

Wesley Memorial *magazine*

from Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Oxford | Christmas 2022



*Refugees crossing from Turkey to Lesbos
The Connexion Magazine © Guliz Vural*

Making room in the inn!

There is room...for a clear reading of the Bible stories of the Nativity

The most detailed and influential account of the birth of Jesus Christ is found in the Gospel of Luke. But Luke's account, as well as being much more informative than the one we find in the Gospel of Matthew, is the version of events which does the most to strain reader credulity. Details of the census call which Joseph and Mary had to obey, not to mention the account of the birth of Jesus and his being laid in a manger, are found in the Gospel of Luke; so let's take a closer look at what the Gospel says.

What Luke actually tells us:

The angel Gabriel appears to Mary in Bethlehem and announces that she will conceive a child, and he will be named Jesus. This baby boy will be the son of God. Mary is shocked by this news because she is a virgin, but sure enough she finds herself pregnant shortly after this, following a visitation from the Holy Ghost. She rejoices. Caesar Augustus decrees that the whole of the Roman world should be enrolled. Everyone must return to the place of their birth, so Joseph, now mentioned as Mary's husband, and Mary have to return to Judea and Bethlehem, 'the city of David'. In Bethlehem, Mary gives birth to Jesus, wraps him in swaddling clothes and lays him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn. The shepherds in the nearby fields keeping watch over their flocks are visited by the angel of the Lord, who comes down to tell them that a Saviour, Christ the Lord, has been born on this day in Bethlehem. The shepherds are told that they will find the infant Christ wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Then a whole host of celebratory singing angels appears to mark the occasion. Once the angels have gone, the shepherds decide to go and see this baby for themselves; and once they have done so, they spread the word far and wide.

What Matthew actually tells us:

The first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew provide a slightly different account of the Nativity of Jesus. For one thing, it's much briefer than Luke's.

Before Mary and Joseph were together, Mary falls pregnant

after being visited by the Holy Spirit. So far, much the same as Luke's. However, then we hear Joseph's misgivings about his wife - who, it is claimed, is still a virgin - having conceived a child when he hasn't yet lain with her. So the angel of the Lord appears in a dream to set Joseph's mind at rest and attest the divinity of the child conceived.)

Matthew then chips in a quote from the prophet Isaiah: "the child will be named ... Emmanuel, God with us.") Joseph calls his son Jesus. Matthew then breezily tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and 'wise men from the east', without mention of their number, come to worship the baby. After this, Matthew turns his attention to the vengeful actions of Herod when he discovers the new king has been born in the city.

As these summaries of the two accounts of the Nativity reveal, many of the details associated with the birth of Jesus in the popular imagination come from Luke, not Matthew. Matthew makes no reference to the time of year at which the birth of Jesus takes place; Luke's account referring to shepherds tending their flocks at night is more likely to suggest spring lambing season! The date of 25th December was only decided as the traditional date for Jesus' birth many centuries later, some time in the fourth century. Nor did any of this happen in 'the year zero': the historical Jesus is widely thought to have been born in around 4 BC, as we count the years. Was there a Roman census then? Scholars cannot agree!

But enough of details which don't appear in the biblical accounts. What about those details that do appear? Matthew's account gives the impression that Joseph and Mary lived in Bethlehem before moving to Nazareth some time after Jesus was born. This straightforward explanation allows Matthew to fulfil the prophecy, which stated that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and would be a descendant of King David, but also makes sure Jesus was living in Nazareth shortly afterwards.

We'll leave aside another problematic matter, namely the prophecy stating that the Messiah would be descended from the 'stem of Jesse', (the father of David), while Matthew goes to some lengths to prove that Joseph – who wasn't Jesus' biological father – was descended from Jesse. Surely it's Mary's pedigree that's important?

Why not tax the subjects where they live, and state their hometown when they complete the census? Did everyone, even heavily expectant mothers like Mary, have to make the difficult journey? This, for Mary, would have involved a journey of some 70 miles. Even with the imaginary 'little donkey' of the popular song to carry her, that's a long way to travel when your waters might break any minute.

