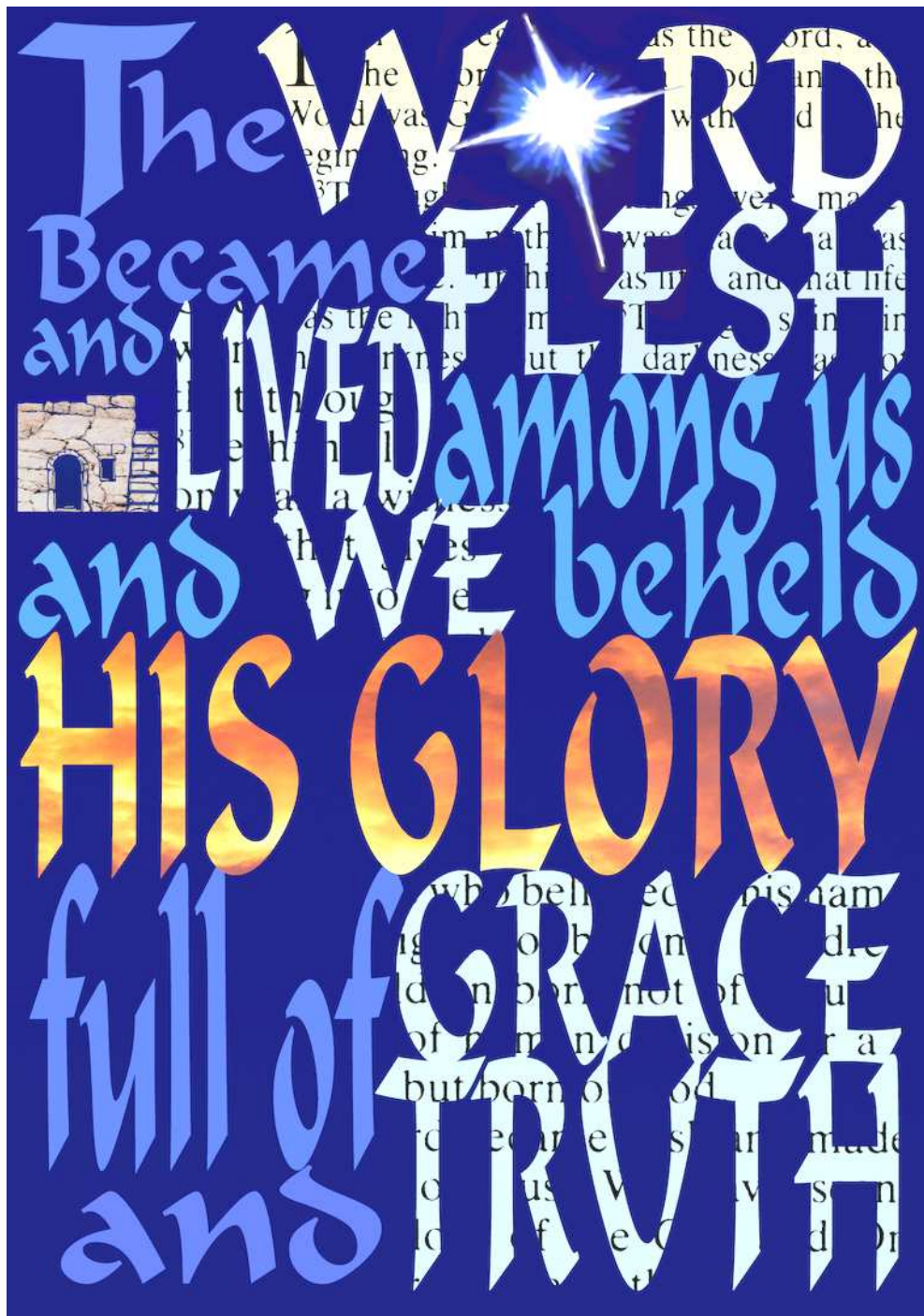


FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

The magazine of Sydenham Methodist Church



December 2011



Beaver News - page 6
Nikki's Togo Trip - page 14

FROM THE EDITOR



At the end of the summer I used the internet to order a new GB uniform for my daughter. A week or so later, I received a phone call. The lady at the other end of the line explained that she too was called Carolyn and had recently placed an online order with the GB for her own daughter. However, in a mix-up my daughter's GB uniform had been sent to her address. We had placed our orders on the same day.

