

News from the Pews

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Dear Friends,

The Christmas season is a season full of carol singing, singing all the hymns that we wouldn't normally sing during the year. One of the favourites is 'O little town of Bethlehem', written by Rector Phillips Brooks before 1868 for the Sunday school children at his Philadelphia parish, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem. Brooks says, 'Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds ... Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still 'keeping watch over their flocks,' or leading them home to fold.'

However, have you ever noticed that Bethlehem is not the first place that is mentioned in the New Testament? You would have thought that Bethlehem, which is key to the birth narrative of Jesus, would have been placed first, but we don't read about it until chapter 2. The first place mentioned, three times (four times in the KJV), is Babylon, the place of exile for seventy years for the children of Israel.

As Matthew brings the message of Christ the King, you would have thought that Jerusalem would have had a prominent place in the birth of the Saviour, as this is the place from where the Kings ruled. Jerusalem means 'city of peace', and Christ brings a divine peace into the lives of those who trust in Him.

The focus though is on Bethlehem, which means 'House of Bread'. Babylon is the city of sin, so we need to come first to recognise that we are sinners before a holy God, before we can come and recognise that Christ is the Bread from Heaven, who was broken for us on the cross on that first Good Friday. When we recognise that He was broken for us, then we can acknowledge Him as King of our lives.

This is not the first time that Bethlehem was a place of importance, if we were to turn to Genesis 35 we would read, 'So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath' (that is, Bethlehem). Later, we learn that this was the home of Ruth

Who's Who at Roeburndale & Wray

Minister:	Rev Roy Burley 173 Brookhouse Rd, Brookhouse	01524 771230
Wray Leaders:	Judith Sanderson Edmund Park Charlie Preece Andrew Wright	01524 811139 21753 07930 738690 21652
Wray Treasurer:	Andrew Wright	21652
Wray Stewards:	David Huddleston George Longton Luke Gorst Michael Preece Andrew & Ben Wallbank Alan & Andrew Wright Thomas Whitfield	62170 22026 22303 07946 209086 37720 21652 61230
Roeburndale Steward:	George Preece	21618
Fellowship:	David Huddleston	62170
Wray Sunday School:	Charlie Preece, Martin Huddleston, Luke Gorst	
Drop-In:	Andrew Wright	21652
Youth Fellowship:	Richard & Hazel Preece	21285
Wray Pastoral:	Margaret Wright	21652
Wray notices:	Kath Fawcett	01524 811193
News from the Pews:	Peter Gorst	22303

DROP IN

The leadership of Drop In is passing from Margaret and Andrew Wright to a group of our young people over a period of time. We want to thank both Margaret and Andrew for their time and energy and pray for those who are taking up the reins.

The next Drop In is on Saturday 1st December.



and Naomi, and Ruth features as one of four women in Matthew 1. It was also here in 1 Samuel 16 that David was anointed king in place of Saul. It is for this reason that Luke calls it, 'the city of David'.

We have already seen that Bethlehem has two names, and we have seen that Bethlehem means, 'House of Bread', whereas, Ephrath means, 'fruitfulness', which was the name of the village in the days of Jacob. It is to Bethlehem that we must go by faith to partake of the nourishing Bread of Heaven, and our own fruitfulness depends on our feasting upon the true Bread.

It was to Bethlehem that the Magi travelled from Babylon via Jerusalem, to witness the birth of the King of Kings. It was here that they brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Before that, shortly after Jesus was born, the shepherds of Luke 2 went with haste to see this momentous event and went on their way, singing His praises.

I pray that at this Christmas time, we too might come in wonder, love and praise, as we gather around the manger, and see again the birth of the Christ child who came as the Saviour of the world.

With every Christmas blessing,

Roy

Circuit Matters

Stationing – the Circuit Meeting in September approved the re-invitation of our Superintendent Minister, Rev Steve Charman, to serve for a further five years, and our former Minister, Rev Keith Borwick, for four more years.

Deacon Jane Gibson will be retiring from the ministry in August 2019. We are now in the stationing process to replace Jane but were unsuccessful in achieving a match in round one. The Circuit remains hopeful that we will be more successful in round two in early December or we may attract a probationer minister. This remain a matter for prayer.

At the Circuit Meeting, the Chair of District, Rev Paul Davis, spoke about the difficulties with stationing in this present age, as there are not enough ministers to go round. This year 15 trainees were welcomed and 89 ministers retired! He said we need to challenge people from within our own circuit to see if they have a call into the Methodist ministry.