Yet in a way, raising such questions misses the point that, despite some absurd premise, it is the account given by Luke which has become the dominant narrative detailing the birth of Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is something to be said for the story's focus on the hardships that attended the birth of the most important person in the birth of our faith. And, of course, the humble surroundings in which he was born.

We all know these details: arriving in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph find there is no room at the inn, so Mary ends up giving birth to Jesus in a stable among the animals.

But in fact, even Luke makes no mention of these details. He simply tells us that the newborn Jesus was laid 'in a manger' having been wrapped 'in swaddling clothes'. He does tell us

there was 'no room for them in the inn' which seems pretty clear, but here there's a translation issue. The Greek word *kataluma* can be translated as 'inn' but also as 'guest room': it's more likely that the Gospel writer was thinking of the latter, rather than a commercial tavern. It could even be reasonably assumed that Mary and Joseph were staying with relatives during their return to Bethlehem. The Bible makes no mention of when Jesus was born; and the idea of Mary and Joseph being turned away from an 'inn' is probably the result of an error in translation.

However, the Luke version of the Nativity is the fullest account of Jesus' birth that we find in the Bible, and for me, and perhaps for you, as you read my letter this time around in the Wesley Memorial magazine, an inspiring story about the difficult circumstances in which the Jesus, the Messiah was brought into the world.

As we celebrate Christmas in 2022, we hope that we can be together in person more fully and completely this next year. So let us make room for the actual telling of the story offered to us by the Gospel writers, alongside the rather more magical Christmas story that the world has inherited and sadly ignores after the celebrations of the 25th December.

Every Christmas blessing!

Revd Peter Powers

The Manse, Cumnor



There is Room for us all in the story of God's boundless love, no matter where we are, how we feel, or how hopeless everything might seem.

Editorial

Advent is almost upon us, a time of penitence and preparation. In a world of turmoil, we cannot escape our concern for so many problems, at home and on the international scene, which threaten to overwhelm us with our inability to make a difference.

We pray for a good outcome to COP27; for a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine; for relief for hungry children in the UK; for help for families afraid of the size of the next gas/electricity bill; for support for mortgage-payers and tenants in rented accommodation, and much more.

You can read of our own contributions to change in this issue of the magazine, and of some joyful and some sad moments in the life of the church.

We hope you will join us in our Christmas services, have a very happy Christmas and greet the New Year with enthusiasm. Our Covenant service will be on January 15th.

Warmest Christmas greetings,

The Editorial team



In this issue...

<i>Minister's letter</i>	2–3
<i>Editorial</i>	4
<i>Making room!</i>	4–13
<i>News</i>	14
<i>Obituary</i>	15
<i>Church details</i>	16
<i>Wesley Membrain.</i>	16

Oxford Winter Night Shelter 2023



In previous years, a number of churches in central Oxford have provided shelter for rough sleepers. The shelter runs from 1st January to 31st March. During 2019 and 2020 accommodation was provided every night for up to 20 men and women in different locations in central Oxford. The model was adapted in 2021 to comply with Covid-based government regulations. The night shelter opened for the month of March only, and operated out of a single church venue, with a capacity for 8 guests. The guests at the venues are provided with a warm welcome, hot drinks and a snack on arrival, a warm bed, and breakfast the following morning.

Wesley Memorial joined the project in 2019 and 2020 and opened its doors every Sunday night to 10 guests. The congregation volunteered to set up the hall, stay overnight as shift leaders and shift workers, clear up the following morning, bake cakes and do the laundry.

This year we have been allocated Saturday nights and we are looking for volunteers to do all those jobs! All volunteers who have contact with the guests need to complete a training session and you can sign up for this on the OWNS website: <https://www.ownsoxford.org.uk/volunteer-training>

Those who have been involved with OWNS in the past have found that it is a practical way to help with the ongoing problem of homelessness in

Oxford. It gives us a greater understanding of what causes people to end up on the streets, and a way to live out the calling of the Methodist Church to care for and give service to others.

