounsdale School**

Early February – **Clothes collection**

October 19th – **Ball Civic Centre**

Part of the 3rd Wombourne group heading abroad

Congratulations to Jorja Slater-Morris, Matthew Sixsmith and Phoebe Wilkinson for being selected. Keep an eye out on ways that you can help support these youngsters in their fundraising events during the coming months.

Sing that again! Bob Hughes with some angelic mishearings

You'll know of the small children said to have been heard conducting a "funeral service" and ending with the words: "In the name of the Father, and the Son and into-the-hole-he-goes . . ." The following is a teacher's seasonal collection.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Barney's the King of Israel.

Deck the halls with Buddy Holly fa la la la la . . .

We three kings of porridge and tar.

On the first day of Christmas, my tulip gave to me . . .

Sleep in heavenly peas, sleep in heavenly peas.

Rudolph the red nose reindeer, you'll go down in Listerine.

Oh, what fun it is to ride with one horse, soap and hay, hey!

Frosty the Snowman is a ferret elf, they say . . .

What can I give him, Paula Siam?

Olive, the other reindeer, used to laugh and call him names . . .

In the meadow we can build a snowman;

then pretend that he is sparse and brown.

Ian on track as Stationmaster

Fascinating insight to running heritage railway

Ian Sadler is something of a celebrity in Wombourne, a few years ago having taken part in the BBC's Mastermind competition. These days his mind is focussed on the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, where he has taken on the voluntary role of Stationmaster.

In November, Ian came to speak at Wombourne Men's Fellowship, and as well as outlining the history of the railway – it was built originally to link the agricultural communities with the national network – he explained his role as stationmaster, bringing with him some of the “tools of the trade”, from flags and whistle to first-aid kit (you never know what might happen).



Ian with fellowship chairman Bob Hughes

It's not always as romantic as it sounds (someone has to sluice out the gents'), but Ian clearly enjoys his role and is keen to involve others in the preservation of this unusual railway, with its rare gauge and original locomotives. He and the other volunteers are currently raising funds to renovate the 1954 loco they bought from Sierra Leone, following the expiry of its “boiler ticket”.

The railway follows a regular timetable for visitors, and there are extra events during the year, including Santa Specials. For more information call the station at Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool, on 01938 810441.

Bob's Brainteaser

From Bob Hughes

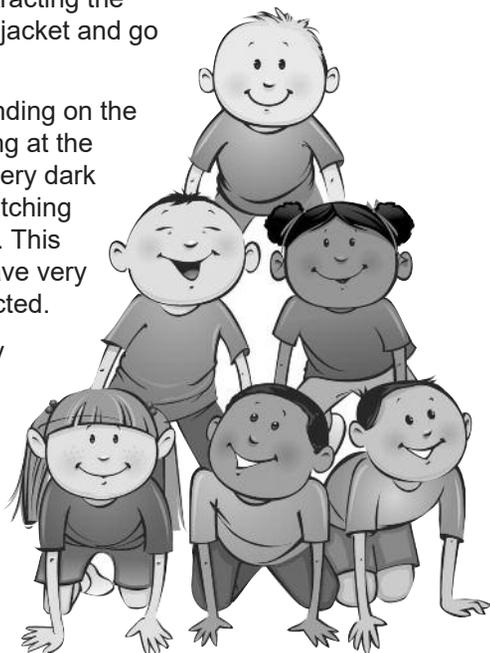
These are cryptic clues to types of fish/seafood.
How many can you work out? Answers on Page 12

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 A long, drawn-out cry | 9 Sometimes they're shooting |
| 2 Part of a male voice choir | 10 A swindler |
| 3 A speciality from Blackpool | 11 A kind of (diningroom) mat |
| 4 Where a bird sits | 12 Very, very expensive |
| 5 To slop about in deep mud | 13 What Jane and Christopher do on ice |
| 6 A weapon of yesteryear | 14 Sounds like a pain in 'is tooth! |
| 7 A type of spear in the days of Cromwell | 15 Police inspector from “Pie in the Sky” |
| 8 It's fired from cannon | |

Rules for children in the worship service

Penny Baldwin shares a radical new approach . . .