Peter Gorst

An anxious note to baby Jesus

By Peter Thurston

Dear Lord,

I feel tired before it's even started.

The cards (should I bother?)

The presents (who to buy for?)

The decorations (real or artificial?)

The family... (enough said)

The crowds, the hassle, the weather -

Wake me up when it's all over.

I know I shouldn't feel this way

but if I'm honest,

Advent -

it makes me weary just thinking about it.

Which makes me wonder,

how was it for you?

Were you weary too?

Just thinking about it?

The call, the life-long challenge, to

hear God,

listen to God,

follow God?

For those with ears to hear

and eyes to see,

to be God?

All begun in makeshift circumstances.

(Sorry, Lord, we were not better prepared -
some things don't change.)

A sign of things to come,

of an uphill struggle

to make your voice heard.

Uphill towards Jerusalem.

Uphill to the Mount of Olives.

Uphill to the hill of execution.

Hoping we would follow.

Hoping we would understand you,
respond to you,
welcome you then,
welcome you now.

Lord, were you tired before it even started?
Or was your love your inner energy,
the love you received your support,
the love you gave a light in the darkness,
the love you give the strength I need?

Will you help me through Advent, dear Lord,
little one?

Give me the grace to greet you
without suppressed sighs of weariness.
Give me the generosity to invite you home
without thought to the inconvenience.
Give me the will to rise to your demands,
to share your love and to receive it.

It's not so much to ask, I know,
when you have faced it all -
the Advent task, the Christmas hope -
two thousand times before.



Special Events & Dates

Over-60's Christmas Lunch – Sat 1st December in Wray Institute.

Circuit service – 7pm Sun 2nd December at Garstang.

Circuit Meeting – 7.30pm Tue 4th December at Torrisholme.

Carols by Candlelight – 7.00pm Mon 17th December in Wray Institute. A festive mix of carols and other musical and spoken items.

Village Carol Service – 6.30pm Sun 23rd December in chapel.

Christmas Day service – an informal service at 10am to celebrate the birth of the Saviour of the world.

Men's Quiz – 7.30pm Thurs 24th January in the schoolroom. Teams of 4.

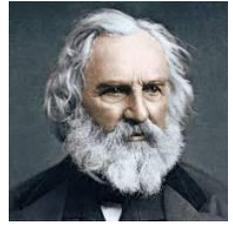
Wray Sunday School Anniversary – Sun 10th February with a programme by the Sunday School at 10.30am and Wray Young People leading the 6.30 service.

Regular Activities

- Sunday 10.30 **services** at both Wray and Roeburndale
 10.30 **Sunday school** – weekly at Wray
 6.30 **service** at Wray.
 8.00 **After Eight** young peoples' meeting at Wray, second Sunday of the month.
- Monday **Come for Coffee**, first Monday each month 10-12 in Wray schoolroom.
- Thursday **Ladies Meeting** - 2pm second Thursday of the month
 7.30pm **Prayer Meeting** or 7pm Prayer Meeting and 7.30 **Fellowship** on alternate weeks from October.
- Fri/Sat 7.00-9.30pm **Drop-In**, monthly in Wray schoolroom. Age 9 upwards. Games, tuck shop, etc. Contact Andrew Wright.
 7.30pm **Youth Fellowship**, monthly as announced. Year 9 upwards. Contact Richard & Hazel Preece.

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(1807-1852)



I heard the bells on Christmas day
their old familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet the words repeat
of peace on earth, good will to men.

And though how, as the day had come,
the belfries of all Christendom
had rolled along the unbroken song
of peace on earth, good will to men.

Till ringing, singing on its way
the world revolved from night to day,
a voice, a chime, a chant sublime
of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head
“There is no peace on earth,” I said,
“For hate is strong and mocks the song
of peace on earth, good will to men.”

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
the wrong shall fail, the right prevail
with peace on earth, good will to men.”

Tales of a training preacher

These stories were sent to the Circuit by John Young, a Local Preacher in the Sheffield Methodist Circuit.

I received a "Note to Preach" at 16 in the then Sheffield South Circuit and went "On Trial" at 17. Training was initially slow... doing a sandwich degree with, each year, 6 months study in Bradford, 6 months working away, and a fortnight at home at Christmas, Easter and in August was not ideal for LP training! However, I continued to a higher degree in Lancaster and, on learning I was on trial, the Revd Don Parsons, Methodist Chaplain, decided to sort me out... and he did!

