

Dovercourt Central Church



Contact

December 2023 — January 2024

Methodist & United Reformed Churches Together

203 Main Road, Dovercourt, Essex, CO12 3PH

www.dovercourtcentralchurch.org.uk

Suggested contribution £1



Church Magazine Minister's Letter December 2023

Christmas is just round the corner, it seems to have come round quickly again this year, or maybe I am just getting older!! So many activities will be happening this December, Messy Church, Carol services, Toy service, our special Christmas services, and our community lunch too. A time of celebration as we remember the coming of our King. Jesus, Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus fulfilling God's promise to come, His life on earth spent revealing God the Father, and eventually through His work on the cross, His death and raising to New Life, the fulfilment of reconciling humankind back to God. The gift of forgiveness and new life. Such a joyous celebration of all that God has done.

But for me this Christmas is more poignant. I look around the world and see suffering. I saw a programme on the television recently about young people and drug taking, in the UK, which was heartbreaking. Teenagers abusing alcohol following in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents. I have read stories of the police removing and destroying the tents and personal belongings of the homeless in London. Everything they had. The situation in Ukraine and Russia. The situation in Israel and occupied Palestine. The bombing, the soldiers, the fighting, the death, the suffering, the hardship, and poverty. People not having food, water, shelter, warmth, or medical care. The stories of premature babies being moved out of incubators as a hospital is occupied by soldiers, mothers giving birth without pain relief, children only days old, already orphans.

It reminds me that this is the world that Jesus came to. These are the people that Jesus came to serve and save, to bring life and hope to. Israel, when Jesus was born, was an occupied territory, occupied by the Romans. No dissention was tolerated. There was poverty and hardship everywhere. People in need, the sick, homeless, and poor, were shunned. Mary having to travel to Bethlehem for the census, on the back of a donkey, heavily pregnant, reminds me of the migration of those in Palestine. Mary, having nowhere to stay when she arrives, reminds me of the homeless, Mary giving birth in a stable with the animals without any medical care, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus having to flee the wrath of Herod who ordered the killing of babies to eliminate any potential threat to his position of power and authority. There are many connections with today's world.

Peace on earth, goodwill to all men (and women, and children) seems a long way off at this time. And I weep at what human beings can do to each other. I have discovered a poem recently, that has spoken to me at this time by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, entitled 'Christmas Bells' written in the context of the American Civil War, over 150 years ago. It talks of cannons drowning out the song of peace on earth, good will to men. It talks of there being no peace on earth, no goodwill to men because hate is strong which mocks the song of peace on earth, goodwill to men. Beautiful poetry. Poignant, real, timeless. The poem was written more than 150 years ago and still speaks today. The full poem is reprinted in this edition of the magazine.

But that is not the final word. The angel announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds proclaimed 'I have come to bring you good news of tremendous joy for everyone.' Not just for one or two, not just for the righteous, but for everyone. And then a great number of angels appeared praising God saying, 'Glory to the Most High God in heaven and His peace to men on earth on whom His favour rests.' The song is sung by the angels, peace on earth, goodwill to men and, once the shepherds had seen for themselves, they join in the song praising God for all they have seen and heard and go and tell everyone what they had seen and heard so others too can join in the song.

And that is the hope we have. We know how it ends. Although at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ, we already know the life He lived, the suffering He bore, the death He submitted to, and the victory that was won. We know that death has lost its sting, wars will cease, peace will reign, every knee shall bow, suffering will end and God Himself will wipe away every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death, no more grief nor crying nor pain, for the old order has passed away. Revelation 21:4

Or as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow puts it so much more eloquently than I.

**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."**

So let us, this advent, this Christmas, let us join in the song and sing with all the heavenly host 'peace on earth, goodwill to men,' let us proclaim 'Emmanuel, God with us', and just as Jesus came to reveal the Father, may we reveal God, His love, life, peace, joy and hope, so the word would spread and everyone would join the song 'peace on earth, goodwill to men.' Amen

With every blessing

Trevor

Christmas Bells

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1807 – 1882



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 thought 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!
Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
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.