She explained that rather than send my daughter's uniform back to GB headquarters to be resent to our address, she was willing to deliver it - straight to our door. She was happy to do this even though she lived outside of Belfast.

I was touched by the kindness of a complete stranger. At Christmas time we remember God sending Jesus into the world as a baby.

The kindness of a Saviour.

CAROLYN HALL

With thanks to this edition's contributors.



November 2011

Dear friends

Since I wrote last, many new initiatives have begun: we have engaged in the **E100** Bible Reading Challenge which led to a Summer Bible Study (**SuBS**); **Streetreach** an attempt to share God's love through tidying the local area and some gardens; **the Dock** a new mission in the Titanic Quarter (www.thedockchurch.org); fellowship has been encouraged by two church picnics, and by tea and coffee being served after morning worship once a month. **Knit and natter** is a new group that meets and does what it says – knit and natter! **Back to Church Sunday** saw approximately 36 people return to church.

Recently as a church we have helped others by giving non-perishable foods for our harvest, (to be distributed by local social workers) and for East Belfast Mission's Christmas hamper appeal. (400 hampers will be given to needy families).

In April we welcomed Richard Wright, a candidate for the ordained ministry of the Methodist church, as he completed a placement with us. In October we welcomed Michael Spence, a ministerial student from Edgehill College, who is on placement until May.

You will read many stories in this magazine about the mission and life of God's people in Sydenham. We are thankful to all those people who give so willingly of their time as they serve God in and through his church. I hope you will be encouraged by what you read.

I write to you as we enter the season of Advent, a time of watching, waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ as we celebrate Christmas and await his return. It can be a time of great busyness and stress for many people as presents have to be bought and cupboards filled with food, yet that is not what it is meant to be about. There is no doubt that church life can be busy and I pray that we will all take time during this Advent season to be still, watch, wait, pray and reflect on the coming of Jesus into this world as its Saviour.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and a happy new year

Karen

DEATHS:

