

THE LINK

MARCH 2020



From
Tragedy ...



... To
Triumph

Wolds and Trent Methodist Circuit



Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends

Some of you may know that I am a keen reader and I love to “escape” as I become engrossed in a well-constructed story. The story of Easter is ultimately joyous but getting there is much more of an emotional rollercoaster! You may know that the Presidential theme this year is “So, what’s the story?” Stories can be a gentle, yet powerful, way of sharing God’s good news for all the world with those who have yet to experience it, and those who perhaps need to be reminded of it.

As Barbara Glasson said “the story of God and the stories about God, the stories of life and the stories about life, make sense of who we are as humans, created and loved in a world full of perplexity and delight. ... We are called to tell stories, to listen to stories and to wrestle with stories, ... and to go on believing that as people of creation, exodus, crucifixion, wilderness wandering and even in exile we can still claim the hope of resurrection and the gracious promise of life in all its fullness.”¹

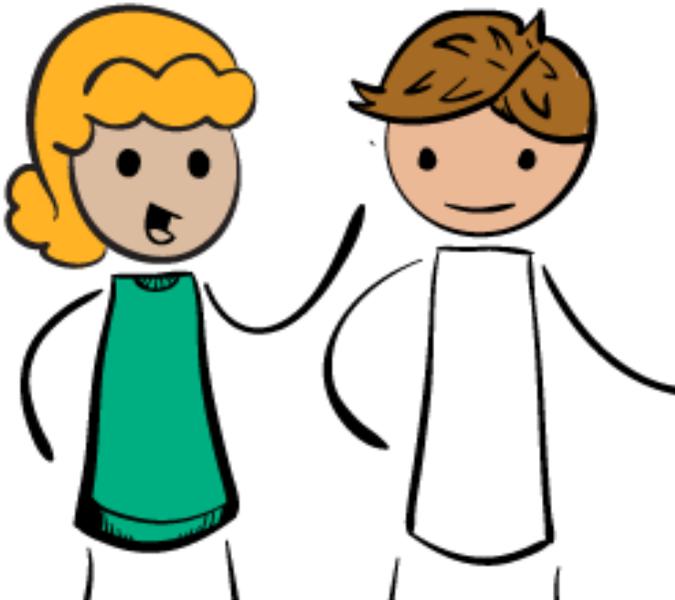
It’s a theme which seems to be recurring for me: I was reminded of it at 3Generate in November when we were challenged and encouraged to think about where God is in our story of 3 Generate; and then at our Circuit Service in early February, Tim Baker, of All We Can, invited us to think about where our individual stories began and where these fit into the bigger story of God. Maybe God is giving me a nudge? Might God be nudging you too? Perhaps you might like to take some time this Lent to think about or begin to answer that question. After all,

¹ The President’s Address to Conference, 29 June 2019

sharing your story of God's love could be the good news someone else needs to hear.

As we think about our individual stories and how they fit into the story of God, may you continue to experience the good news of God's love, grace, and peace, afresh each new day.

Have a very happy Easter,
Rev. Sarah



The deadline for the next Link will be May 15th.

The theme is Summer – Love.

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My Christian Journey

Ian Short

I'd be telling an untruth if I said I'd been a Christian as long as I can remember. I was Christened in the Church of England when I was a year old, but I certainly don't remember that. In point of fact, my parents had all but abandoned the Church when I was small. Father was a non-conformist (Congregational) and Mother had been brought up as an Anglican. Since they couldn't agree which Church they would attend, they compromised by going nowhere. It was a work colleague of father's who suggested they might like to accompany him to the Methodist Church in Corby, and it wasn't long before they were taking my younger brother and I to "God's House". We were enrolled in the Sunday School there and that was the pattern for the next seven or eight years.

Now as soon as I was old enough to know what one was, I was convinced that I was a Christian. When Father became a local preacher, I would often accompany him to services around the Kettering and Corby circuit. My faith was fairly primitive, simply because I wasn't old enough to have refined it. Prayer, to me, was a sort of request-shop, though I often found that what passed for faith was strengthened because God was prepared to play along with that.