- 1 If you find that you're sitting in front of a child and they can't see, lean to the one side so that they can.
- 2 If the children seated behind you in church are rustling papers, hand them a crayon.
- 3 If there is a baby crying, offer to take it from its parent and walk to the back of the church and rock it for a while. That parent really needs a break.
- 4 If the teenagers are whispering, give them some Smarties. The rustling and crinkling will replace their whispering.
- 5 If an adult complains to an usher about the noisy children near them, offer to trade seats with that adult and then apologise to the parents of the children.
- 6 When a child is running around giving everyone high-fives during the sharing of the peace, make sure to give them an extra fun high-five, and then high-five the next five adults you see.
- 7 If a child has decided to wear tap shoes to church and is dancing on the wooden portion of the floor, slip the sheet music for "The Entertainer" to the pianist and roll with it.
- 8 When the children can't hear because an adult nearby won't take off their puffy jacket, and it keeps squeaking and distracting the children, offer to help the adult off with the jacket and go and hang it up for them where it belongs.
- 9 When the three-year-old insists on standing on the front pew, turned backwards and looking at the rest of the people, give the child a pair of very dark glasses. That will prevent the child from catching any adult's eye, which would distract them. This will protect the adults who, as we know, have very short attention spans and are easily distracted.
- 10 When the child in front of you is very squirmy, but he finally turns around and you suddenly realise: "Oh, it's Jesus!", take it in your stride and play "Got Your Nose" until he turns around to the front again.



*Written by **Cindy Beal** of the Justice and Peace Consulting organisation and used with permission of the author*

The Big Decision – how Teddy and Muulo took on

Our new minister was talking to David Hotchkiss, who has adapted his ‘Jus

Talk about a “steep learning curve” – Rev’d Teddy could write the book! He has not only moved himself and his family to a new job (Methodist ministers have been doing that for years), but has travelled almost 5,000 miles from Zambia, with its own languages, culture and church structure, to leafy Wombourne and Penn.

Rev’d Teddy, his wife Muulo and their two younger sons have moved into a house in Tudor Crescent, off Penn Road, which church members helped furnish. It’s very different from the bungalow-style homes of Zambia and their large back yards.

“We have been very well received here,” says Teddy. “So many people are concerned that we are comfortable and have everything we need. They have supplied everything they have control over – everything except the weather!”

Its changeability is, he says, “challenging”. But Rev’d Teddy, despite his gentle voice and pleasant disposition, is clearly not one to be put off by a challenge.

He was born the second of eight children in the mining town of Mulfuliri in Zambia’s Copper Belt, where his late father was human resources manager for RON Consolidated Copper Mines. His mother is a retired teacher. The children of mining employees were given access to various sporting facilities, and Teddy spent a happy childhood playing basketball, lawn tennis and, until he broke a leg,



Rev’d Teddy and Muulo earlier this year

football. But his greatest love was cricket, and he tried to emulate the stars of the day as a fast bowler and wicket keeper.

It was a church-going family and Teddy was an active member of Boys’ Brigade. He was baptised and confirmed in 1980. From the age of 21 Teddy worked for an ICI subsidiary in Kafironda and during his time there felt God’s call to service. At first the United Church of Zambia turned down his request, suggesting he needed more time, but in 1992 he was accepted as a candidate and given a place at the church’s university in Kitwe, the country’s second city. His diploma in theology came via the prestigious St Paul’s Theological College in Kenya after a three-year course, in 1996.

n the challenge of a new life

st Visiting' feature from the Wombourne magazine Grapevine



Teddy was posted as a presbyter to Zambia's North West Province, where much of the work was evangelical. He was one of only three ministers. He is proud of the growth in the province that he helped to seed. There are now 15 presbyters and three deacons. They have served an enormous refugee camp and have overseen the establishment of a hospital.

Twenty years after he had moved from Mufuliri he returned as minister, serving the very same congregation in which he had grown up. He determined to concentrate his efforts on mission and education. He wanted to transform the "static" church so that it became life-giving once more.

