Beeston **Methodist** Church ewsletter



December 2024/January 2025

Full steam ahead for redevelopment!

This month's newsletter includes the fabulous news that our church redevelopment will soon be underway, with building work to start early in 2025, and the hope that it will be completed by next Christmas. See more details in the update on page 16.

Hush the Noise is this year's Methodist Church Christmas campaign, urging us to take time away from the noise of Christmas and listen to the love song brought by the angels at Christmas. See page 5 to find our where you can watch the video, sign up for email reflections, and listen to carols.

Merry Christmas to you all.

Mark Ramsey – Editor

Beeston Methodist Church Newsletter – Dec 2024/Jan 2025

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Any articles for inclusion in the next issue should be emailed by 16th January to newsletter@beestonmethodist.church. Articles may be edited for space.

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Cover image from Methodist Church web site.

Minister's message

SIR – I was assisting my 16-year-old daughter with her homework when she received a text from Mum, which read: What do you want from life? This was an unexpected and profound question for an exam-sitting teenager. We debated various answers – wealth, fulfilment, love, all three. Five minutes later, she received a second message, blaming predictive text for correcting the word Lidl.

David Lavelle

Coneythorpe, North Yorkshire

The letter above was printed in The Daily Telegraph in May 2015. Reference was made to it on a recent radio broadcast that I heard whilst driving to a meeting. I was very amused at the confusion that had been caused but it did make me think about the questions that many of us may be asked over the next few weeks or maybe we have already.

What do you want for Christmas? This short sentence fills me with fear and dread as I know that I only need to suggest I need something, I will be warned not to purchase it. It makes things worse as I have my birthday not long after Christmas so I'm basically banned from buying anything for several months.

The question that the mother inadvertently asks leads to some interesting speculation. The three areas that the daughter debates revolve around wealth, fulfilment and love. I wonder how we would respond to the question of what do we want from life? Would we look at wanting the same kind of things as the teenage daughter?

Several months ago, my daughter wrote on the shopping list some things that she wanted. They included world peace and hugs. I know supermarkets are well stocked but I think I would be struggling to get them from the shops. I know my daughter would be very unimpressed it I returned with a pack of green veg and some nappies!

When we think about the things that we might ask for at Christmas, we also need to consider where they are going to come from.

At an assembly recently, I was invited to share the meaning of the Advent candles. One meaning is that they symbolise love, joy, peace and hope. I wonder if there are any better things to look forward to getting this Christmas?

So may the love of God which encircles the earth and throughout time, the hope in the coming of God's Son, Jesus, the peace of Christ which is beyond our understanding and the joy of knowing we have a God who loves us and family and friends to share this Christmastime, be with us and everyone who needs God's love and peace today and everyday.

God bless, Andrew

Update from the Leadership Team

Doreen Corlett was welcomed to her first meeting as the **new safeguarding representative** alongside Connie.

The leadership team was delighted to hear that a small group had been formed to look into the possibility of **employing a lay worker**.

Ten further copies of large print Singing the Faith have been ordered

An ecumenical meeting has been formed for those interested in organising a **walk of witness Easter 2025**. This is open to anyone from the church to attend.

The church will once more be open for **Beeston Light Night** on Saturday 25 January 2025. There will be musical entertainment taking place.

There have been ongoing problems with the church website and email. It was felt that as the present contract with the provider ends on the 7 December now was the time to look at moving to another, paid for, provider. The property group have been asked to look further into this.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 8 January. If anyone has any item of business they want discussed please speak to one of the leadership team.

Susan Holmes, on behalf of the Leadership Team

Hush the Noise: Join the love song this Christmas



Christmas is loud, isn't it? So much **expectation**. So many **voices**.

Telling us how to **celebrate**, what to **wear**, what to **eat** and **drink**, what to **watch** and what to **buy**.

Throughout Advent and Christmas 2024 the Methodist Church is calling us all to *Hush the Noise*, a phrase taken from the carol *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*. To listen for the love song that the angels bring, this and every year. They sang it for the first time more than 2,000 years ago, and are waiting for us to join in.

Watch our 2024 Christmas film

Our short film titled *Hey, I've been trying to reach you* follows the story of someone struggling with the busyness of life and all the noise that it brings at this time of year.

Watch at www.methodist.org.uk/about/news/youre-invited-to-hush-the-noise-this-christmas

Listen to our 2024 Christmas singles

Alongside the film, two new contemporary arrangements of the carols *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* and *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* are being released as singles across streaming platforms after the success of our first Christmas single, *O Little Town of Bethlehem* released in 2023.

Listen at <u>www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmasresources/2024-christmas-singles</u>

Weekly Advent discipleship gift emails

Weekly Advent discipleship gifts, to keep you spiritually fed throughout this busy time of year. Sign up at www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/christmas resources/#AdventEmails

Daily Christmas reflections

Get a moment of peace delivered to your inbox, helping you Hush the Noise and enjoy the present. 13 daily emails, beginning on Christmas Eve.