By the time I was in my teenage years I had quietly turned my back on the Church, apart from a brief flirtation with the Pentecostal Church. If asked (and I sometimes was) I would still say I was a Christian.

"You can be a Christian without going to Church", I would say. Of course, there's no doubt that that's true, though it's not so easy, but if I'm honest, I doubt whether that was the real reason that I chose that path. The truth is

that, like many other teenagers, I had become rebellious. As a child I had been made to go to Church, so the Church became one of the childish things that I had put away now that I considered I had become a man.

For a couple of years Father was pastor of a Baptist chapel at Broughton, just outside Kettering, but I never accompanied him there (except for the weddings of two of my siblings - which he conducted), and he eventually returned to the Methodist Church, taking up the mantle of a local preacher again.

By this time, I was old enough to hold long discussions about the Christian faith with Father, and I always joined in when the house group was held at our home. Not once did Father try to persuade me to rejoin the Church - presumably because he thought that too much pressure from him was why I had stopped attending in the first place.

When I was about twenty-four, I became involved when a good friend suffered a nervous breakdown. I found myself unable to cope, but what I was able to do was pray. When I asked my parents for help, it was immediately forthcoming, but I had discovered something else. I had discovered that it was my instinct to turn to the Lord in time of need, and I very quickly realised that my parents had done me a favour when they made me go to Church as a child.

I had never stopped reading the Bible, but I soon started attending Church and, within a year, was accepted into membership. In fact, I was soon teaching Sunday School (or Junior Church as it was called there). I took the Sunday School teacher training course at Desborough, which included a weekend course at Westminster College, Oxford (I still like to tell people I attended an Oxford College).

By the time I left Kettering I was well into my thirties, and had had plenty of time to learn to understand my relationship with God. I had learned that life was not just something that happens to people on TV and had discovered how the Holy Spirit can sustain you through it. I had also found that God was

ready and eager to accept me as I was. That, of course was because other people accepted me as I was. Yes, I had learned that other people could show me the love of God.

I've been in this area for a lot of years now, since I left Kettering. In fact, if I'm in Caistor for very much longer, I shall be forced to start considering myself local, but though I am growing old now, I have not seen anything to change my mind about that one thing - God loves me, and it is my job to show that love to others. That's what it's about.

Since I've been here in Caistor, I have several times been chapel steward at Caistor (the first time was when Father was the minister there), and I'm now looking forward to new challenges as a circuit steward. I'm well aware that I've taken that job at a challenging time, but my job - our job - is the same as ever. We show the love of God in His world.

Ian Short

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What has knitting to do with Easter Or What has Easter to do with knitting?

“The great gift of Easter is Hope - Christian hope which makes us have that confidence in God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake.”

Jesus frequently used the phrase **“the good shepherd,”** he is referencing His inherent **goodness**, His righteousness, and His beauty. As **shepherd of the sheep**, He is the one who protects, guides, and nurtures His flock.

We can get to know the Good Shepherd and experience the gift of

Hope is many different ways. In Caistor we have a Prayer Shawl Knitting Group. Well! That is what the church calls it. However, in the Heritage Centre, where we meet, we are known as the Reflection and Knitting Group. Very early on in our meetings we discovered it was very difficult to have audible prayer in a public place. So, each time we meet we are given a card with a verse on it so that we can reflect on the message as well as chat and drink coffee. We also knit! Our knitting is for charitable causes. We have knitted hats for fishermen, clothes for premature babies, blankets, shawls for sick people, gloves, twiddle muffs for people with dementia. The list is endless.



Back to where I started. Sheep give us wool and by the time it has been spun and dyed it comes in many forms! Would you believe it! We have got quite competitive about finding just the right sort of wool we need. It can be exciting to get new balls of wool and a lovely pattern and to **hope** that one can knit the item well. God's goodness and love is with us as we help one another and triumphantly produce a knitted item worthy of the good shepherd.

The Disciple team must have felt so distraught thinking they had lost their Good Shepherd. But Jesus had wrapped them in a prayer shawl of Love. He is the Son of God after all.