The then Lancaster Circuit had several town and more country churches located up the Lune Valley and in the surrounding countryside. Lovely places and people, and what a place to train, many lessons learned!

Lesson 1: Expect traumas and blessings. My first service in the then Lancaster Circuit was at Quernmore. I went through an empty church into the vestry. Minutes later to my surprise, I came out into a full church with many children. The service seemed to go well, I said the final Amen, and instantly everyone walked out, leaving me alone, absolutely blown ... what was wrong? The steward came back, invited me to follow and they were all outside, talking and enjoying the sunshine! A lady came and said, "It's my turn to offer lunch, can you come?". "Yes", and what a super lunch it was! I enjoyed this added 'blessing' many times at Quernmore!

Lesson 2: Members of the congregation may receive a quite different message to the one intended. I was at Brookhouse, seemed fine, but a few days later I received a letter from a flat-earther, yes, a flat-earther. She was upset, I had questioned her 'flat-earth' beliefs. I couldn't find what I had said, we agreed to disagree on 'flat earth', and got on fine.

Lesson 3: Make sure you know about the congregation before you prepare the service, especially the first time you go. I went to Westham Street the Sunday before Christmas, had a bright idea: 7 lessons 7 carols and requested readers. The service started but by carol 4 they were flagging, so it became 4 lessons and 4 carols and I learned another lesson!

Lesson 4: Expect the unexpected. I arrived at Tewitfield at 10.30 for the 10.45 start. We chatted but no steward. At 10.45 I said, "Shall I start?", "No, at the Church Council we couldn't agree whether we start at 10.45 or 11.00, can we wait for the others?" We started at 11.00ish! In another church, something in

the village had made the headline in the News of the World and I had a completely distracted congregation!

Lesson 5: Have reliable transport. I was between 'old bangers', planned at Emmetts Chapel. I borrowed an old bike but half way there the chain broke! The service time passed, miles to go, then a milk float came by, stopped, and I was asked, "Are you the preacher?" "Yes", "Good, put your bike on the back". I arrived covered in oil, a shaking steward in the pulpit. No water to clean up so I continued the service trying not to touch anything. Afterwards, yes, I did stand at the door but with hands behind my back. 'My driver' was taking his empties to Lancaster and took me home. I soon had a 'reliable', £17 banger!

Lesson 6: Speak up, but sometimes keep quiet. At one LP Meeting we heard of a new preacher on trial who had taken his first service at Silverdale. This church had many retired members and filled from the back leaving a block of empty seats at the front. Some hadn't heard this preacher very well and made this point so strongly that he was really upset and was ready to give up. Who was it next Sunday? I told them what had happened, that they should sit nearer the front, and should put their hand up if they had difficulty hearing. Oops! But no complaints followed (remember, few churches then had microphones).

Lesson 7: Mind your head! I was planned for the first time at Pott Yeats, a farmhouse beyond Brookhouse. It was my reported service. The service was in the kitchen, I led from the table, and the congregation were seated in an assortment of chairs. I stood up to start, BANG straight into the ceiling-suspended, clothes-drying frame! I flopped back into my chair and can't remember what happened next BUT I received a good report!

Lesson 8: Have faith, don't worry. I had passed my studies, it was now decision time and this was to be made at the LP Meeting at Wray. A week before, I received an invitation letter from Revd Albert Ball, the Superintendent. The letter stated I would be tested on my knowledge and understanding of a long list of doctrines. I was petrified, 7 years of exams in Higher Education had never made me so nervous and I begged a lift as I felt it unwise to drive. What happened? A few general questions, mainly about my Call to Preach, and they agreed I should be accredited!

The Accreditation was at Marsh, my home church in Lancaster, in June 1972. Frank Young gave The Charge and, unexpected, my family came from Sheffield. Thank you to Don Parsons and the Lancaster Circuit, and I must also thank Frecheville Church, Sheffield South Circuit and MethSocs in Bradford and Lancaster. My enthusiasm and calling to preach the gospel and lead worship have never faltered since.

A Call to Preach ... ?



One of the defining aspects of the Methodist Church is the leading of a large proportion of Sunday services by trained lay people – known as Local Preachers. All over the country, Local Preachers are planned to lead worship Sunday by Sunday to supplement the work done by our ordained ministers. Without LPs, the Methodist system would very quickly fail.