This poem is in the public domain.

Christmas Gifts

Christmas gifts
I give to you
Make you happy
And myself too

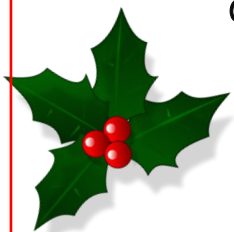
Christmas tree
With all the lights
Children love Christmas
And all its sights

Christmas joy
To be had
Wrapped up toys
By mum and dad

Christmas jumpers
To keep you warm
It's Christmas time
with all its corn

Christmas cake
Plenty of cream
At day break
Oh what a dream

Christmas log
Its ever so nice
Covered with ice
Ill have a slice



Christmas angel
Upon the tree
It's a happy time
For you and me

Christmas candles
Alight on the table
Remember the little
Baby in the cradle

Garry Sysling



Science in the Bible

Job 38:7

**When the morning stars sang together
And all the sons of God shouted for joy
Science has discovered that stars
Emit radio waves which are received on
Earth as high pitch**

Dear Friends,

First of all, I want to thank Noelene for all she has done for us in preparing the Contact magazine. It has been a big commitment, and we are so grateful. Thank you, Noelene. With all good wishes to you and your family.

Now, I wish to thank Edna and Nick for taking this on....it is an important part of church life. Thank you so much, both of you.

Here we are in December, already, and the days are flying past. Advertisements on TV and elsewhere are concentrating on Christmas food and presents, the Choral Society is rehearsing for our Carol Concert and carols are ringing in my ears night and day. Our Advent coffee mornings have begun, and we shall be lighting the Advent candle in church every week.

I regret to say that it all seems a bit unreal...each year, I find it harder and harder to get into Christmas mode. No cards have been bought, let alone written. Present-buying has not begun. Bah! Humbug! (to quote Scrooge!)

Perhaps, when we have our Christmas-themed Messy Church, a spark will be lit. Being with children having fun, is a great energiser, especially when it is really messy...such a joy.

WHEN CHILDREN'S EYES ARE SMILING

When children's eyes are smiling
'Tis God's love that's shining through
With glints of joy and laughter
What good medicine for you!

When children's eyes are smiling
Sure it's Jesus shining through.
Let's all stand up together
And praise His name anew!

When children's eyes are smiling,
When they know the Bible too.
It's a glimpse of His great glory
Heart medicine just for you.

From A Heart for Children by Margaret Fishback Powers. Pub: Marshall Pickering 1995

Wherever you all are, whatever you will be doing, whether alone or with company, whether in good health or not so good health, may you know God's peace and joy in your hearts this Christmas.

My prayer for you was written by our own Bill Brittain in 2007. (It may appear elsewhere in the Newsletter.) And, by the way, I don't have to buy Christmas Cards this year...the ones I bought last year are still about somewhere....unwritten! Let the search begin!

With love and very many thanks for all your friendship and support,

Anne

A NEW YEAR

Today we start a brand New Year
To wish you joy, good health and cheer.

I ask the Lord to be with you
And guide you in all that you do.

I pray your future will be bright
Watched over by His heavenly light.
And as you take your daily bread
Through the year you will be led.

He'll keep you safe and well each day.
He'll listen every time you pray.
Through good and bad, He's always there,
His gracious love with you He'll share.

There may be times when things look grey.
Be sure His love won't go away.
So as you go through this New Year
Think of the Lord and do not fear.

Have happy times with those you love
Always remember God above.
He'll be there in your time of need
And on His spirits you will feed.

By William Leslie Brittain 2007

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

(A WOMEN LED, GLOBAL, ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT)



PRESS RELEASE

'I beg you, bear with one another in love'

The Christian Women of Palestine are calling us to connect with the land from where Jesus came; where he was born, ministered and died – and from where our faith began and is rooted. Despite living in an area of the world where there is ongoing conflict and the future is uncertain, the women of Palestine are sharing with love a reminder that they are there, and they want to give hope to everyone. The theme of the service 2024 'bear with one another in love' seems very appropriate for these women who will not give up witnessing the love of Jesus Christ.