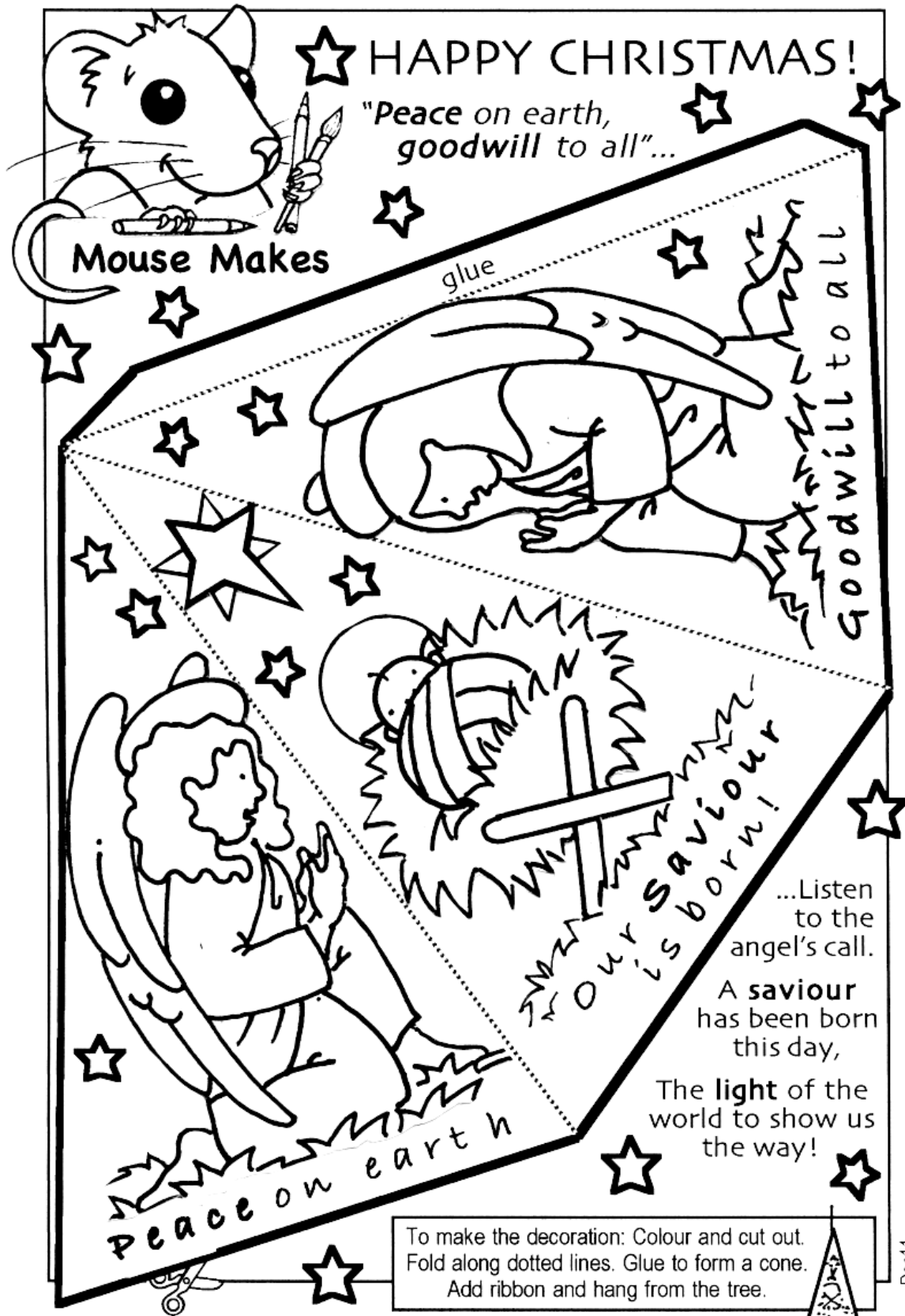
Ina Edgar
Jessie Leckey
Maureen Lowry
Lily Perry
Agnes Taylor
Florence Telford

BAPTISMS:

Grace Olive Wylie
Jenni Doak
Dale James Bennett
Jake Ryan Bennett

MARRIAGES:

Chris Sloan and Joanna Neil
Peter Wilton and Carley Francey



★ HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

"Peace on earth,
goodwill to all"...

Mouse Makes

glue

Goodwill to all

OUR SAVIOUR
IS BORN!

...Listen
to the
angel's call.

A **saviour**
has been born
this day,

The **light** of the
world to show us
the way!

Peace on earth

To make the decoration: Colour and cut out.
Fold along dotted lines. Glue to form a cone.
Add ribbon and hang from the tree.

Dec11

BEAVER NEWS



Hi folks, just thought we would give a little insight into what the Beavers have been up to this past year. Last September we had a very wet day at Crawfordsburn with the Squirrels when we joined with

the Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts at their camp, hoping to give the younger ones what camping is like. WET!!! We had our District Christmas Party full of fun and games and plenty of food. Despite Rudolf wanting in on the fun, Santa chased him off to deliver the presents for the boys. Parents were invited to our own Christmas party to look at the photos that were taken throughout the year at different events.

We joined with other Beavers from Belfast County at W5 for a great day of fun using all the different gadgets and trying to show them a little bit of how things work (no chance they just wanted to play).



The District Unihoc Competition was once again held at our own church and was very competitive. The Beavers had a great time but we did not win (ahh well there is always next year).

We ended the year with a day at Castle Espie. The weather was good, the birds were good and the Beavers had a great day.



Throughout the year, we continued to work towards our badges with ICT, Health and Fitness, Explorer, Hikes, Outdoor to name but a few. We are also very pleased that four of our Beavers achieved Chief Scout Bronze Award, which is the highest award for Beavers. Congratulations to Ben, Nathan, Eoin and Cameron.