Sign up at www.methodist.org.uk/faith/hush-the-noise

Update from the Worship Team

This Advent we are using a liturgy from the Methodist Church called *Hush the Noise*. It recognises that Advent is a 'noisy' time for all sorts of reasons. So, as we come to worship each Sunday, we are encouraged to set aside distracting noises so that we can all listen for the voice of God.

As we approach Christmas there are a number of special services to come to:

Sun 1 December 6.30pm	Advent Carol Service
Sat 21 December 4pm	Christingle Service led by our minister, Andrew
Sun 22 December 10.30am	Nativity Service led by Junior Church and Peter Gray
Sun 22 December 6.30pm	Joint Carol Service at Beeston Parish Church
Tue 24 December 11.15pm	Christmas Eve Holy Communion led by Andrew
Wed 25 December 10am	Christmas Day All Age Worship led by Andrew
Sun 29 December 10.30am	Morning Worship led by Tracy Shaw

In the New Year (12th January) we will be joined by Rowena Worthington from *Embrace the Middle East* for a morning service to share some news about the charity's work.

Our next team meeting is on Wednesday 11th December at 7.00pm (please note the earlier start time); as ever, anyone with an interest in Worship related matters is welcome to join us.

Martin Weir, Chair of the Worship Team

Christmas Jokes

Why do reindeer wear bells? Because their horns don't work!



Advent 1: 1 December 2024 Hush the Noise

Advent dawns with lights strung high and music everywhere,

Sights and smells abound around,

Senses assaulted and confused,

O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.

Amid the lists and cards and gifts,
Amid the pleas and "please can we",
Amid the chaos of the world,
O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.

Let's seek to see and seek to hear.
Let's seek to feel and seek to know.
Let's seek to find peace and love.
O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.



Advent 2: 8 December 2024 *To Prophets Shown*

Preparations underway, shifting focus each new day, Amidst the darkness looking for the light, For the truth among the mess.

O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.

Looking for the messengers who bring the light, Isaiah – prophet and ancient poet And John who came to point the way.

O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.

Angels, messengers of today,
Truth tellers for this present age,
Those who now show us the way.
O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.





All Advent and Christmas liturgies from <u>www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/</u> <u>christmasresources/advent-candle-liturgies</u>

"The light shines in the darkness"

EMBRACE the Middle East

One of the charities we are supporting this year through our financial contributions is Embrace the Middle East. A key aspect to their work is partnership with local organisations as they work to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised communities. As the Arab saying goes, "there is bread and salt between us." It means they sit at the table as equals.

We aim to share some information with you over the next few months about some of Embrace's partners across the Middle East. Do take a look at their website at www.embraceme.org where you will find much, much more.

Anar: Palestine

Anar is one of the partners our contributions will be channelled towards. It is a non-profit organization situated in Bethlehem. Their work is centred on advancing the psychological well-being and resilience of children and young people who have been impacted by violence and oppression. The name Anar means 'to light up' and also means pomegranate. Anar is committed to stand as a beacon of hope and healing for children and communities. Their programmes are specifically designed to address the needs of those who have suffered traumatic events and experiences and to help them rebuild their lives. They aim to create a safe space for children, carers, and community members to receive support and access resources to heal and recover. Anar tells us:

"Witnessing widespread displacement and the killing of children in Gaza has had a significant mental health and psychosocial impact on the youth in Bethlehem. This has led them to seek outlets for psychosocial release and debriefing."

Merath: Lebanon

Merath is an organization working in partnership with Embrace in Lebanon where thousands of families have been displaced as the Israel-Hezbollah war escalates. Since last October, they have been helping families who have been displaced from their villages in the South. Workers report:

"After an entire year, and before the recent escalation of violence, over 110,000 people from South Lebanon were still living as internally displaced and in very tough circumstances. The situation has become unbearable for the people and their needs



are unprecedented. They Merath: Claudette and some young helpers distributing food lost their jobs, their

lands, their homes and shops, their transportation means. They have no money and no source of income. Some villages are almost entirely destroyed.

"Some people had stayed behind, mostly men who wanted to watch their houses and property or to keep working as much as possible, and elderly people who had been living there for 50-60 years and who say they prefer to die in their homes than to move.

"But now, the escalation of violence is forcing a new wave of civilians to flee. They are seeking refuge with their relatives, most of whom are also displaced and are struggling to make ends meet and to feed their own families. People are physically and mentally exhausted and they desperately need material, emotional, and psychological support.

"There is a woman we help. She has a disability and cannot walk, so we go to visit her or sometimes we take her out. She told us: 'The care and the love and the joy you share with us is amazing. I see Jesus in you. In all my life I have never met people who love and serve others like this, with all their heart. It makes such a big difference in our lives'."

Please pray that the work of Embrace and its partners across the Middle East may continue to bring support and healing where it is so desperately needed.