World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organization, led by women, which enables us to hear the thoughts of those women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns, and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans. Finally, at a church near you on Friday 1 March 2024, people will gather to celebrate the service prepared by the women of Palestine.

The Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 146 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world - through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, see the WDP website: wwdp.org.uk

CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORK IN DOVERCOURT & HARWICH

It has been quite a year for the CRCW in Dovercourt and Harwich. We had the 4-year review in the summer, which went well, meaning another 5 year period of work was approved. I love working here in this community, with so many possibilities, partners to work alongside and a genuine sense of community. Whilst Dovercourt Central Church remains the base from which I continue to work in the community, much of my focus has been outside the building itself, mainly through The Lounge, the Wellbeing Space created and hosted post Covid with other local churches.



THE LOUNGE

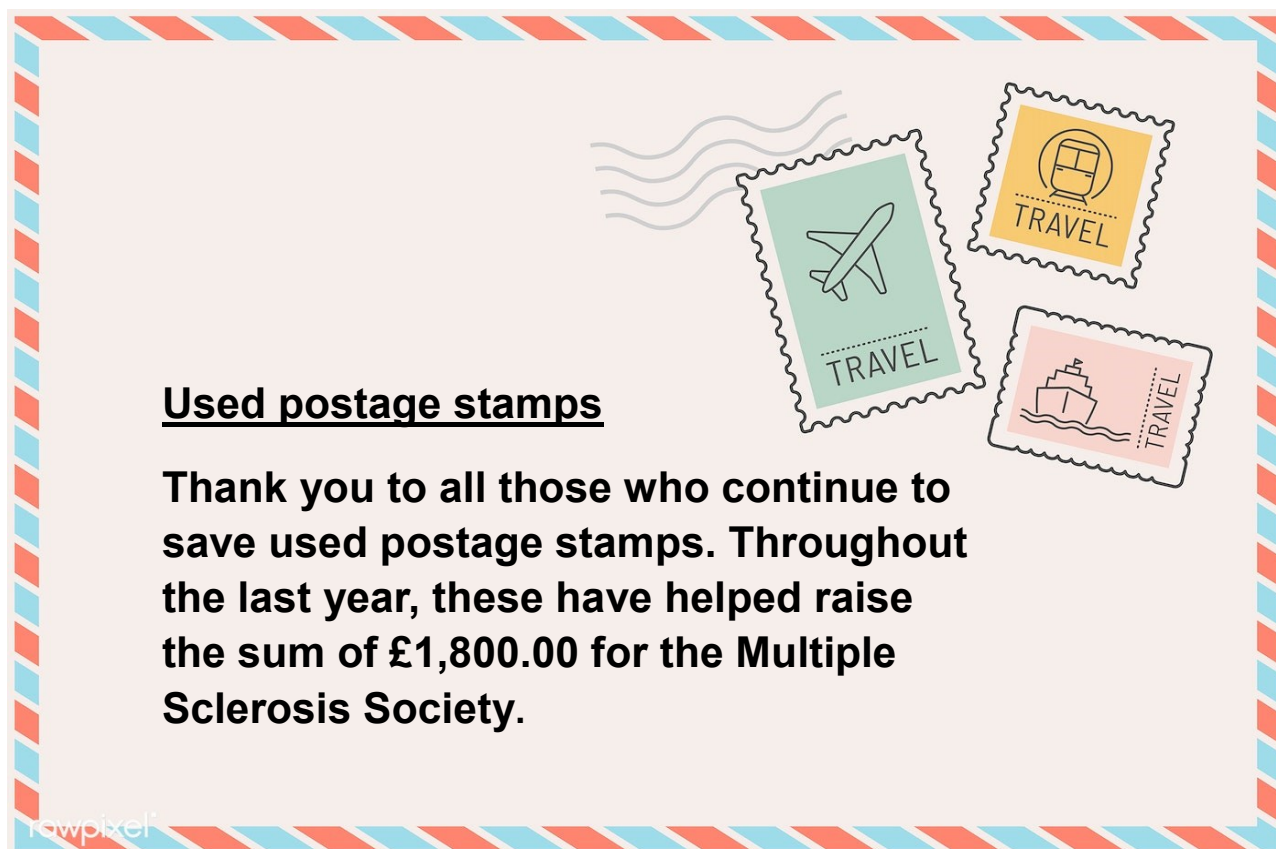
The possibilities are still expanding and although there are now activities happening from Monday to Friday, there are free spaces, and weekends remain open for other activities. Beside the Renew sessions on Thursday and Tuesday evenings, we also have parent toddler group, Baby Beyond, Amaze family craft and fun sessions, a young person's club, called The Project, Parkinson's Support, Futures in Mind, Knit and Natter, Slow Cooker Club and ACL learning sessions. More are still in the pipeline too. The Lounge as a whole, therefore, is clearly doing something right as it grows, so we need to pray into it all and ensure we are listening to what God is saying about what is happening there.