"The outlook of the church was changed from one that looked in on itself and its own salvation to one that looked outwards to find what needed to be done in the community and address it," he recalls.

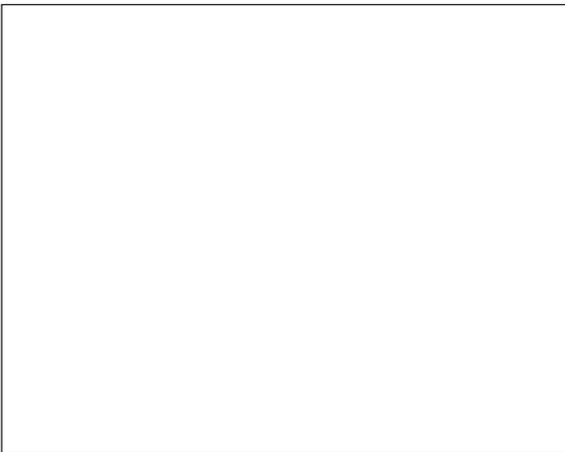
Teddy's work led him to various positions within the church, as convenor for the province, as a tutor for the laity, as one of an elite group of representatives to the Zambian Council of Churches and as a trainer of those training other group leaders. He is particularly proud of the role he was given as organiser of the United Church of Zambia's golden jubilee celebrations.

In 2015 Teddy began to feel he could offer his work for God in a different context and in a different mission, and he applied to the Methodist Church for a post here. It would be a big decision – to take on a new country, different understandings and different culture.

He was afraid he might not be doing the right thing in this new culture. "There had to be adjustments," he says. "Would they understand me? But the Gospel is the same. Only the way it is applied is different.

"It was a very big change for us, moving from Africa to a 'First World' country. What mattered most was that we were willing to learn, that we were open to change. I say to the Christian community: 'give me time to learn'. It is all a learning process. But my training was to function in differing contexts, despite cultural differences."

Teddy reports that Muulo, whom he met as a youngster and married in 1996, is ►



Meeting some of the young people at Springdale

◀ delighted with their new home. Muulo graduated as a nurse in 1990 and in midwifery in 1994. She undertook government-sponsored training in Egypt and has taught at university level.

The couple have three boys: Lukundo (which means “love, mercy”), born in 1998, now studying law at the University of Lusaka; Wila (“gift”) born 2001, who is a member of the sixth-form at Highfields School studying law (and basketball!); and Salifyanji (“thank you”), who is attending St Michael’s C of E School in Tettenhall. (Apparently given names in Zambia all have meanings, although Teddy says his own dates back to colonial days when one was expected to take a European name.)

Teddy is hoping to learn as much from his new congregation as we learn from him and his family.

“It is God’s work that we are doing together. It’s about sharing.

“If I have any long-term plans, they are about outreach – the way we look beyond the church walls and draw people in. To do that, we have to make



Harvest produce at Wombourne

our buildings attractive and welcoming to outsiders. A beautiful building will attract people in, and that may mean modernisation where it is necessary.”

Teddy and Muulo have much settling-in yet to do and are still overwhelmed by the lushness of our countryside.

“You have so much to be proud of,” says Teddy. “We love the countryside here as well as your beautiful streets and gardens. It is so green and lovely.”

‘Worried’ with thanks to Carole Walker

*I’m probably a worrier,
For I worry all the time.
If I could only shake the habit
things really would be fine.*

*I worry about everything,
whether important or not.
Then I worry because*

*I’m worried,
for it is my greatest fault.*

*It’s all a vicious circle
and one day I’ll break out.
But then I think I’d be worried
if I had nothing to worry
about!*

Answers to Bob’s Brainteaser on Page 8

- 1 Whale (wail),
- 2 Bass, 3 Rock,
- 4 Perch, 5 Flounder,
- 6 Sword,
- 7 Pike, 8 Shell,
- 9 Star, 10 Shark,
- 11 Plaice (place),
- 12 Gold, 13 Skate,
- 14 Hake (ache),
- 15 Crab.