Jo Godfrey



Refugee Welcome Wesley Memorial

This article is a follow-up to two previous articles by Gillian Dodds: *Homelessness at the heart of Christmas*, and *Wesley Memorial says YES to Sponsor refugees*.

The church project *Refugee Welcome Wesley Memorial* was formally agreed at the Church Council in February 2022. As we reported, a group of us had felt inspired to explore the challenge of bringing a refugee or a family to the UK, following Gillian's Sunday service in autumn 2021 that focussed on the subject. She posed the question then, you may remember:

“Are we as a church willing to ‘welcome a stranger’?”

It had become clear that the answer was “Yes.” Another, more experienced, group then advised us to enlist the help of the charity *Sponsor Refugees* (Citizens UK) www.sponsorrefugees.org/ We therefore paid the required subscription of £1500 to share their support and knowledge, and under their guidance, we submitted our application to the Home Office in September 2022. Their help is indeed proving invaluable.

In the meantime, we were able to secure a house in Oxford. We hope access may be available before the end of November 2022. We will need furniture and we have had several early offers. (Please note that all upholstered items need a ‘fire-proof’ label.) Our new volunteer ‘manager of the interior’ will ensure furniture and equipment are in place in time for the family’s arrival. She will appreciate some help in deciding what to accept and what to buy!

The Home Office has offered a family whom we have accepted. They are currently living in Iraq. Their arrival date is possibly February 2023.

Our financial situation is encouraging: we do anticipate meeting our target of £25,000, if not immediately, then within the two years of our support for the family, who themselves will be entitled to Universal Credit and other benefits. There are also further grants to claim, including amounts for English tuition and interpreters.

The good thing about the Home Office scheme is that refugees can look for work as soon as their command of English reaches a reasonable level. We were inspired early on, listening to Abdullah Alkhalaf, a Syrian and former refugee who now works in the Oxford University Museum. In the light of his positive experience, we have real hopes for our family.

We still have a lot of ground to cover! If anyone would like to join the group, please contact Gillian or Malcolm Dodds

Refugee Welcome Wesley Memorial group



Logo designed by the Junior Church

The steps to follow – from the website of Sponsor Refugees

THE COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP JOURNEY

/ Build a group of volunteers

/ Get consent from your Local Authority

/ Complete your sponsor application

/ Fundraise £9,000

/ Find a property

/ Welcome the family

/ Support with language and employment

/ Prepare the family for independence

Making Room in the Inn – 80 years ago.

In this anniversary year of the birth of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, (1872-1958) we have heard a great deal about his talents, his muses, and his output: everything from his early career as a reluctant church organist through to his marriage in old age to Ursula, his soul mate and 40 years his junior.

However, a story that has not received so much coverage was highlighted in a recent BBC Radio 3 programme exploring the background of the 6th Symphony. There was much about war, and the doom-laden apocalyptic atmosphere of this music, composed between 1944 and 1947, with some interesting insights into what he was doing from 1938 onwards to ‘make room at the inn.’

Vaughan Williams was already rather old at 42 for enlisting when the First War broke out. He claimed to be 39, trained and was finally sent to France in 1916 to serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps. The carnage and destruction of that experience affected him deeply, and left a lasting emotional legacy.

It is therefore not hard to envisage that the gathering clouds of the next conflict would spur him into action. After Hitler’s annexation of Austria in 1938, Vaughan Williams and the novelist E. M. Forster set up the Dorking and District Refugee Committee with the express purpose of providing assistance to those people who had been compelled to flee from Nazi persecution in central Europe. Vaughan Williams became the warden of Burchett House, a hostel in Dorking for those refugees. At one time 41 Czech, Sudeten and German Jews sheltered there, awaiting placement for their futures.

Vaughan Williams not only involved himself fully in the complicated administration of dispersing the refugees, but he was hands-on with housework, and took a personal interest in the lives of the children, even to the extent of paying for education for some of them. As Chair of the committee, he didn’t miss a meeting in 11 years!