With the onset of the Christmas season, I have been busy helping with the Christmas Present Appeal that looks to get gifts to those families that are struggling locally to afford presents on top of the cost of living rises. We have reached over 100 families this year and it's not quite finished yet. This year we have included food to most of these as things are so difficult for many.

Each week, alongside the Salvation Army and volunteers from the community we also distribute food parcels to local people, as well as advice and support through Heart, a drop-in service based at the citadel in George Street. We have seen dozens of people each week access this space, many looking for help with various issues or concerns. Working alongside lots of local agencies has been a real blessing and enables me to make lots of useful connections and partnerships.

Though this is all outside the building, the connections mean that folk are also accessing other services we offer from the building, particularly in the case of Messy Church, which attracted around 50 people last time out, many through The Lounge or Heart or other spaces where I meet them. This explosion in Messy Church interest is wonderful but does mean we need to think about how we do this and means we need to invest more time and money into it. To help this we were given a grant for the URC Synod Mission Fund of £1500.

All of this means we can look forward to another year of exciting things, working with partners to bring the love of God to Harwich and Dovercourt in ways that can make a real difference in people's lives. So, pray for God's blessing upon what we are doing and that we continue to hear what he has in store next!



FaceBook: www.facebook.com/dovercourtcentralchurch

Website: www.dovercourtcentralchurch.org.uk

Church Notices

Advent Coffee Mornings	Friday at 10am 15th and 22nd December
Soup and a Roll	Lunch time 22nd December
Carol Service and Christmas Dinner	Sunday 17th December

Invitation

Been thinking about learning to Ballroom Dance
Or just love to watch Strictly Come Dancing
No matter your age its never too early or late
And, as part of the experience, Tea & Coffee plus cake
Will be served.



Why not come and join us here
1st of February 2024 and then every first Thursday of each month

For more information please contact

Colin Knight

07483 848766

Sunday Worship Schedule

Sunday 10th December	10:45am (including Communion)	Reverend Trevor Hahn
Sunday 17th December	10:45am Carol Service	Birgit Ewald
Sunday 24th December	10:45am (including Communion) 11:30pm Midnight Communion Service	Margaret Smith Reverend Trevor Hahn
Sunday 31st December	10:45am	Angela Shereni
Monday 25th December	10:45 Morning Worship	Sue Potter and Ann Cortty
Sunday 7th January	10:45am	Reverend Lythan Nevard (Moderator Eastern Synod)
Sunday 14th January	10:45am (including Communion)	Reverend Trevor Hahn
Sunday 21st January	10:45am	Miss Gill Bavister
Sunday January 28th	9am Communion 10:45am	Reverend Tom Osborne MRS Ann Beeton

United Reformed Minister	Revd. Trevor Hahn	01225 483288
Methodist Circuit Minister	Revd. Tom Osborne	01206 396654
Church Related Community Worker	Mr Mark Tubby	0744 6817625
Church Secretary	MRS Anne Crotty	0774 3179412 Anne_and_terry@yahoo.co.uk
Hiring Officer/Church Contact	Mss Helen Smith	07778 166206
Contact Magazine Editor	Mr Nick Andre-Fatah	07882 242741 Ed_jaf28@yahoo.co.uk