Paula Dawson

BMC Mission Possible

Firstly, congratulations and thank you to everyone who has helped support the **BMC Mission Possible** fund raising events so far – we raised over £220 000. It is wonderful news that the BMC Redevelopment work has now been given the green light, and as we move forward, BMC Mission Possible will resume with the imaginative new name of BMC Mission Possible 2. Please remember it is important that we continue to show our commitment to the redevelopment project in this way.

The first clearly visible sign of change on the ground will be in early January when much of the organ will be taken away for refurbishment and put into storage. Only a few weeks later we will worship together in the church for the last time and thereafter our services of worship will be held in the hall for about twelve months.

Money has continued to be raised for the redevelopment during September, October and November this year. Our share of the sponsorship for the Ride and Stride amounted to £165, our share of the money from the church family concert in October came to just over £500 and the Harlequin Concert has raised £935 including gift aid and generous donations. Thus around £1600 has already been raised even before we launch BMC Mission Possible 2.

Glenda will be running her *Unwanted Christmas Presents Stall* again in the coffee mornings at the end of January and February; please feel free to leave anything you wish to donate towards it in the Church Office.

BMC Mission Possible 2 Fundraising will begin in earnest after Christmas. If anyone would like to join the team, suggest fundraising ideas or run some fundraising events, please get in touch with *Andy or Glenda Taylor* (0115 9135571).

Advent 3: 15 December 2024 Babel Sounds

Presents get wrapped with tape and glue, Tidy parcels neatly wrapped, Names on labels with "love from", O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**

We've sorted gifts and who needs what, What will they like, what will be good? But are there more we need to include? O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**

What of those alone, adrift, forgotten and neglected? What of those whose life's been hard? What gift of help needs wrapping too? O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**





Advent 4: 22 December 2024 *The Love Song*

Preparations almost complete, the time is nearly here. Promises and praises echo all around, Silencing the noises of injustice.

O hush the noise, Let's hear the angels sing.

The promise of God for the servant lowly, God who comes to the help of all, Whose ancient promise still stands today. O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**

And we watch and we seek,
And we learn, we pray and we praise,
And we wait and we wait.
O hush the noise, **Let's hear the angels sing.**





Nevertheless, Pursue Peace

Last year, ten days after the Hamas invasion, in the early days of Israel's response, while we were still waiting to see how bad it would get, I wrote a poem, never thinking it would still be relevant a year later.

In the poem I suggested that more important than taking sides is to place a vision and a practice of peace before us. That in thinking of what we do or say next, we ask, "Does this serve the cause of peace?" And not some remote, abstract peace that someone says we will reach at the end of more bloodshed, but peace in the today and in the tomorrow.

The poem went viral fast, with tens of thousands of re-posts. It was quickly and unsurprisingly taken up by *Buddhists* and *Quakers*. It was then taken up by people engaged in the field of conflict – civilian peacekeepers in the West Bank, and *the Parents' Circle*, representing families of Israelis and Palestinians killed in past violence. I have been told it made some inroads in the Palestinian diaspora. I hope it did. And it travelled around many Jewish circles, but not all. Some American Jews took offence; they saw it as an irresponsible call to do nothing, to sit silent in the wake of the horrors of October 7. I took that critique to heart, because I am very suggestible to criticism, and I worried that maybe I was condoning apathy, or that I was being a disloyal Jew by suggesting that peace was more important than victory.

I no longer worry about that.

It is easy to become discouraged when speaking the language of peace, because you are so frequently dismissed as naïve or worse. The ways of war are more dramatic, more cinematic, more appealingly cynical than the ways of peace. But our tradition tells us to seek peace, and to do so steadfastly. Psalm 34, for instance, famously says, "seek peace and pursue it."

Our sages of old wondered why it wasn't enough for the psalm to simply say "seek peace." Why add, "and pursue it?" They must mean different things. So they suggested that "seek peace" means in your place. And "pursue peace" means elsewhere. So what? Seek peace here and pursue it in the Middle East? In

Ukraine? Elsewhere? Or maybe the close and far is a metaphor. We must promote peace not only when it's in our comfort zone to do so, but also when it's a stretch. Or maybe "seek peace" means first articulating the demand for peace, and "pursue it" is what you do after you've been told you're naïve but nevertheless you persist.

"Peace" is not about pretty words and wishes. It is about taking a moral position – a moral position rooted in thousands of years of Jewish values. It means asking ourselves, at every step, "Are my actions and words today serving the cause of the greatest possible peace?"

Pursuing peace might also involve risk and loss: "Am I willing to act for peace even if it means less power or privilege or territory for me?"

Placing peace at the centre means that peace must not only be the ultimate goal but must be baked into the methods. I do not accept that peace for Israel must require the sacrifice of tens of thousands more Palestinian lives. And if your particular anti-Zionist ideology involves not the dismantling of an oppressive system but the destruction of actual Jews — I want no part of that either. The path to peace must be a peaceful path.

Insistence on peace is the moral imperative of our moment. Peace as a goal and peace as a means. Instead of co-existence leading to peace, we must make peace now and let co-existence spring from it.