Milestone on my daughter's chosen pathway

By Wombourne Wives Group member Kath Henderson

The traffic and parking in Lichfield on a Saturday is like every other town, but we had an appointment to keep and we just had to find a space to park. We had to walk a little way but eventually we got to our designated seats in Lichfield Cathedral.

We could hear a service going on but we couldn't see anything. Eventually, a whole group of people, each wearing a black robe, a white surplus and a blue scarf, came into the body of the cathedral and there was our special person, Su, our daughter, decked out in her "uniform". What a moment!

Su was born in Wombourne, went to Wombourne schools and attended the Methodist Sunday School. She was in the Anniversaries, when the girls had white dresses and boys had white shirts (didn't they look great?) and she joined the Brownies and Guides.

She left school and trained as a nurse, becoming a sister in the paediatric department at Walsall Manor Hospital. She married Stuart, a Wombourne lad, and moved to Church Hill, Penn.



Su after the cathedral service with Stuart and son Will

Su joined St Bart's Church and eventually did a one-year Pathways Course. She then went on to do a three-year Reader's Course, having taken a year out. There was a lot of reading and studying to be done at home and also every Wednesday, after work, she would travel to the Diocese Retreat House in Shallowford, near Stoke-on-Trent, where, together with her group she also studied with ordinands (they take one year more for their course). There were also several residential weekends, when Stuart, at home, was head cook and bottle-washer for their sons.

On September 9th this year, together with all of her colleagues on the course, she received her licence. She was sponsored by Stuart, who, for the second time, walked her down the aisle. All of her immediate family, aunty, cousin and Stuart's two sisters had travelled to Lichfield from Scotland, Hereford and Berkshire. Her working colleagues and friends were also there and all said what a lovely occasion it was.

After the service, and lots of photographs, we had a meal together, and a few glasses were raised in celebration, with congratulations, love and best wishes to Su on her chosen path.

Springdale pastoral news

Jane Rawlings, pastoral secretary

As I sit to write my pastoral message it is with a sad heart. I am starting with the sad news of the loss of Colin Turton on October 4th. I remember Colin when he was doing the anniversary concerts with the Scouts. He was so enthusiastic. I'm sure he enjoyed it just as much as every Scout taking part, as well as all of us watching, of course.

After such a difficult year, I was struggling to find the words for my pastoral message, as Christmas this year is going to be very different following the sad loss of so many during the last 12 months. I turned to Google and came across this poem which I thought was beautiful. I hope you all agree . . .

*We see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,
With tiny lights, like Heaven's stars, reflecting on the snow.
The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away the tear,
For we are spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.*

*We hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.*

*We have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description, to hear the angels sing.*

*We know how much you miss us, we see the pain inside your hearts,
But we are not so far away, we really aren't apart.*

*So be happy for us, dear ones, you know we hold you dear.
And be glad we're spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.*

*We sent you each a special gift, from my heavenly home above.
We sent you each a memory of our undying love.
After all, love is a gift more precious than pure gold:
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.*



*Please love and keep each other, as our Father said to do,
For we can't count the blessings or love he has for each of you.
So have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember, we are spending Christmas
with Jesus Christ this year.*

Anon

Remember to spend Christmas with Jesus Christ every year.

AFTER THE loss of such big figures I always turn to my favourite poem, Footprints, when the Lord replies: "During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you".

Let us all help to carry and pray for all the families of Kay, Geoff and Denis through the coming weeks and months and remember that our Lord will never forsake us and he will give us strength to carry on. After all he has three new, amazing helpers sitting at his right hand now. Church life will not be the same without them, but their faith and dedication will live on in the memories they left behind in all of our hearts.

On a happier note, on July 1st, Wendy and Richard Gould announced the safe arrival of their new granddaughter, Michaela. May she bring joy and happiness to all the family.

On August 5th Springdale celebrated the wedding of Lizzy and Julian. The sun shone for them after a morning of rain. Everyone looked resplendent and a good day was had by all. May the Lord bless you both as you continue your life as a married couple.