Private RVW, 1915

One refugee who arrived on the last Kindertransport five days before war was declared in 1939 told his story. Erich Reich, now Sir Erich, came with his two older brothers. They were immediately sent to the Jewish Free School in Ely, but he was too young at four years of age, and was allocated to the Dorking Committee HQ. He and five other young ones were scooped up by Vaughan Williams, and taken to Burchett House. Erich was the very last to be placed with a foster family, who were themselves refugees from the Sudetenland in 1938. He paid tribute to their kindness, having stayed with them until 1948. He even recounted an afternoon tea invitation at Vaughan Williams’ own house, The White Gates in Dorking. As a small child, he found the ‘tea and scones’ experience ‘very boring’!

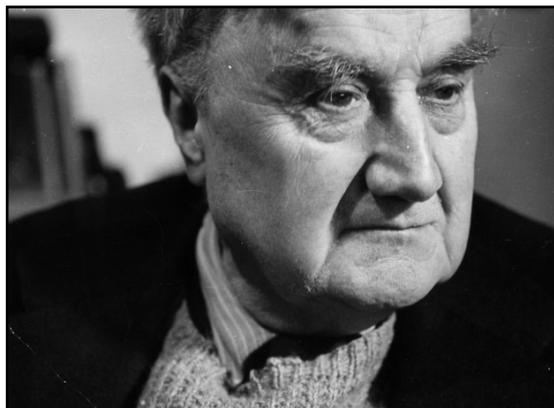
After 1940, when all ‘enemy aliens’ were locked up, on the order of the government, Vaughan Williams was very active. He regarded this mass internment as ‘complete nonsense’. A letter to The Times written by Vaughan Williams and co-signed by fellow Committee members in July 1940 politely but pointedly identified ‘certain hardships’ that would inevitably follow for internees, requesting that ‘Jewish and other refugees from Nazi oppression should not be interned with (known) Nazi sympathisers’, and that ‘Refugee husbands and wives, especially those between 50 and 70, should not be separated.’ He subsequently became chairman

of the Home Office Committee for the Release of Interned Alien Musicians. The release of 30 to 40 musicians was achieved through his activity, among whom were the violinist Peter Schidlof, the conductor Peter Gellhorn and the musicologist and critic Hans Keller.

“The composer must not shut himself up and think about art, he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole community.” RVW

We celebrate a grand old man of English music, and a generous fighting spirit whose legacy gave us so very much more than his art!

Kate Dobson



The composer in the 1940s



Vaughan Williams' house, The White Gates in the 1950s

A real Box of Delights!

Saturday 29 October's concert at Wesley Memorial really lived up to its title a 'Box of Delights'! We thoroughly enjoyed the delightful mix of musical items ranging from Vaughan Williams' *O Taste and see* to Coldplay's *Viva la Vida*, via *A World of our own* by the Seekers, and highlights from Wesley Memorial's musicals, *Amazing Love*, *Barleytime* and *Moses*.

The regular church choir was joined by the wider Wesley Memorial Singers, along with our young people's band Rockfish, which showcased the solo skills of Jasper and his guitar. A special delight was the folk group starring Livi, Mel and Jim, reminding us of the harmonies of the sixties.

After the long intermission of the Covid lockdown, it was so good to be together again, appreciating the many and varied musical skills from within our church family. From the

expressions on the performers' faces, they too were enjoying making music. It was a privilege and a delight to be there not only to enjoy the evening, but hopefully to encourage them all to carry on singing, signing and playing together.

Thank you to everyone, and especially to Kirstie Vreede who coordinated the whole evening, which certainly entertained and for an extra delight, raised £930.00 in funds for our church's *Refugee Welcome* project. (See page 5.)

www.wesleymem.org.uk/about-us/social-action/faith-in-action-4-churches-group.html

John and Freda Cammack

Room for Ukrainians?

When the Government launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme in the middle of March this year, we signed up like many others, keen to do something to help. We have a large house, usually three empty bedrooms and live in a friendly welcoming village. Why would we not?