There isn't a lot we can do from here, from this distance, to affect the war there. But we can stand for peace. Pour peace into all the discussions and debates. Insist on peace. To force the question: what is the least violent, the non-violent, way to the next step?

We can support the peacemakers out there, the people working across the divide: the Parents' Circle, Salt of the Earth, Standing Together. And as an Israeli friend who was caught in the Hamas attack on October 7 and survived said to me this week, we should resist being divided by a vertical chop into an Israeli side and a Palestinian side, and instead draw the line horizontally across the middle into those who want peace and those who don't. And everything will be clearer.

So now, a year later, and just days after the 100th birthday of Jimmy Carter, whose insistence on peace over power made possible Israel's near half-century of peace with Egypt, I am taking the poem up again. Last year, this poem might have been an embodiment of "seek peace." This year, with more insistence, it is an example of "pursue it."

Today I am taking sides. I am taking the side of Peace.

Peace, which I will not abandon even when its voice is drowned out by hurt and hatred, bitterness of loss, cries of right and wrong.

I am taking the side of Peace whose name has barely been spoken in this winnerless war.

I will hold Peace in my arms, and share my body's breath, lest Peace be added to the body count.

I will call for de-escalation even when I want nothing more than to get even. I will do it in the service of Peace.

I will make a clearing in the overgrown thicket of cause and effect so Peace can breathe for a minute and reach for the sky.

I will do what I must to save the life of Peace.

I will breathe through tears. I will swallow pride. I will bite my tongue. I will offer love without testing for deservingness.

So don't ask me to wave a flag today unless it is the flag of Peace. Don't ask me to sing an anthem unless it is a song of Peace.

Don't ask me to take sides unless it is the side of Peace.

May we be watchful. May we be compassionate. May we be unafraid. May we be loosened from the tangles. May we seek peace and, that done, may we pursue it.

Shanah toyah.

Rabbi Irwin Keller, 13 October 2024.

This is part of a blog post. To see the whole post visit www.irwinkeller.com/ itzikswell/2024/10/13/nevertheless-pursue-peace-yom-kippur-2024 Christmas Day: 25 December 2024

Hear the Angels Sing

Light in our darkness, joy in our sorrow, Our Saviour is born, the Prince of Peace, The King of all, Emmanuel, God with us. Let's share the song, **With angels let us sing.**

Glory to God, revealed among us, Given for us, offered for us, Living within, one with us. Let's share the song, **With angels let us sing.**

The day is here, the time is now.

Promised long ago and promised still.

Within the laughter and the chat,

Let's share the song, With angels let us sing.







BMC Church Charities 2024-25





Saving lives through stem cells

The total raised by September 1st was £3182.83

еВау	£2073.66	Money jars	£55.96
Other items	£80.17	Recycled books and CDs	£83.28
Coffee mornings	£291.69	Coffee bar	£248.64
Coins	£33.28	Donations	£287.18
Event refreshments	£28.97		

Recent contributions include £1046 from eBay sales, £159 from the Christmas Card Sale Coffee Morning and £57 from recycled books and CDs.

Colin Firbank

Update from the Redevelopment Group

After more than a decade, we're on our way!

Church Council approved proceeding with the redevelopment project at a meeting on Sunday 10th November. In the report below we give you a summary of the information presented at the meeting and tell you about the 'next steps'.

In July, we invited five builders to bid for the building work. They all submitted a tender and we investigated the two lowest cost builders further. We invited them for an interview, assessed their capabilities and visited a reference site for each.

The tenders showed that costs have risen considerably since the estimate we saw in 2021. So we asked the Quantity Surveyor (QS) to identify elements of the work that we could delay without compromising the main upgrade of the sanctuary. We said we still wanted to achieve the initial remit of the project – to make a 'new' space for worship that is lighter and brighter, more ecologically sound and with better disability access.

As a result of feedback from the QS, the Church Council agreed to some reduction in scope for the project. The coffee bar extension and new entrance will be put on hold for the time being (saving about £267,000). Double glazing of the windows in the sanctuary (a significant cost at £129,000), will be delayed (but could be added back into the scope if we raise sufficient funds). These changes reduced the cost from £2.2 million to £1.73 million.

The newly specified project will deliver:

- A bright, flexible & accessible space for worship and community use.
- A new roof
- · A flat floor
- · Removal of the side galleries
- A new heating system
- A renovated organ
- New AV & lighting systems

Financially, we are in a good place.



Artist's impression of the new church interior

We have already raised 75% of the money we will need from the sale of the other church properties and the £220,000 that was donated as a result of the BMC Mission Possible fund-raising campaign. We have started to apply for grant funding from charities and trusts and we will also apply to the Methodist church at Connexion, District and Circuit level. It is unlikely that the grants will cover the total costs and the Church Council agreed the balance will need to come from local, BMC-led fund-raising.

