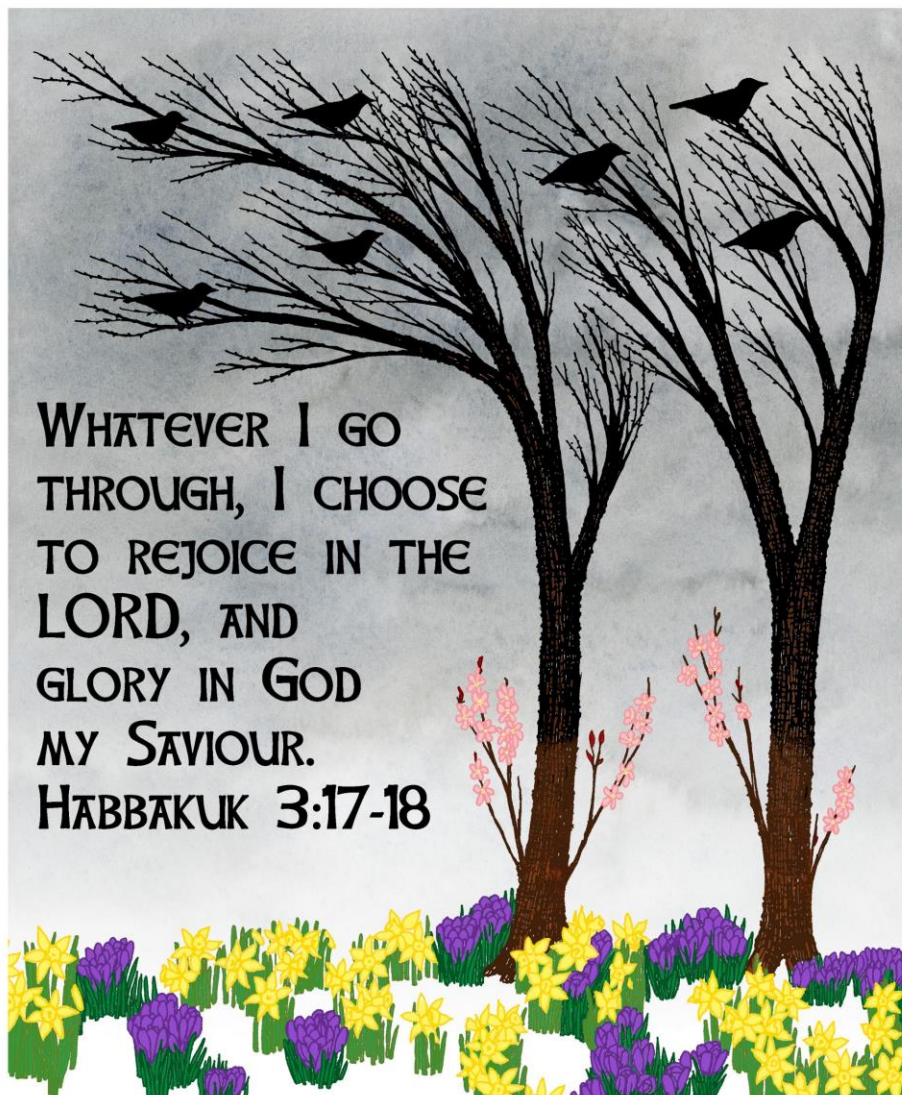




Kempston East Methodist Church Newsletter Issue 145 February 5th 2023

Minister: Rev Michael Giles
Michaelgiles2017@gmail.com
01234 930882



LENT 2023



Ash Wednesday 22nd February to Maundy Thursday 6th April

Theme: 'The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace'.

Dear Friend,

LENT is that time of the year when we have an MOT on our faith. We have six weeks in which to dig a bit deeper, reflect, slow down, maybe for some to speed up in terms of our faith. So, for our spiritual MOT and faith workout we shall be using the Lent material from EMBRACE the Middle East (formerly known as Biblelands). EMBRACE is a Christian charity working throughout the Middle East (www.embraceme.org).

FREE Study booklets for the church community will be distributed from 12th February onwards.

Each of the weekly studies has a Bible reading, prayers, pause and respond, a Reflection Action for the week and photographs of the churches in the Middle East. All four Methodist Churches (Kempston East, Kempston West, Willington and Wootton New Life) plus some local Anglican partners in Willington are taking part.