Unlike other refugee arrangements, Ukrainians would spend their time in the UK as guests in the homes of British residents. Hosts had to commit to offer accommodation for a minimum period of 6 months. The theory underpinning this scheme seemed to be that the war would not go on for long; it would take a while before Ukrainians would be able to get here; and that, by then, local authorities would be in a position to offer constructive support. By Autumn, Ukrainians would probably be able to go home. Sorted. Sadly, none of these conditions proved to be true.

As I began to ask around in Islip, it turned out that several others were already in the process of ‘finding a match’ – a curious and somewhat disconcerting term for the *ad hoc* mechanisms that were used to identify those who wished to come to the UK. We began to meet, to share information about more formal ‘matching services’, to learn the ropes of the visa application process and to plan how to make guests welcome when they finally arrived.

There was a tremendous response in Islip, both from those who were able to host and others who were keen to help.

Our first guests arrived in May. We now have nine families or individuals hosted in Islip (12 women and 7 children).



We support another half dozen families – 7 adults and 12 children – in the villages surrounding Islip lacking a similar network.

We’ve prepared welcome packs for all guests, gathered baby equipment for young mums, set up a volunteer

transport scheme, established discount arrangements for guests in our village shop, provided English lessons and set up a weekly ‘Open House’ in Ukrainian for our guests. Over the summer many of us grew sunflowers in our front gardens – a much appreciated gesture of support.

In August we organised a ‘Big Day Out in Islip’ - a free event enjoyed by over 250 Ukrainian guests and hosts despite the searing heat. There were many happy moments, including Ukrainians recognising each other from home, not having known they were each living in this area, plus a wonderful display of traditional singing and dancing. A fortnight later ‘Sing for Ukraine’ nearly lifted the roof off the parish church with the Ukrainian National Anthem and Vivaldi’s Gloria, as was featured on BBC South Today. The profits from the event were shared between the DEC appeal and our own Islip Ukraine Community Support Group. More recently a Halloween-themed family fun afternoon saw ghoulish goings-on in the village hall complete with creepy seasonal food and pumpkin-carving.

We are now six months on from the arrival of our first guests. They have had to learn how to live in another family’s home, in a strange land, with limited English, with different ways of doing things, while separated from loved ones and desperately worried about the situation at home. Hosts have helped their guests negotiate arrangements for benefits, banking, health and education whilst sharing their private domain with complete strangers who are facing the most challenging time of their lives.

It has been emotionally draining for both sides. Somehow, to their great credit, most would also say that it has also been a hugely positive experience. Our Ukrainian neighbours have become friends and some of us are even beginning to learn a little of the language. Nevertheless, for some hosts, the time has come to end their offer of accommodation; for some guests the yearning to have their own place has become acute, even though it means

acknowledging that they are not going home any time soon.

And now, the inadequacies of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are coming to the fore: there is a continuing need to provide homes for Ukrainians – most have been given leave to stay for three years and the Ukrainian government have asked that they do not, in any case, return before next spring. Despite the large numbers who initially signed up for the scheme, there are few new hosts available, many like us having decided that we really did not feel able to follow through on our original offer. There is an acute housing shortage with many others ahead in the queue already. Most Ukrainians have limited means and no obvious access to a guarantor so are not allowed by agents to view any properties to rent. Children have begun to settle in school and make friendships. Those adults whose English is good enough may have found work, but the prospects of being financially independent are far off.

At the time of writing there have been three Prime Ministers, three Chancellors of the Exchequer and two Foreign Secretaries since the war began in Ukraine. A Minister for Refugees has been appointed and has resigned, stating – unbelievably – that ‘his work is done’. Over 140,000 Ukrainian adults and children have arrived in the UK this year, including 1915 in Oxfordshire (about 0.3% of the population). Islip’s Ukrainian residents currently make up 3% of our small village population – an outstanding response from the village which nevertheless presents a challenge looking forward.

Your prayers would be much appreciated.