Members of the Redevelopment Group have visited several churches that have completed renovations like the ones we are planning. All the churches said that they were pleased they had gone ahead with their projects, despite the need to overcome financial and practical challenges on the way. The Group members were impressed by the positivity and enthusiasm they encountered. Churches had been revitalised, worship had been enhanced, interactions with the community increased and additional income had been generated from lettings to groups keen to use the updated premises.

After the presentation to the Church Council meeting on 10th November there were some discussions, after which Church Council accepted the following proposals:

- Proceed with the redevelopment project
- Accept the reduced scope of the project
- Appoint the chosen contractor (Derwent Valley)
- Authorise the Redevelopment Group to apply for grants
- · Commit to restart fundraising within BMC

The proposals were unanimously accepted.

The building work will begin at some point in the first three months of 2025. Before that time the church will need to be cleared of everything we want to protect from the builders. The project is expected to take a year to complete.

Now the hard work begins for all of us! And we need your help...

- It is wonderful that Glenda and Andy Taylor have once again offered to take the lead on the local fund-raising BMC Mission Possible 2. They will be putting a group together to coordinate the activities if you are willing to join it, please speak to one of them.
- Chris Wright is organising the removal of the remaining pews downstairs, and in the side galleries, so that they can be sold. If you have pew-moving or woodworking skills, please contact Chris Wright.
- Steve Ames is heading up the Transition Group that will organise final clearing in the church and the move out of the church into the hall for worship. Please contact Steve if you are able to help with this.

This is the final stage of the coming together of the Methodist Churches in Beeston and it will be the launch pad for the next stage of our witness to the local community.

It will require many different skills and capabilities. Please think carefully about what you can do to help make things run as smoothly as possible.

Connie Pullan and Chris Bridges, on behalf of the Redevelopment Group. November 2024

If you would like a copy of the power point presentation given at the Church Council meeting, please get in touch with Connie Pullan at connierpullan@gmail.com or 07909 503539.

Christmas 1: 29 December 2024 Hush the Hushing

Old and young, rich and poor, hale and frail, Near and far, remembered and forgotten, Neighbours, family, friends and strangers, Let's share the song, **With angels let us sing.**



Let's listen to each other's singing of that song, The old familiar words that take us back, The 'new take' that gives fresh light, Let's share the song, **With angels let us sing.**

Together, you and me and they and them, And he and she, from here and there, And everywhere and always, Let's share the song, **With angels let us sing.**



Christmas 2: 5 January 2025 *Hush the Hushing*

The year is new, the day is new,
The light is newly shining,
The song is newly sung.
Let's share the song, With angels let us sing.



We cannot touch with harps of gold,
But touch and speak and pray we can,
With smiles and words and deeds.
Let's share the song, With angels let us sing.

So hush the turmoil with words of hope, And hush the pain with needed care, And hush two thousand years of wrong, Let's share the song, With angels let us sing.



Three wishes... for BMC!

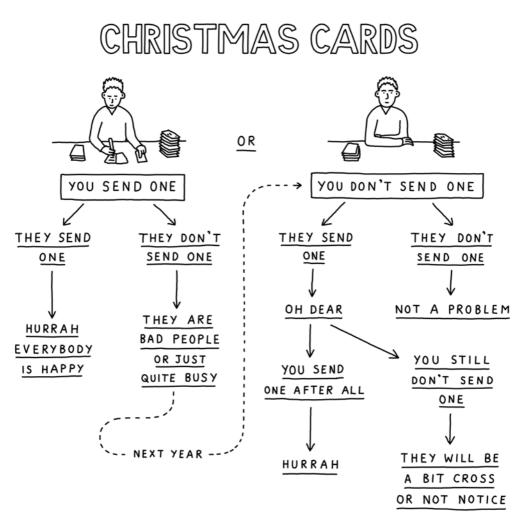
This is how the Alternating Housegroup began our autumn term. Having enjoyed celebrating BMC's first 10 years together as a congregation during September, we shared our dreams for BMC's next 10 years. Here they are:

- We picture a church where we are having lots of fun together, as this fosters
 a sense of community, helping us get to know each other in a nonpressurised environment. For example, the recent Harvest Supper and quiz
 was a lot of fun and the atmosphere was warm and caring.
- We long for more young people and families to be a part of our church. We want to find imaginative ways of encouraging them and be the kind of place which attracts them.
- We would like BMC to explore more urgently the idea of a Circuit youth fellowship as a way of encouraging those young people who may feel isolated within their own church setting.
- We would like to eat together more, because that is what families do.
- We seek God's direction in how to become more fully an inclusive church. We know that the intention is there, and now we we need to become clearer about what this means in practice, hence our group's decision to try out the Being a Good Christian Ally course this term, which explores how to be actively welcoming to and accepting of people of different genders and sexualities. We dream that inclusivity becomes one of the things which attract new people to our church, challenging their assumptions about 'the judgemental church' and making them curious enough to come in. We are proud of being an Inclusive Church and want to promote this.
- We hope for a an increasing feeling of **travelling together in faith** and celebrating all that we are.
- We dream that we will find it easy to find people to do 'church jobs' because everyone wants to contribute towards our church family life, and we have managed to find ways of enabling everyone to feel their contributions will be welcomed and valued.
- We would like to experience **more joy in our worship**, exploring new and modern songs, celebrating our talents through our band and singers.

