

**We invite you to come and see The Eldwick Angels** at The Eldwick Church On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 10am-4pm and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 1pm-4pm. A collection of angels made by the Church and the Eldwick Community. Refreshments available.

**A request to all Circuit Churches—The Welcome Project** that operates out of Keighley Shared Church would like to help those who are less fortunate and alone at this time of year. Some of their clients have fallen on hard times whilst others are isolated and lonely and may even be spending Christmas alone. Can you help by bringing a gift of a box of biscuits or chocolates or some warm clothing such as gloves or hats or scarves to The Welcome Café on Tuesday or Thursday lunchtime prior to Christmas? Or contact Geoff or Shona Grange and they will happily pick it up from your church. Your small token could make a massive difference to one person's life this Christmas. Thank you.

### Dear Friends

I am too young to remember The Goons and their zany sense of humour, but my Dad introduced them to me and then much later to my sons and we were hooked. One of the songs that I liked was "I am walking backwards for Christmas" and I think it was the concept that I liked! Imagine my surprise when I came across a book last year by Steven Cottrell with the title very similar "Walking backward to Christmas". Last year the book sat on my bookshelf unread but this year I decided to rescue it from its isolation and dip into it. Boy am I glad I have. In a very imaginative way the author tells the Christmas story through the eyes of some key players but it starts in the Temple with Anna and works backwards. Reading it in this way casts some new light upon such familiar stories and characters. His use of words is delicious and I find myself delighting at phrases such as "the light has dimmed itself, or should I say clothed itself, in the grey ambiguity of life". What a marvellous description of the Incarnation. Many of you know that I love words and at times write

poems. Last Christmas I was quite prolific. I hadn't realised how many I wrote or indeed where I found the time! As part of Silsden Christmas Festival I have produced a small booklet "A Christmas Collection" and for a minimum donation of £2 a copy can be yours. All the proceeds are going to The MS Society and Carers Resource, two most worthy causes.

But I digress. I do hope that over Advent you might have found some time to do some reading based around this wonderful season of the year (one of my favourites) and that through it you are feeling blessed. If you haven't started yet might I heartily recommend "Walking backwards to Christmas". It would be easy enough to pick it up even in the last week of Advent and read it all the way through.

So when Christmas comes, have a blessed one. May you know that the light that comes clothed in grey ambiguity is in fact the brightest light, the light of God's love.

Happy Christmas.

Ruth

### Diary Dates for December

- 5** 10.00-11.30am Christmas Coffee Morning at Lees Methodist Church.
- 6** 12.15pm at Haworth Methodist Church. Advent lunch with reflection
- 10** 7pm at Silsden Methodist Church. A meeting for stewards of the churches re stationing
- 13** 12.15pm at Haworth Baptists. Advent lunch with reflection
- 21** 2.00pm at Silsden Methodist Church. A Christmas film for all the family.
- 21** 7.00pm at Keighley Shared Church. Civic Carols.
- 31** 10.00pm at Cowling Methodist Church. A social with supper, followed by Midnight Service led by Kanu.

### House to Rent

Good 3 Bedroom Cottage with garden, to rent at Lees Methodist Church, likely to be available from January 2016 - please contact Maurice Baren (01535 643100) for further details.

**Pay As You Can Café** As many of you know, and have supported through harvest gifts, the Pay As You Can Cafe at Keighley Shared Church is a growing success. The Cafe set up in Partnership between the Circuit and the Welcome Project (created and run by 2 members of Lees Methodist Church) aims to reach out to anyone in need, not only does it provide freshly made soup, sandwiches and Jacket potatoes it also offers a listening ear. If anyone from across the circuit would like to volunteer either through baking cakes, washing up or providing a listening ear then Claire or Shona would be happy to hear from you.

A linked initiative to the Pay As You Can Cafe is the setting up of a town chaplaincy scheme where people will wander around the town and sit and chat to people and perhaps point them in the direction of the cafe. If you would like to consider this, a meeting is being held on the 12th January in the Keighley Shared Church Hall at 10.30am it would require a commitment of an hour or two once a month on either a Tuesday or Thursday, training will be given.

#### **Lees and Oxenhope Library Links**

Lees Library Link opens on the 5th December, it will host a selection of books, fiction, non-fiction, craft and children's. Anyone can join and borrow up to 5 items for a month. This has been created as a result of the Mobile Library Closure. Research suggests that reading can stave off dementia and help keep minds active, a library can also be seen as non-threatening way of engaging with the community which will help create more connections with the communities we serve. Oxenhope's library Link is an ecumenical project which will provide two sites in the village - the Parish Church hosting the children and family section and West Lane Methodists being for the more mature reader. This will open in the New Year and again replace the much used Mobile library service. We ask for your prayers.

#### **Marriage and Relationships**

On November 15th around 25 people from different churches around our circuit attended Keighley Shared Church for a conversation on marriage and relationships. Revd Christine Hawke facilitated our thinking and conversation, guiding us through historical matters, legislation and current issues. In small groups we shared our own stories and views. We had time to look at displays on the theme. To help us reflect on what we had heard there was the opportunity to do something creative such as weaving or writing. The event concluded with worship led by the Circuit Staff.

#### **Diary Dates for 2016**

**Sunday February 7** Marsh Chapel will hold its first session of 'Show, Tell and Sing' from 9.30-10.30am. This will be a new venture taking the form of showing and telling stories (much akin to Godly Play) from the Bible, the stories will be interactive and accompanied by craft activities and songs. It is hoped that this will become a regular monthly event for children aged 0-11, all welcome.

**Sunday 13th March** 6.30pm at Silsden Methodist Church. Actor Mark Topping is staging Impossible God. Tickets are £5 and can be obtained from Silsden Methodist Church or 01535 657256.

**Saturday 9th April** Circuit Quiz at Bingley Methodist Church. More information later.

**Saturday 14th May at 6.30pm** St Peter's Church, Crosshills are holding their Annual Christian Aid Quiz. Teams of up to 6 can take part and if you wish to reserve a table, please contact Diane Bloomfield 01535 633129 by the end of April, in order to organise the catering. The price is £6 and refreshments are included in this. All churches in the Circuit are welcome, as well as the churches of the C.D.F.C. but you can come whether you belong to one of the above or just want to join us for a fun evening.

Please submit any items for the January newsletter by Monday December 21st to Gerald Crompton (Editor) news@airedalemethodists.org or phone 01535 652353 or post to 55 Woodside Road, Silsden, Keighley BD20 0BN. If you would be like to receive the newsletter by email please send a request to Gerald

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