Alison Butler, Chair of Islip Ukraine Community Support Group



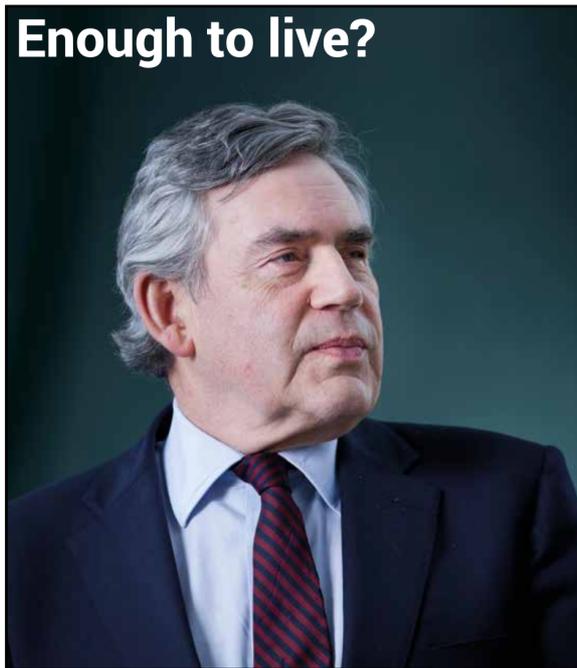
That “much appreciated gesture of support”



Irina with cupcakes (above)



Big Day out In Islip



As millions are dragged into poverty this winter, the Right Honourable Gordon Brown supports churches campaigning for justice and offering practical help to their communities.

We found that we don't just co-operate out of need: we have a human need to co-operate.

Now, this autumn, we are discovering that to be a good neighbour we have to do more than just sympathise with those in distress: we must do what we can to help people directly, not just with food banks, but with clothing banks, bedding banks, toiletries banks and fuel banks. For millions have found that, just as we cannot feel at ease living a life of spiritual meaninglessness, we can only feel comfortable within a world where rights and responsibilities are distributed according to morally acceptable standards.

Energy costs soar

At the start of October a new cap on energy prices means

“It is our duty to let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

average bills are expected to rise to an unprecedented £2,500 a year. This represents an average increase of £10 a week in fuel bills, on top of April's rise of £14 a week. Fuel costs, according to Jonathan Bradshaw and Antonia Keung at York University, will consume an unprecedented 20% of the income of 4.1 million families in October. By May, that figure could rise to 7.4 million. For 2.2 million families, energy bills will take up an unpayable 30% of their income, and this could rise to 3.8 million families by May.

Add rising food costs into these figures. According to updated figures from Donald Hirsch at Loughborough

Throughout history, all the greatest social movements have been built on the strongest of moral foundations.

And across the generations, right up to current times, the Methodist Church has always taken the lead in fighting for social justice: from John Wesley's commitment to social reform and the abolition of the slave trade to participation in *Make Poverty History* and the work of *All We Can*.

This winter we face a new and urgent challenge. Fuel poverty is now at a level unseen in modern times, with too many children going to school ill-clad and hungry, too many elderly citizens scared to turn up their heating, and too many families dreading the winter months as fuel bills surge and food bills soar.

In the Covid-19 crisis, our country discovered that we depend on each other more than we thought, and that we value what is rooted and close to home more than the distantly networked. We saw people understand the importance of community above selfish individualism.

University, despite government help, a family of four on Universal Credit will be £1,450 a year worse off. Malnutrition among children has already doubled in the West of Scotland and one church charity, which used to send 75% of its food donations overseas, is now rerouting 80% of what it receives to families in the UK.

Warm Welcome campaign

For the first time since the welfare state was created, it is now the food bank, not social security, that is our safety net, and it is charity, not Universal Credit, that is our last line of defence. To their great credit, churches and voluntary organisations are doing everything they can to help. I have nothing but praise for the hundreds of churches opening their doors to the elderly and the poor under the Warm Welcome scheme this winter. By offering families in need and pensioners a warm space when heating bills are overwhelming, churches are doing what they can with the resources at their disposal to ease pain and suffering. As well as organising food collections and hosting food banks, donors

who have a little are giving generously to those who have nothing, which is why the *Enough to Live* campaign led by the Methodists and other faith groups for a more compassionate and just government policy deserves all our support.