Pat (BSL)



THANK YOU

Valerie Matthews, her husband Tom and family, would like to thank all those who prayed for her, sent gifts, cards, beautiful flowers and telephoned during her recent illness; also those who called at the home. Special thanks to Reverend Karen Spence for her kindness and prayer. God bless. Isaiah 40:29.

CARD MAKING WORKSHOP

Many thanks to all who helped or contributed to our recent Card Making fundraising day in September. we raised a grand total of £400 for Age NI

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

11 December at 6:30pm
Christingle Service



18 December at 7pm
Carols by Candlelight



Christmas Day Service
at 9:30am



31 December at 11:15pm
Joint Watchnight Service
Fellowship and supper 9pm

Robert Russell (Pastoral Assistant)

I have been asked by Karen to write a short article for this edition of the Church Magazine as a kind of introduction of who I am and my involvement in the life of Sydenham Methodist Church.

My early years were spent in a rural community a few miles from Lurgan in Co. Armagh. I started working life as a textile designer where I remained for the next seven years. Our family belonged to Queen Street Methodist Church. As a young man, under the influence of Godly parents and the ministry of the Rev. Derek Ritchie, I committed my life to Christ. The experience became a major turning point in my thinking and lifestyle.

In the late 1960s I responded to God's call to full time ministry. After spending a year at Cliff College in Derbyshire, followed by a year in Dungannon Methodist Church, as a Circuit Evangelist, I entered Edgehill College and trained for the Methodist ministry.

After Edgehill, Kathleen, my wife and I were sent to the Cavan and Longford circuit. Following this we served as Mission Partners for a number of years in the W. Indies. On returning to Ireland we worked in the Crumlin Road and Oldpark area, Dundonald, Ballynafiegh and finally Donaghadee.

On retirement two years ago we returned to live and worship in the Dundonald area.

We have three boys, two daughters-in-law and one grandchild. Two live in England and one in Warsaw. One consolation is that we have Midge, our Yorkshire terrier, who among other things helps to keep us fit. My hobbies include walking, gardening, reading, painting and some DIY.

Following a morning service which I conducted in Sydenham Methodist in the autumn of last year, Karen and I had a chat which led to an invitation to help with the pastoral side of the work at the church. I hit the roads and streets around Sydenham in wintry weather in December 2010. Most of the five hours that I work each week are spent visiting church members and those on the fringes of the church's life and work. Those who are unwell, or in nursing/residential care or with special needs receive more regular pastoral care.

It is a real privilege to have the time and the experience to compliment in some small way the pastoral work that Karen does so effectively and faithfully. Sincere thanks to all who have made me welcome. It has been great making new friends and sharing fellowship with you. I am sorry if I called at your door and missed you. Hopefully, my timing will be better next time round.

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If, for any reason, you would like me to call with you, please do not hesitate to get in touch direct or through Karen. I will be more than happy to meet up with you.

Tel. 90 229515

Email. rk.russell@virginmedia.com

SANTA'S PRAYER

On Christmas Eve I heard a sound
I'd never heard before,
A voice was softly speaking
And I wanted to hear more.

So very quietly I arose
From the bed where I was laying,
I tiptoed to the living room
Where I heard Santa praying.

"Dear Jesus, it's your birthday
And I just wanted to say,
Thanks for letting me be part
Of your very special day."

"I always have believed in you.
I know that you are real,
But there are some who don't believe,
And how sad that makes me feel."

"Some houses have no Bible,
They have no manger scene.
Some people speak of Christmas,
But forget what it really means."

"I pray some day they all will know,
What your love is worth,
Then I know they will understand,
The importance of your birth."



I always knew Santa brought toys,
Like my truck, and my sister's doll,
But on this night I understood,
Why Santa is the jolliest of all.

It is because he helps us to spread
Good will and Christmas cheer,
And he helps Jesus celebrate
His birthday every year.

Then I quietly returned to my room
And snuggled back in my bed,
Knowing I'd always remember
The words that Santa had said.

In the morning I remembered
What I had heard and seen,
But I wasn't sure if it was real
Or just a wonderful dream!!

AMEN. !!