 We are looking forward to enjoying the possibilities of our completed BMC redevelopment project!

Maybe you have dreams of your own. Why not share them with us all through the newsletter?

Sally Ramsey (for Alternating Housegroup)



Square Pegs, Round Holes

Recently, the film *Apollo 13* was on in our house. I'd never actually seen it before, but was aware it was considered a classic and contained the line 'Houston, we have (had) a problem'. What I didn't know was it also contains one of the sayings that's doggedly pursued me my whole life!



I am, of course, referring to the remark made when the ground team are trying to figure out how to help the astronauts rig up a CO_2 filtering system with the very limited resources they have available. The issue essentially requires them to fit a 'square peg in a round hole', and this is the task laid out to them.

For those who haven't seen the film, it's a tense, life-or-death moment requiring creative problem-solving. The life and future for the three astronauts literally relies on success – 'failure is not an option', because failure means they will die.

In our day to day lives we don't often have such life and death scenarios laid on us, so it can be easy to underestimate the importance and impact of our actions. But our efforts matter more than we realise. In matters of equality, inclusivity, and accessibility, how we adapt matters. We may feel limited by existing systems or hesitant to change, but adapting can make a real difference for others.

The Apollo 13 story beautifully illustrates that neither the peg nor the hole is at fault — it's about how they connect. Sometimes, rather than questioning one part or the other, we need to look at how we're shaping our communities to truly welcome and fit people of all backgrounds.

We know that 'one size doesn't fit all' but we're oddly reluctant to have multiple sizes available. We have a deeply ingrained expectation that one option is the only option. It's always easy to come up with plenty of reasons, excuses or justification for not making changes — some of which can be very real and valid, but some really aren't. Any changes inevitably will bear a cost, some amount of time, resource and input will need to be expended on achieving them, and sometimes we don't think it's a cost we can afford.

But we have a faith that teaches us that we, people, are worth everything. That we are beloved children of God and there is nothing that God will consider too

much to lavish on us. We are called to be Christ-like in our living and seek to do as Jesus did in the way we love others and how we shape our interactions with them.

Jesus wasn't afraid to shake up the system, to include the usually excluded, to change things up and meet people where they needed to be met, even if and when that took him outside of the expected, traditional norms. Because people matter, first and foremost. Whatever it was that society had used to reduce and reject them, be it age, gender, marital status, physical variants, mentality, understanding, heritage and history, family allegiances, (the list is long) Jesus was open to including them.

Peter and Paul, arguably the two most prominent initial patriarchs of the Christian church, were told very clearly by God that the gospel, the Good News, this new relationship was to be different, open, broader, flexible and able to evolve and adapt to situations and contexts. Reams of letters were written that sought to explain and unpack the details of faith in ways that folk would relate to in their own context and community.

We're asked to do the same. Being and becoming an ever more **Inclusive Church** asks us to continue this task. As Christians, we know we're called to live in Christ's spirit — being open to adapting for others just as he did. This is part of our Inclusive Church mission, which will always evolve as we find new ways to include and welcome.

Rev Chantel Noppen, Inclusive Church National Co-ordinator.

From the Inclusive Church November newsletter which can be found at www.inclusive-church.org/civicrm/mailing/view/?id=197

Christmas Jokes

Why did the snowman go to the veg market? *They were picking their nose!*



Praying for the Earth

15: Resurrection



Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, We know that when your Son entered Jerusalem, he wept. He wept because he knew what would befall it.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, When we look at this world of yours, this world of ours, we weep. We weep because we know what has befallen it.

Violence, Lord have Mercy. Consumerism, Lord have Mercy. Unrestrained Capitalism, Lord have Mercy.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son dreamed a dream of a different kingdom,
An alternative reality for an alternative community.
And then he demonstrated what this looked like,
By healing the sick, welcoming the outcast, overturning tables of injustice,
And living a life, and dying a death, of self-giving sacrificial love.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
May we too dream a dream of a different kingdom,
An alternative reality for an alternative community.
That your church would demonstrate what this looks like,
By bringing healing to the world, welcoming the stranger, challenging injustice,
And living lives full of self-giving sacrificial love.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You raised your son on the third day, Showing that a new day has dawned.

Demonstrating that violence, evil and death Will not have the last word.

Demonstrating that oppressive empires

Will not have the last word.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

May we too be resurrection people,

Who demonstrate that violence, evil and destruction

Will not have the last word.

Demonstrating that unrestrained capitalism and empires of exploitation

Will not have the last word.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus,

Your son came to his disciples in an upper room.

They were scared, and he spoke saying,

'Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.'

He calls, commissions and equips.

And then he breathed upon his disciples and said receive the Holy Spirit.

Father of Creation, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Your son comes to us in a world of climate breakdown.