Looking at the statistics, the North Lancashire Circuit has a very healthy number of preachers compared to many Circuits in the Lancashire District. However, even we are finding it increasingly difficult to fill our preaching plan with accredited Local Preachers or ministers at certain times of year.

There is also a concern amongst the Circuit preachers that none of us are getting any younger! If we are to be relevant to those in their teens, 20s, 30s and 40s, we need to have people from those generations in our pulpits, relating the things of faith to our younger people.

In the Methodist Church, we believe preachers are called – God makes it plain that he wants people to serve him in this way. He calls people in different ways (why not ask the preachers you know how they heard the call?) but most preachers would say that the call was undeniable. It is not an easy road – there is a training course to be negotiated and lots to learn about the craft of leading worship and speaking – but most preachers would also say that there is the significant reward of serving God in a very real and tangible way, helping others to worship, allowing God to speak through our words and services and, occasionally, helping people come to faith for the first time or move on to new things for God.

Of course, not all preachers hit the spot for every member of every congregation every time they speak – that's inevitable, not least in such a large and varied Circuit such as ours. However, preachers and ministers do spend considerable amounts of their time discerning what God wants them to share and then preparing for each service.

So, maybe God is calling you? Maybe preaching could be the next step in your Christian walk? If you are interested today, please speak to a Local Preacher you know or your minister for more details. Our churches need preachers!

Peter Gorst

Ladies Meeting

- December 13th** Wray (slightly younger) ladies with a Christmas programme
- January 10th** Marcie Potts
- February 14th** Linda Thomas
- March 14th** Sarah Gorst
- April 11th** Bentham Praise bringing an Easter themed programme

Meetings start at 2pm and are followed by refreshments.

More Wray Rotas

Morning Coffee

Dec	2	Sarah & Peter
	9	Joan & Andy
	16	Judith & Malcolm
	23	SS teachers pm mince pies
	30	Jan & Kath
Jan	6	Becky & Martin
	13	Charlie, James & Ben
	20	Andrew, Luke & Laura
	27	Laura, Matt & Sam
Feb	3	Rachel, Steven & Will
	10	SSA – chapel lunch
	17	Ruth & George
	24	Mary, Imogen & Chris

Cleaning Fortnight

Dec	3	Liz P
	10	Kath – chapel After 8 – SS
	17	Kath F
	24	Judith S
	31	
Jan	7	Janet T
	14	
	21	Ruth L
	38	
Feb	4	Diane H
	11	SS teachers
	18	Diane H
	25	Joyce L

**Please bring milk, squash and biscuits.
Tea and coffee are provided.**

**Cleaning fortnights start on
Mondays thro' to Saturdays**

2018/ 2019	Wray preachers	Wray welcome	Wray flowers	R'dale preachers	R'dale flowers/ cleaning
Dec 2	C Ward Circuit Service	Seth Thomas	Susan S +Advent wreath	Paul Bowden	Margaret
9	Rev R Burley C E Rendle	Laura Malcolm	Linda W +Advent wreath	Rev Ken CLapham	Hazel E
16	Rev K Clapham S Hewitt YS	Sam Sarah	Xmas tree +Advent wreath	Rev Tim Widdess	
23	Susan Wilson Rev R Burley CS	Kath Rachel	Xmas tree +Advent wreath	Rev Roy Burley C	Barbara H
30	JR Gorst M&L France	Andy Steven	Xmas tree +Advent wreath	LA	
Jan 6	Lund YP R Aldren	Luke Andrew	Christmas tree	Jim Hutchinson	Hazel P
13	Rev R Burley Cv S Joel	Dorothy George L	Dorothy W	John Fox	
20	J Hutchinson LA YS	Mick Judith	Margaret W	Rev Roy Burley Cv	Grace
27	M Longton Rev R Burley	Franc & Carol Lois P	Diane A	LA	
Feb 3	LA G Woodhouse	Dora & Amy Thomas	Kath F	Rev Steve Charman	Margaret
10	SSA Wray YP	Jan Malcolm	Jan F	Rev Roy Burley	
17	Rev R Burley J Gorst YS	Sarah Will P	Sarah G	Earle Rendle	Hazel E
24	Rev S Charman Rev R Burley C	Laura Rachel	Carol G	Gillian Graham	

C - Communion

Cv - Covenant Service

CS - Carol Service

LA - Local arrangement

SSA - Sunday School Anniversary

YS - Youth Service