Home-based mid-week Study Groups

You are welcome to join one of these discussion groups:

Tuesdays starting 28th February 10am-11.30am. Contact Barbara Tipping (in Kempston)
T: 852101 or email: barbara.tipping@outlook.com

Wednesdays starting 1st March 7.30pm Contact Rosemary and Stuart Simms
(in Wootton) T: 766427 or email stuart.simms@ntlworld.com

Lent and Easter Services

Ash Wednesday Service 22nd Feb

7.30pm at Church of the Transfiguration, Kempston

Maundy Thursday 6th April

7.30pm at Church of the Transfiguration, Kempston

GOOD Friday 7th April

10.00am March of Witness from Church of the Transfiguration to Saxon Court, followed by refreshments at Bunyan Road Chapel, Kempston

7.30pm Kempston East are presenting 'Jerusalem Joy' Musical by Roger Jones
More details on page 7

EASTER DAY Sunday 9th April

10.30am Celebration Service at Kempston East

So I encourage you to get involved in Lent 2023 through the study groups and personal study resources.

Blessings

Rev Michael Giles

Candlemas

The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Last Thursday, February 2nd, was the Feast of Candlemas. In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself. These days, particularly in the nonconformist denominations, we don't tend to celebrate Candlemas – which is why I forgot to put this in last week's newsletter!



In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first 'public appearance'. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to 'present Him to the Lord'. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was 'purified'. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year's supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon's great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.

The picture above is of a stained glass window in Saint Aloysius Catholic Church, Bowling Green, Ohio, and is by Nheyob and is reproduced under the CC-BY-SA 4.0 licence

Thank You

Terry and I, from Cranfield, were looking for a new spiritual home when our neighbours, Alistair and Margaret Riach, suggested that we came with them to Kempston East. This was back in October 2022. We have been coming ever since! We love the church building with its comfortable seats, the well prepared, thoughtful services and the joyful singing. Most especially we would like to thank you for the warm welcome. We are gradually getting to know more of you. Thank you that we have found you and can share our journey loving and serving Jesus.

Marjorie and Terry Stevens



Website and Livestreaming Update from Dom Simms

We are continuing to stream the Sunday morning services and various others

(Remembrance, Christmas carol concert etc) all to YouTube. That is over 30 now since we got the new equipment, which has all been working well.

I'm very appreciative to have the help from our willing volunteers, Robert Callaghan and Godfred Asare, and we have just set up another rota to the end of March for the livestreaming.

I hope the streams have been useful and are serving their purpose for those who cannot make the service and also to improve our outreach. I received several positive comments around Christmas to say that the quality was good, compared to other church services that people have viewed, so it is good to know that they are well received.

I continue to add the latest newsletter and YouTube streams to the 'Newsletter' page on the website. When I get time, I also try to create blog posts on upcoming news such as the 'Warmospace project'. If there needs to be any changes to the website or online, please let me know.

As far as I'm aware, the WiFi has been working well (in the church and halls). From my experience, it has been great to be able to use it for various classes and activities for Boys Brigade, as I'm sure other groups have also used it in this way. For example, we have used this asset for the latest round of the Boys Brigade National FIFA competition. We can play and connect online, which is saving us a lot of time and money by not needing to travel to that company (which happens to be in Manchester!)

I thought I would also include some information about our online profile and some of the analytics from the past 6-12 months, in case this was of interest. In short, our online profile is growing and is looking good.

Analytics

All our livestreams receive around 30-50 views, with around 5-10 'live' viewers on the day. I post some of the videos on our Facebook page the following week. According to YouTube, we now have over 500 hours of watch time and 4500 views across the channel, since we started it just under 3 years ago. We have over 300 followers on the Facebook page and 29 subscribers on YouTube.

All-time page views since we launched the website are over 22,000, according to Google. Each month (over the last year) we have had around 700 page views and around 200 users on average.

We also have a Google profile which drives traffic to the website. This profile shows up in Google Search and on Google Maps. In the last 6 months, over 3000 people viewed the profile and there were 793 interactions which included 474 direction requests (via Google Maps), 279 website clicks and 40 phone calls.



We have 24 reviews on Google - pretty much all are positive and 4 or 5 stars (4.3 out of 5 stars is our average rating).

Dom Simms

[Dom also has very detailed analytics breakdowns of both Google searches and of website accesses. Please contact Dom directly if you would like to see these data.]

National Alert - Obscene Phone Calls



We have been alerted by Safeguarding contacts in the Church of England that, throughout November 2022 and January 2023, there has been a spate of obscene, malicious, and offensive phone/video calls directed at female church officers. The caller identifies himself as Dan or Daniel. Stephanie Field, Circuit Safeguarding lead, tells us she's aware of calls directed at Methodist folk.

The overwhelming likelihood is that you won't receive a call. Our GDPR processes are rigorous and people's personal details are kept secure.