We are scared. And he speaks saying,

'Peace to you. As the father has sent me, so I am sending you.'

He calls, commissions and equips.

Empower your church afresh with the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

Empower us to be faithful to your Son,

Until that day when the Kingdom of Your Son,

Now inaugurated, is consummated.

Until that day, when swords of ecological violence are turned into ploughshares.

Until that day, when unrestrained capitalism and empires of exploitation are no more.

To him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb,

Be all praise, honour and glory.

Amen

Rev Jon Swales, April 2021. From https://atyourservice.arocha.org/en/26-prayers-for-the-climate-and-ecological-emergency Creative Commons License

Eco Church: Recycling



What recycling does Beeston Methodist Church do? Well, we have all the usual bins like every or

do? Well, we have all the usual bins like every one else so we have a brown bin for all the garden waste and a green bin for all the recyclable stuff. But what else do we do? Well, we have a collection box for printer ink cartridges which is located in the coffee bar entrance. So that is there for all who use that entrance. I then collect these cartridges and send them to Recycle4Charity. They will sort them & either recycle or remanufacture. Cartridges which are remanufactured are refilled for using again and we benefit as we receive £2 for each of those cartridges. Also since 2002 when the facility began 396,511kg of cartridges have been kept out of landfill. And so far this process has raised £369.10 for BMC.

Did you know that we also collect unwanted spectacles and used postage stamps. Boxes for each of these can be seen in front of the BMC office window and can be seen as you queue for your tea/coffee after a service. You are welcome to drop spectacles or stamps into those boxes. We don't actually make money from the return of these items but it's not all about us making money but about doing the best we can with them. So the spectacles are taken to Flynns opticians to go into their process for making new spectacles for customers. And the used stamps are sent to the Royal National Institution for the Blind who can gain financially from that.

So that is what Beeston Methodist Church is doing but what are you doing and do you have any suggestions for what else we might do.

For my part this is what I do.

I am grateful to a number of my church friends who have given me their used blister packs to be sent on for recycling but I fear now that I will have to stop that collection as my contact will not be taking any more after December 2nd. If anyone has any information on who might be collecting these for recycling perhaps you could let me know.

As it happens, I do also collect other recyclable items like soft plastic for returning to the supermarket, foil for taking to Beeston tip, plastic bottle tops to help a hospice in Derbyshire, and Tassimo coffee pods which can now be taken to Toton Tesco Costa Coffee shop for recycling.

So what recycling do you take part in. I'm sure our Newsletter editor, Mark Ramsey, would be only too pleased to hear from you on this subject and if he gets enough response might even create a dedicated page in our monthly Newsletter for readers to share their contributions with other readers to encourage us all further.

I have recently come across a couple of booklets from Grove Books at just £4.95 each which I'd like to recommend:-

Renewing the Life of the Earth: Christian Discipleship and Environmental Action (2021)

While creation groans in deep pain, the centrality to Christian discipleship of care for the Earth has long been neglected.

This call to action urges that creation care must become mainstreamed as part of day-to-day faith, rooted in a spirituality that reads from the two books of God-the book of Nature and the written word of God.

The Earth is the Lord's: A Biblical Response to Environmental Issues (2008)

Caring for the creation is an integral part of following Christ, yet many Christians fail to see this. Looking at a range of texts and themes in Old and New Testaments, this study shows how the whole of the non-human created order is included in the biblical vision of God's restoration. It includes questions for reflection and points to resources for practical action.

Of course, if you wish to speak to me personally about Ecohurch and what it's all about I would be happy to have a chat with you.

Mick Towlson

Christmas Jokes

What's green, prickly and flies through the air? A *holly*-copter!

What do you call someone who's scared of Santa? *Claus*-trophobic!



Embrace the Middle East Prayer Diary - December 2024



1 December

Please pray for Musalaha, which trains Palestinian and Israeli women in reconciliation skills, empowering them to start community initiatives that strive for peace. The women meet each other away from society in a Desert Encounter, which helps them let go of the narratives of fear and dehumanisation and picture a new outlook of tolerance, empathy, and respect.

8 December

Amid the challenges of recent years, the Karagheusian Medical Centre in Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon, has seen an increased demand for mental health services. We are supporting them to provide assessment, therapy and medications to those suffering with psychological distress.

15 December

Refugees in Egypt have difficulty getting medical care, especially for widely feared conditions such as tuberculosis and HIV. Refuge Egypt in Cairo ensures that these traumatised people – many from war-torn Sudan – receive the correct treatment.

22 December

This week we will rejoice in the birth of Christ and join hands with all our Christian sisters and brothers celebrating in the Middle East. We give thanks for their faith, commitment and resilience, and ask God to uphold the presence of these 'living stones' in the region.

29 December

During the harsh winter months, humanitarian needs increase across Lebanon — both for vulnerable Lebanese households and Syrian refugees alike. Please pray for our partner, Middle East Revive and Thrive (MERATH), as they distribute fuel vouchers, mattresses, blankets, emergency lighting and more to those who need assistance.