In our small way we try to wrap people in prayer shawls of love. Our knitted items never leave us without a prayer for the recipient. "Hope" and "Love" are the key words for Easter that come to my mind today.

God bless,

Jenny Rudd - Caistor

Good News from our Youth Leaders

Did you watch the episode of Songs of Praise, broadcast in early January, which featured several aspects of Methodism?

If you did, and were watching closely, you might have seen some of our local young people taking part very enthusiastically in a Christian concert at 3Generate, the annual Methodist youth gathering.

Some comments from young people who attended 3Generate recently:

“I liked the Lunar's performers.”

“We enjoyed spending time in the Den - a “chill” zone with bean bags to relax on, games, music and someone to talk to.”

“The food was the same every day and the queues too long.”

“The concerts were good, especially Guvna B.”

“It was exciting when the fire alarm went off during the Guvna B concert.”

Not everyone enjoys rap music or the sound of a fire alarm. Not everyone enjoys organ music. For the sake of others, we sometimes have to be tolerant. Let's celebrate our diversity as well as the unity we can enjoy in Christ!



Syd and Bridget

There's Always Good News at Upton Chapel!

I have been asked to explain the history of the "good news" spot that always precedes our weekly notices at Upton Chapel. Patrick has been doing the good news spot for almost 11 years. We can't quite believe it!

It all started after our very good friend, Colin Hutchinson, became ill and subsequently passed away. For many years Colin had the job of reading the notices and receiving the collection. He was a quiz master at local quizzes and he decided to ask a quiz question before reading the notices. The questions were always linked to Methodism, Christianity or the Bible. When Colin passed away, it became Patrick's job to do the notices. He decided he couldn't do what Colin had done and decided to start the week with "good news".

Patrick, like many of us, gets tired of only seeing and hearing awful news in the media. He would say "we never hear about good things that happen". So, for the last 11 years Patrick has been bringing us good news. Sometimes he hears about people doing special things locally, to help neighbours and friends. He often finds amusing tales to recount, and he usually has some sporting event to share. Some good news stories came from our members Doris and Doreen who both spent months having work done on their homes. Doris even had to move out of her home for several months. It was certainly good news when their work was completed and we all shared their happiness.

Over the years there has been lots to celebrate and we hope Patrick will continue to find "good news" for us to celebrate. Thank you, Patrick and keep up the good work!!!

Jenny Fotheringham

Our next Coffee and Chat at Upton Chapel will be on
Wednesday, March 11th at 10.30 until 12.00. All welcome!

My Easter

Like all Christians, Easter has had a special significance to me; even as a child I felt outrage at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. My friend Roy and I would always on Good Friday set off to follow the river Land Yeo from our village to Nailsea, eight miles away. We both revelled in the joy of the countryside and all of nature, once we saw a little grebe swimming under water, there was shoals of roach, birds singing and butterflies emerging from hibernation, always a competition to be the first to identify them by name. We would climb trees, jump over fences and push our way through hedges. Eventually we would reach the source of the river where a spring rose up to create a small lake on private land, we didn't care, then we would eat our sandwiches after which we retraced our way home.

Nowadays, every Good Friday, seventy years later, I get up early and stroll down the side of the river Trent, I stand at the edge of the river and sense the whole ethereal presence of nature's wonder, the big river knows where he is going, steadily making his way to the Humber, unencumbered with trivial things.

There is always a spiritual feeling of the great engine of life and nature passing through the day, sight, sound and smell all working together, a complex of simplicities, designed and organised by a great intelligence, a caring and wonderful intelligence, the work of God. I feel surrounded by love.

It was my
witness divine
perspective of

How



privilege to stand and
organisation and put the
my own being into place.

wonderful life is.

Bob Cook.