Well, I kept you all in suspense, having missed the last Triangle deadline (sorry), about the service we had back in April, when we welcomed ten new members into the Springdale family. I was honoured to be asked to do the welcome from the church family. Such an uplifting service and what a special occasion for everyone.

Congratulations to anyone who has celebrated a birthday or anniversary recently or has one coming up in the near future. I won't name names, as I am sure to miss someone!

Many of us will have started somewhere new in recent weeks, and we should remember that we are never alone – our Lord will always be with us, giving us the strength and courage to take our next step into the unknown.

God Bless, Jane



The Craft Group busy on angel production in the well-lit atrium at Springdale
"The Angel Gabriel from heaven came" Basque Carol
(paraphrased by Baring-Gould)

The Craft Group which meets at Springdale and includes some church members, has been knitting angels, to be distributed during the Christmas season.

More than 200 have been knitted – with love and care – in various colours. A message of hope, with

details of services will be attached to them.

On Sunday, December 10th, they will be shared between the congregation who will distribute them in the local community – leaving them in various places such as walls and hedges, for anyone to take. Perhaps some owners may join in our fellowship in the future, sharing faith, food and friendship.

Jackie Neilson

The Prayer of Cyrus Brown

with thanks to Carole Walker

"The proper way for a man to pray,"
 said Deacon Lemuel Keyes,
 "– And the only proper attitude –
 is down upon his knees."

"No, I should say the way to pray,"
 said Reverend Doctor Wise,
 "is standing straight with outstretched
 arms,
 and rapt and upturned eyes."

"Oh, no, no, no," said Elder Slow,
 "such posture is too proud.
 A man should pray with eyes fast
 closed,
 and head contritely bowed."

"It seems to me his hands should be
 astutely clasped in front,
 With both thumbs pointing to the
 ground,"
 said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

"Last year I fell in Hidgekins well –
 head first!" said Cyrus Brown,
 "With both my heels a-stickin' up,
 my head a-pointin' down.

"An' I made a prayer right there an'
 then;
 best prayer I ever said;
 The prayingest prayer I ever prayed –
 a-standin' on my head."

Springdale vestry news

David Crook, senior steward



I was speaking to someone the other day and he said: "I am scared of December", and I have to say I agreed with the sentiment. It is a crazy month and every year we brace ourselves for the hustle and bustle, the endless lists of things to do and prepare for.

On reflection later in the day I thought how misguided this sentiment is. As Christians we should meet the month of December with eagerness and enthusiasm, for it is at this time of the year more than any other that we have endless opportunities presented to us to share our faith. Our churches become open to the community as at no other time.

At Springdale we have already held our Christmas Fayre and were amazed at the numbers of our neighbours who visited and shared lunch with us.

Our uniformed organisations, together with their parents, will join us for our parade and Toy Service giving us an opportunity to think of others less fortunate, and to share the message of giving not receiving. A representative from The Haven will join us for the service to collect the gifts, and share information about their work, and on the same weekend we join with our Ecumenical partners for the Crib Festival at St Bart's.

Springdale hosts the Circuit Choir concert on December 8th, when the message of Christmas will be presented in song and word. I have no doubt that the Christmas Family Hot Pot will be busier than usual, and 160 tickets are already taken for the Santa Breakfast and Brunch on December 16th.

On Christmas Eve parents are invited to see the Junior Church Nativity, and young children and parents will celebrate with a Crib Festival during the afternoon. The church will be overflowing for the evening Carols by Candlelight.

Yes, it scares me, for we have much to do – but what an opportunity we have to share the Christmas message, the coming of our Saviour, with so many.

So, in this season of Advent, let us look forward with anticipation and expectation. Let us prepare well, and be ready to ensure a warm welcome, for those we meet, and share with them the joy and peace of the message of Christmas.

Fun and fundraising

Well done everyone who helped make Springdale's Christmas Fayre and Wombourne's Bazaar such great fundraisers for the work in our communities. You will be pleased to know that Springdale raised £2,210.35 and Wombourne £1,149.71 for their missions in the year ahead.