(submitted by Laura Brown)

NIKKI'S TOGO EXPERIENCE REFLECTION

What is your highlight from the trip?

My highlight is definitely getting to join in with the African dancing around tables. Trying to learn the African version of the funky chicken was really amusing, but I think I'm getting closer every day!!! It was really inspiring to see how joyful they were while they were worshipping God!

What was the toughest/hardest moment for you?

The toughest moment would have to be lying in hospital on Sunday morning, receiving more injections and having my drip moved from my hand to my arm (mega fear of needles). And then just getting really homesick because I'd spent three days in hospital and (no offence to the company I had!) I really just wanted to go home.

What has God taught you through this experience?

During this experience, I've learnt that God can be worshipped in so many different ways! In the UK, we generally stand, sing a song, and sit down again. Maybe someone will raise their hands... But in Togo, we've seen both children and adults dancing around tables, dancing round the church and absolutely singing their hearts out for the Lord!

What have you seen God doing through these two weeks?

Over the past two weeks, I've seen God work through the Togolese youth we were working with. During the trip, we

ran a program involving group discussion and question and answer on a topic. The first time we asked if people had questions, nobody said anything. But over the next few days, I could see God opening their hearts to what was being said during the discussions. This helped them ask questions, and soon we were into really in-depth conversations about Christianity and you could see the Togolese youth learning so much about God and the Bible! I really just loved seeing them open their hearts to what God had to say to them and as we spent time praying as groups I just knew that God was working through them. It's so good to see the youth at the camp learn that God has a plan for every single one of them, even though their life right now may not be great. "God is good: all the time!"

What might you change/include in your life after your Togolese experience?

I said before about how the worship in Togo is so amazing compared to the worship at home. Worship is something I'm already really involved in in my church, but I really want to do so much more now! In church, I'm not always confident enough to raise my hands because I know people can see me, but now all I can think is "why not?!" I really hope I can use this experience of worship to inspire others as well!

What is your favourite thing about being at home?

My favourite thing about being home again is having my friends and family back. :) Probably would have just stayed in Togo if they had flown over! And I must admit, I'm not exactly missing the mosquitoes!

All in all, an amazing trip :)

Merci beaucoup for all your prayers and help over the past few months.

'Neekee' :)



Learning Skills!



African Worship



(for another photo of Nikki's trip turn to back page)

EXPLORER SCOUTS BATTLE ON.....

This past year saw many new things in the Explorer Scouts. Our first Camp of the session was to Crawfordsburn as part of a joint camp with the rest of the scout section. The Explorers coped well under the severe wet conditions, and still managed to build a very scary looking bridge out of nothing but sticks and lashings. Along with the Scouts, the Explorers did caving and tower crate building. Despite this



the camp had to be abandoned after one day due to 'Somme like conditions' as Buggy put it.

As the nights progressed and the seasons changed the Unit decided to have another go, this time to Slievenaman to break the Newbies in gently.

The Explorers made their own way to Newcastle by Bus being met in Newcastle by the leaders. Once there, but not before they had purchased enough sweets to last a month, they hiked through Tullymore Forest park with their gear and set up camp at Slievenaman School House.

Despite the Scout leaders attempting to keep everyone awake...well one in particular... everyone survived the weekend.

The next challenge on the calendar, after winning the district unihoc competition, was to build a go-kart out of nothing but scrap. After many nights work we headed to Crawfordsburn. Out of the six teams competing we managed second place.



Taking things a little slower we had a day trip to the Folk and Transport museum before finishing.

The final camp before the summer holidays was to Gosford Forest Park. We had three glorious days of sunshine, plenty of games, plenty of walking and most importantly plenty to eat.

Over the summer we had day river walking at Crawfordsburn finishing off with games as well as hotdogs, pizza and chips with ice-cream for desert at the church halls.

There is plenty more to do and see so roll on next year!!!



Basil (ESP)

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN YENDALL OUR SOCIETY STEWARD

Occupation: Principal Social Worker

Length of time at Sydenham: 12 years

Interests/hobbies: Football (Man City Fanatic!), Bowls, Snooker, Reading

Favourites:

Food: Steak, curry, (in that order!)