Many people will have their own processes in place for screening out calls from unrecognised numbers, but if you do receive a call, the advice is:

- Do not engage in any conversation if it's clear the call is obscene and offensive.
- **Do not agree to meet the caller.**
- Note and record the time, date and any details of the caller's number.
- Note any distinctive accent or description: if it is a video call, and if safe, consider taking a screen shot.
- Report the incident to the police.
- Refer the matter to one of us.
- Consider calling your phone company and asking for their nuisance or malicious calls team.

Margaret Musgrove and Richard Ward



Our Church Family



Please remember in your prayers:

- Martin and Margaret T
- Vivienne, Graham and Alice Miles
- Anwar M
- Jason M, in Great Ormond Street Hospital
- Mary S
- Hugh, son-in-law of Ann and Michael

This Week at Kempston East

Tuesday Feb 7 th	2.00pm	Tibbs Dementia meets in the New School Hall
Wednesday Feb 8 th	10.00am	'Warm Space' open in the Beginners Room
	2.30pm	Guild meets in the New School Hall for 'Ciao Italia'
Thursday Feb 9 th	12.30pm	Lunch Club meets in the New School Hall
Friday Feb 10 th	9.30am	Parents and Toddlers meet in the Halls
Saturday Feb 11 th	4.00pm	Soup Kitchen in the Church Garden

After church coffee



We now only have four teams who prepare and serve coffee each Sunday after the morning worship and we would like to have a few more people to help. If this is something you feel able to do we would be pleased. It is not difficult to set up and the more people we have the less all of us would need to do.

If you are interested in this small service to the church please have a word with Ann Stevenson.

WORSHIP AT EAST

Our morning service this week, at 10.30am, will be led by Rev Martin Truscott.

The live streaming team will again be in action so you should be able to watch on YouTube if you're unable to get to church in person. Details of how to connect in are given in Richard's email. An audio recording will also be available for those who normally receive this and will also be loaded on to the church website.

Future Services at Kempston East

Sunday February 12 th	10.30am	Janet Watts
Sunday February 19 th	10.30am	Local Worship
Sunday February 26 th	10.30am	Rev Michael Giles



Jerusalem Joy

Some of you may remember the choir singing Jerusalem Joy by Roger Jones several years ago. It tells the Easter story from Palm Sunday to Easter Day.

I would like to have a choir to sing it this year on Good Friday evening. Rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 9.45am to 10.15am and also on some Friday afternoons. We will begin rehearsals on Sunday 12th February.

Please let me know if you would like to join the choir for this.

Barbara Tipping



METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN
NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE CIRCUIT

COFFEE MORNING

9 am - 12 noon

TUESDAY 21st FEBRUARY

at
TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
SHORTMEAD STREET
BIGGLESWADE
SG18 0AP

in aid of
QUEEN VICTORIA SEAMEN'S REST
at **TILBURY**

This is the Charity which our District MWiB are currently supporting and we are teaming up with Trinity's normal Footprints Coffee Morning

THERE WILL ALSO
BE A SALES TABLE



The QVSR has a number of Centres around the British Isles, but our focus is on Tilbury.

Facilities include

Wi-Fi • TV Lounges • Chapel • Shop • Bar • Light Refreshments • Books • Clothing • Pool table table tennis & an Outdoor Recreational Area.

ALL MUCH APPRECIATED BY LONELY SEAFARERS, FAR FROM HOME

Fairtrade Coffee morning

Kempston East – February 25th



Fairtrade Fortnight, this year, begins on Monday February 27th. To mark the beginning of this there will be a Coffee morning at Kempston East from 10.00am until 12 noon on Saturday February 25th. As well as an extensive Fairtrade stall, there will also be all the usual stalls including a cake stall. We would be very grateful for donations of cakes, biscuits, jams etc. which should be labelled with a list of their contents.

Please come and support this and enjoy a drink, a doughnut and a chat.



Tibbs Dementia Foundation

As many of you will know, as a church we support the Tibbs Dementia Foundation by providing them with premises and refreshments each Tuesday afternoon for one of their many weekly meetings. Tibbs Dementia Foundation are celebrating their 10th birthday this year and we have been supporting them for eight of those ten years. We have been able to provide both premises and refreshments free of charge to them thanks to a team of volunteers from the church and a generous donation provided some years ago by Sheila and Clifton Ibbett for use in charitable outreach projects that Kempston East could get involved in.

Coffee morning at Kempston West

11th February 2023 at 10.00am - 11.30am.

In aid of Mercy Ships.

Why not come along and enjoy the company and the homemade cake whilst helping a good cause!!



If you have any prayer requests, thanks and, indeed, any other items and news that you would like to go into the weekly newsletter then please email these to Geoff Talbot (geofftal@btinternet.com) as soon as possible and ideally by the previous Wednesday.

If you know of someone who would like to receive this emailed newsletter could you please send their email address to richard.ward4@btinternet.com. Equally, if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, please let Richard Ward know.