Wombourne vestry news

Pat Beddall, senior steward



Here at Wombourne we are settling in to life with the Rev'd Teddy. Easy for us, but a little different for Rev'd Teddy, but we are now getting into a routine and things are perhaps beginning to settle down.

Since the autumn news we celebrated our harvest at the end of September, the service being taken by Rev'd Teddy, with items by the choir. After the service we held a care and share lunch, to welcome Teddy and his family, which was well-attended. Our thanks go to all who were involved in its preparation.

We held our Ladies' Day service on October 6th, again taken by Rev'd Teddy, at which again the choir sang. Thank you, ladies, for all your hard work.

On Sunday, October 5th, Rev'd Teddy conducted our annual Memorial Service, remembering all who have died. This service was open to the wider community who have lost close family and friends. Rev'd Teddy spoke sensitively and we hope those who attended felt the love of God surrounding them in their time of



We had a wonderful baptism service on November 19th, when Lee and Kayleigh Cresswell brought their son Zachary to Wombourne where Lee attended Sunday School as a child. Lee is the son of Gail and Martin Cresswell and Gail's father, Rev'd Bernard Price, baptised Zachary.

God and the generosity of our members for all the gifts which will be donated to the Good Shepherd Ministry.

December 17th is the date for our Christmas Carol Service this year. It will be followed by coffee and mincepies. Thank you to all involved. On December 24th we meet with friends at the United Reformed Church at 9.30pm for the "Christmas In

need. *"Remember at times of trouble, that was when I carried you."*

On the following Sunday, October 12th, we held our Remembrance Day service, and it was wonderful to see so many people, old and young, join together to remember the dead of two World Wars and ongoing conflicts. Well done to all members of the uniformed organisations who attended, it was lovely to see you.

Our annual Christmas Bazaar was held on November 18th. Members were involved in getting various stalls ready.

We hold our annual Toy Service on December 10th and thank

Bethlehem” service. We give thanks to God for the recovery of members who have been ill and remember our housebound members. We also remember Sandra Clowes and all her family on the death of her mother. Into your hands, Lord, we place them, knowing you will give them strength and comfort to face the future.

May I, on behalf of all at Wombourne, wish you all a peaceful Christmas as you celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

Big day for Liz, Ben and families

Liz Martin, daughter of Wombourne member Alison Baldwin and the late Paul Martin, married Ben Mills, of RAF Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, at a beautiful rural venue on November 18th.

Liz is grand-daughter of Wombourne organist Doreen Pike and current parish council chairman John Pike. She was given away by brother Edward.



Racing heart

with thanks to Bob Hughes

A Jaguar mechanic was removing the cylinder head from the engine of an E-type when he spotted a well known cardiac surgeon in the garage. The surgeon was waiting for the service manager to come and take a look at his car when the mechanic shouted out across the garage: “Hey Doc – want to take a look at this?”

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over to where the mechanic was working. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and said: “So Doc, look at this engine. I opened its heart, took the valves out, repaired or replaced anything damaged and then put everything back. When I’d finished it worked just like new.

“So how is it, then, that I make £30,000 a year, while you take home more than £100,000, even though you and I are doing basically the same work?”

The cardiac surgeon thought for a moment, leant over and whispered to the mechanic: “Try doing it with the engine running . . .”

Springdale Wives presentation

Jackie Neilson



Springdale Wives at the cheque presentation. Thanks to Meg Gough for the photo

On Thursday, September 7th, our president, Pat Coates, presented a cheque for £850 to Tanya Fellows from Acorns Children's Hospice, Walsall. It was our local charity fund-raising mission from September, 2016 to July 2017. It was an impressive amount considering we now

meet monthly (instead of fortnightly) with a small membership attending. We have some interesting speakers on our programme. If anyone would like to join us on the first Thursday of the month, 8pm to 9.30pm, in the Community Hall, they would be most welcome.

Wombourne Wives shoe boxes



Members of Wombourne Wives group spent a festive evening packing shoeboxes with Christmas gifts for boys and girls in some of the poorer Eastern European countries. Doreen Pike will ensure their 32 boxes join more from Sedgely and Wombourne Inner Wheel to be distributed by the charity International Aid.