We know that society is richer when we care for the poor, more secure when we care for the insecure and much stronger when we care for the weak. As winter approaches, the country's desire to come together in support of each other, seen so vividly in the commemoration of the death of Queen Elizabeth, is unmistakable. And it is by recognising the importance of the words of the Sermon on the Mount – and acting on them – that we give people not just shelter and sustenance but hope. The words of Micah 6:8: “love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with your God” have inspired the recent Methodist campaigns against poverty. And as his contemporary Amos, urged us (5:24) it is our duty to “let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Gordon Brown

The Right Honourable Gordon Brown was Prime Minister in 2007-2010, and the Labour MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath until 2015.

Article reprinted from the Methodist Connexion Magazine Issue 28, Autumn 2022 with permission.

Our Warm Welcome Hub – Mel McCulloch reports

We launched our Warm Welcome provision at the beginning of November and within a week it was obvious that offering teas and coffees in the church sanctuary was a good way of helping us engage with the visitors to the church, whether they were just having a look around, in need of help or looking for someone to talk to.

Owing to the economic climate and the huge rise in the cost of living, many churches and other public spaces, such as libraries, are listing their venues as warm spaces. Here people can visit to work, rest, have a cup of tea, or take part in an organised activity there. This fits in with the Open Church provision we've offered consistently for the last 30 years.

In order to make the Sanctuary a more homely place to spend time, whilst sheltering from the cold, visitors are offered self-service tea and coffee, Tuesday to Friday 10.00 – 4.00 pm. Some seating to the side of the Church has been arranged into bays, to create a more cosy feel. Although what we can offer is limited, we have gathered information to help us signpost people to places and organisations that can help further. We also have some emergency provisions, as well as lovely items, created by our knitting group, to give to people. Often what people want most is someone to talk to.

If you would be interested in helping us in the Warm Welcome Hub, do get in touch with us!

3Generate 2022: a great weekend!

3Generate is the annual Methodist Children and Youth Assembly. This year's venue was the NEC in Birmingham.



The light show was amazing!



4s to 7s went on the 'ten-ton Bus of Fun'



Older ones had a choice of activities: gym, tech room, Lego, arts and crafts and.. the silent disco!



And net-making was very satisfying.

There is room....for a wedding blessing at Wesley Memorial

Many weddings have taken place in the church over the years. We have also blessed marriages for those not married in church, when they have requested it. On November 16th Freda Cammack and I were delighted to attend a wedding and act as witnesses at the Oxford Registry Office, for the marriage of Claire, Zheng Fang and Noel, Gyungin Shin.

After the civil ceremony, we joined the couple and many of their guests on the short walk to Wesley Memorial where we blessed the marriage that had just been legally solemnised at the Registry Office. We entered details of the couple and their blessing in a new Record of Marriages and Blessings book. This will live in the church safe, as a permanent record of the service.

It was a joyous occasion, as the couple were surrounded by their student friends and neighbours from here in Oxford,

and by media links joined with their families at home in China and South Korea.

Our church is a place of God's welcome, a home where Noel and Claire could seek God's blessing, and in so doing, deepen the spiritual significance of their union, and joy of the occasion.

Peter Powers & Freda Cammack



Photos by Little Forest Studio & Mary Lines

Notes from the Church Council

Key matters to note from the November meeting are:

We now have a small surplus in our finances, and the Treasurer thanked everyone who had responded so positively to the Stewardship Campaign.

We continue to look for people interested in joining the Stewards' team.

Junior Church is also looking for people interested in joining that team. See Mel McCulloch if you would like to offer help.

Purchase of the Cumnor manse is nearing completion. At present we are still renting the property, but hoping a legal matter will be settled soon. Our thanks go to Chris Butler and Circuit Stewards' team. (NB Purchase was successfully completed by mid-November.)