From www.embraceme.org/s/Embrace Prayer Diary Aug24 Jan25 Web.pdf

Embrace the Middle East Prayer Diary – January 2024



5 January

Nursing education in Egypt is of variable quality but in recent years Harpur Memorial Hospital has trained all their nursing staff to a high standard in the onsite Nursing School. We pray for them as they use what they've learned to care for patients on a daily basis, and look forward to supporting the training of more health professionals in the future.

12 January

The compassion and hard work of our dedicated supporters is something that inspires us every day. We give thanks for all those who give their time and energy to organise and participate in fundraising events, raising vital funds to support our Christian partners' mission in the Middle East.

19 January

The Learning Centre for the Deaf in Lebanon advocates for equal rights, social inclusion and accessibility for people who are deaf. We give thanks for their passion and dedication, and pray that their efforts to improve services will lead to a more inclusive society where people who are deaf have better life opportunities that enable them to meet their full potential.

26 January

Many Palestinian Christians are migrating to other countries because of the economic, political and security difficulties they face. This means that there is a need to invest in young Christians and support them to be the future leaders of the community – which is what the Palestinian Bible Society is doing via the Jericho Leadership Academy. Please pray for them as they train future Christian leaders to follow Jesus' example of servant leadership.

From www.embraceme.org/s/Embrace Prayer Diary Aug24 Jan25 Web.pdf

Beeston Methodist Carol Choir: Christmas 2024

The **Carol Choir** will be singing again this Christmas, but with a somewhat reduced programme of events. It's just the way the calendar and other choral events have fallen this year. Our dates are:

Wednesday 11th December Singing at the Crown Inn, Beeston, start 8.45pm

Sunday 15th December Singing in the morning service at BMC

Thursday 19th December Street singing (start on Cromwell Road at the end

of North Street 7.30pm)

Tuesday 24th December Street singing (start bottom of Park Road 7.15pm)

Please note the change of starting points for the street-singing and that we will only be doing two such evenings this year.

The Carol Choir basically has a three-part mission: to bring our carols about the birth of Jesus to our wider local community; to raise money to help those in need locally through the work of the Benevolent Society and other charities; and to support each other and enjoy our own fellowship through the singing.

If you would like to join us please let me know. Many of the carols are very well-known and the others can be learnt as we go along. We will also be in need of people to help with collecting when we sing "on the streets" and would very much appreciate any offers of help for this.

Merry Christmas to everyone.

Andy Taylor

Christmas Jokes

Why are Christmas trees bad at sewing?

They always drop their needles!

What did the Christmas tree say to the ornament? Hang in there!



Dates for your Diary

December 2024

Sun 1st Advent Carol Service at BMC 6.30pm Mon 9th Knit, Natter and Craft at BMC 2pm Christmas Coffee Morning at BMC 10am-12 noon Sat 14th **Table Top Time** – family board games at BMC 3-5pm Sat 21st Christingle Service at BMC 4pm Sun 22nd Junior Church Nativity Service at BMC 10.30pm Joint Carol Service at Beeston Parish Church 6.30pm Tue 24th Christmas Eve Holy Communion at BMC 11.15pm Wed 25th Christmas Day All Age Worship at BMC 10am

January 2025

Mon 6th Knit, Natter and Craft at BMC 2pm

Sat 11th Coffee morning at BMC 10am-12 noon
Table Top Time – family board games at BMC 3-5pm

Mon 20th Knit, Natter and Craft at BMC 2pm

Sat 25th Coffee morning at BMC 10-11.30am

Weekly events

Sunday	Morning Worship at BMC 10.30am		
	Evening Service 6.30pm (on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday of the month)		
Monday	Little Acorns Parent and Toddler Group at BMC 9.30-11.15am		
Tuesday	Little Acorns Parent and Toddler Group at BMC 9.30-11.15am		
	Open Space refreshments and fellowship at BMC 11.15am-12.15pm		
	(lunch at 12.15pm every second Tuesday of the month)		

Wednesday Wholly Ground Café at BMC 11am-1pm (including a short act of worship at 11.15am on the first Wednesday of the month)

Beeston **Methodist** Church

Here for You: God is calling us to

- Offer spiritual nourishment and growth to all
- Welcome and nurture everyone
- Serve those in our local community
- Be a strong voice for **Justice**.

Beeston Methodist Church is an Eco Church

From meditation to insulation, from location to invocation, loving God and His creation should impact everything in our church lives. **Eco Church** is a scheme to help churches demonstrate that they care for God's earth, to help them 'go green' in all areas of church life.



Beeston Methodist Church gained the Eco Church Bronze Award in March 2021 and is now working towards the Silver Award. ecochurch.arocha.org.uk



Beeston Methodist Church is an Inclusive Church

We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates** and affirms every person and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of **disability**, **economic power**, **ethnicity**, **gender**, **gender identity**, **learning disability**,

mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which **welcomes and serves all people** in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

www.inclusive-church.org