Music: Pink Floyd/Genesis (love large variety of music so also like some folk music like Donovan and my guilty pleasure is Alicia Keys (her music that is))

Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Song: Changes all the time but is currently anything from 12 Avenue North.

Bible verse: **John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

And another thing: just to say that I take a lot from the help and support I receive from lots of individuals in the congregation and I really hope and pray that as a church, we continue to help and support each other over the coming year. It's been said that in the first year a minister can do no wrong. That in the second year they can do no right! With that in mind, it is important we recognise and support Karen as she moves through her second year and enable her to guide us as she feels led, with encouragement and enthusiasm.

KNITTING - WHO KNEW

About a year ago I had just given up my involvement in Kidzone. After more years working with the children than I care to admit to, I felt God was telling me that the time was right to move on. I guess I was wondering what God would have me do next. I'm not a quiet, contemplative person and really need something to enthuse about. As God knows me better than anyone else, I knew he would have a plan for me. I just didn't think it would involve knitting.

I was away for the weekend and had just sat down to thumb through my new knitting magazine (yes, such things do exist). I happened to notice how many groups met in churches and I suppose it got me thinking. Would one of these work for Sydenham? The idea wouldn't really go away, so I decided to run it past Karen. Christmas came and went before we actually got a chance to talk about it. She thought it was a great idea and got me to sit down and outline my ideas for the group. I wanted a group that would meet to share a hobby they enjoyed and a bit of chat, so the name "Knit and Natter" seemed appropriate.

Church Council gave it the green light, so at the beginning of May, armed with needles, yarn, patterns, tea, coffee and my secret weapon (cinnamon loaf), I was ready to start. I was just hoping and praying that someone would actually turn up.

On that first morning seven eager knitters arrived but over the weeks more have joined us and we now regularly have

13 people. The youngest so far has been an eight year old and the oldest isn't admitting anything! We even have one brave male!

We have knit many things to develop our skills such as jumpers, shawls, wellie toppers, scarves and hats. We have also got involved in the knitting and crocheting for charity projects. We have donated hats, blankets and vests to the container ministry but the most fun project has been knitting little hats for Innocent Smoothies. For every hat knitted, Innocent donated 25p to Age Concern. We managed to send almost 380 hats. If you look in Sainsbury's and Boots towards the end of November you will see the little hats on the bottles.

Our current projects are knitting premature baby clothes for the unit in the Royal Maternity Hospital and winter hats, mitts and scarves for the Simon Community. We meet every other Tuesday from 10 - 12 noon in the Taylor room. If you fancy a bit of knitting and a bit of a chat you know where to find us. So to answer the question in the title, Knitting - God knew.



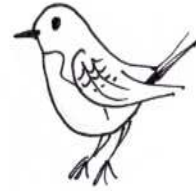
For another photo of “Knit and Natter” turn to the back



"Nice idea, Amelia, but I don't think the Angel of the Lord texting the shepherds would have the same dramatic effect."



"You'll be in deep trouble if the vicar finds out you're not deeply meditating, just playing with your new iPad!"



With Christmas in mind...

Christ is the great central fact in the world's history. To him everything looks forward or backward. All the lines of history converge upon him. **C H Spurgeon**

God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. **C S Lewis.**

The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that he sunk himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding. **Martin Luther**

"I can get more out of God by believing him for one minute than by shouting at him all night!" **Smith Wigglesworth**

The best way to succeed in this world is to act on the advice you give to others. **Anon**

Wisdom for everyone with relatives coming to stay this Christmas...

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

Age doesn't always bring wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone.

Nothing is often a good thing to say. **Will Durant**

Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due.

Better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot.

To some people, religious freedom means a choice of churches to stay home from.



A Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the One whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the One for whom the crowded inn could find no room; and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the One whom the rulers of the earth ignored, and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the One who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible.

I believe in the One whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God; the need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself.

I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

Author unknown



Colouring Page





“Knit and Natter” with their innocent smoothie hats



Playing with frisbees