The 2022-223 Wesley Memorial Safeguarding Policy was approved.

We supported the proposal to offer the Sanctuary as a Warm Space this winter, from 10.00 to 4.00pm daily. Thanks to Mel

McCulloch and team.

It was agreed that a sub-group from Finance and Property, with Eco Church representation, should be convened to look at the overall energy effectiveness of the building and explore options to lower our carbon footprint.

Following the *Our Calling* series of services led by local preachers from Wesley Memorial, we agreed to proceed with the plan to run the course *Everyone an Evangelist*. More information will follow. Sincere thanks to our five preachers for five stimulating services.

The 'Mission Group' assessed its ongoing role and will continue to meet and looking for new participants. Anyone willing to join should contact Lawrie Coupland.

We approved David Harper (Woodstock Church) as the new treasurer of Rainbow House.

We noted plans in place for improving AV system.

The 2023 Annual Church Meeting has been scheduled for Sunday 7th May.

Janet Forsaith, Church Council Secretary

Dorothy Elizabeth Jones 1929–2022



Ralph tells us:

Dorothy's father was gassed and was a prisoner-of-war in WW1. He spent several years in Hospital Rehab learning knitting skills which he later passed on to his daughter.

Dorothy was born in July 1929 and lived in Salisbury where her father was manager of a bespoke tailor's. Being strong Methodists, the family sang in the Church choir and local United Choirs. She went to the Girls' Grammar School, where her year-group were especially gifted in music: many of them became well-known professional musicians. Dorothy also sang in the Cathedral Choir under David Wilcocks, and spent hours just listening to the organ.

She went to Southlands College in London for teacher training and to continue her musical studies in singing and cello. Whilst there Dorothy met famous singers, including Joan Sutherland and Kathleen Ferrier, at Sunday afternoon soirées. At the end of her course, she was offered a teaching post and opportunity for further musical study in London. However, she gave it all up to nurse her mother who was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and returned to Salisbury. A bombshell indeed!

"To every cloud, a silver lining". Returning to Salisbury led to her meeting Ralph, a research meteorologist at Porton Down, who had joined the Church choir in Salisbury. This friendship blossomed into true love, and gave new purpose to her life. Dorothy and Ralph were married on 5th July 1958.

Their first home was in Hounslow, when Ralph worked at Heathrow Airport, and later taught at Ealing Boys Grammar School. Their daughter, Margaret, was born in 1961. In 1963 they moved to Oxford for Ralph to lecture in mathematics at Westminster College. Dorothy elected to devote her energy to family and the Church. They both became active members at Wesley Memorial, including singing in the choir. Dorothy was happiest when in partnership with Ralph, whether on Church duties, pastoral visits or attending College functions.

Dorothy taught at Botley Primary and Matthew Arnold Schools. She was an excellent teacher with firm control and a good rapport with students having special needs. Her kindness, compassion and concern for others drew staff and pupils to her for advice.

For relaxation Dorothy was an avid reader and watched TV selectively. She enjoyed comedy and drama, fact and fiction, past and present, particularly archaeological series. This gave her an extensive general knowledge, useful in party word-games and solving a daily crossword.

Dorothy and I had a successful marriage for over 64 years, enjoying wonderful contented lives together. In addition, it gave her pleasure that Queen Elizabeth acknowledged our Diamond Wedding Anniversary. "God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform"

Ralph Jones

At Christmas

The night gathered up the songs' sound
And scattered it over the housetops
And the snow-sprinkled courtyards.

The night gathered up our songs
About the rose and the winter's darkness
And became quiet and blessed.

She gathered us up, and took us
On the ancient, faraway road
To meet the wonder of the festival.

In the darkness doors were open,
There was love and warmth,
And the light of another world.

There were no choirs there, no panegyrics,
Only in the open distances around
Bees were gently humming.

Someone said 'It's like a folksong!'
And why not, indeed?
Bees love all that is pure and innocent.

*Rita Gale, translated from the Latvian by
Joanna Tulloch*

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WESLEY MEMBRAIN



Jim