North Kelsey

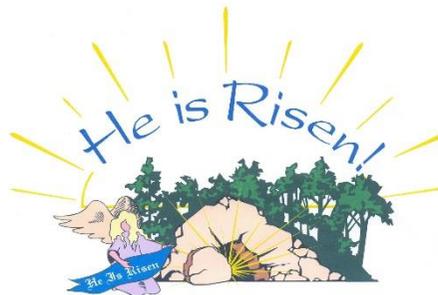
Greetings from us all at North Kelsey and a Happy New Year to all. Since the busy lead up to Christmas and a very well-attended United Carol Service with Rev. Sarah and Rev. Marian, our attendances have become somewhat varied. Our joint services with Nettleton and Caistor have been well received and no doubt we will have more of such gatherings. We look forward to our 7pm evening service with them on Ash Wednesday at NKMC.

Our monthly Open House continues to be well-attended and our February gathering attracted 14 friends from the village and further afield. It will soon be time for our regular remembrance of our friends around the world with the very interesting and enjoyable World Day of Prayer service prepared this year by the Christian women of Zimbabwe. Our joint service will be held at All Hallows Church at 2 00pm on Friday 6th March.

Our 103rd Chapel Anniversary takes place on Sunday 15th March when our guest preacher will be Dr Don Owen of Middle Rasen followed with light refreshments.

With all good wishes

Midge Thomas



Moving with the times or not???

The Methodist Church of Great Britain has espoused the term “contradictory convictions” as, perhaps, a means of dealing with divergent doctrinal views on various topics. In the recent report on marriage and relationships, “God in Love Unites Us”, adopted by the Methodist Church, the authors propose, among other things, that the sacrament of marriage should be adapted to allow for two possibly contradictory definitions of marriage, each definition having equal value: between a man and a woman and between two people of the same sex, and have suggested that standing orders should be amended to accommodate this. Methodist Conference 2020 will vote on this and other provisional resolutions.

We have now really recovered from the excesses of Christmas and all the presents; the Christmas trees have been packed away and the lights have gone out. So now Easter is upon us and for weeks on television no doubt we will be inundated with adverts and references to bunnies and eggs. Lots of people will know about Easter Monday as it is a very welcome bank holiday and it is three days after a Friday, known, for some strange reason, as Good Friday.

Christmas and Easter. These two festivals for Christians are surely seminal to our faith. The secular world as we have seen above, rejoices in these holidays but not for the reasons we might do. For many of us, these occasions define the supernatural foundations of the gospel – that God took on human flesh in the form of a baby, born to a virgin and that this same baby thirty or so years later, was killed by crucifixion, and rose from the dead three days later on what has come to be known as Easter Day. The secular world today, which famously “doesn’t do God”, if it stops to think about this at all, would firstly deny

that any of these things were possible, and secondly claim that they have no relevance to the world in which they inhabit or the life they live.

If the church really wants to “move with the times”, to be relevant to western life in the twenty first century, how do we deal with the apathy we have just referred to? Do we try to “water down” our faith by denying the supernatural, acknowledging perhaps that Mary was not really a virgin, but that does not have to affect our view that Jesus was a brilliant teacher, possibly a healer and even might be the Son of God? And do we acknowledge that perhaps, the Easter resurrection was after all, simply a “conjuring trick with bones”? Even if we do allow that the resurrection as described in the Bible, was made up, or a mistaken account or a spot of grave robbing, does that have to stop us from being Christians? In the world of the twentieth century, there is no place, some might think, for the supernatural, so the modern church should adapt, “move with the times” and recognise the world as it is and look for more “rational” reasons for the events of Easter.

The question might be, then, can the Church accommodate those who might deny these supernatural interpretations of, say, Easter and Christmas, and still acknowledge them as true Christians or are these interpretations essential to our faith? Could the notion of “contradictory convictions” help us here?

How contradictory can our convictions be? As the values of the secular world appear to move further and further away from traditional Christian values, where should we, as people of faith and as Methodists, draw the line?

Geoff Taylor - Market Rasen



GOOD FRIDAY IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES

We were regular visitors to National Trust Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire where we enjoyed walks around the Abbey ruins and lakes.

One Good Friday we noticed that something was going on amongst the old buildings with NT workers carrying chairs into the ruins. On making some enquiries we established that there was to be a service in the afternoon. After a rather damp occasion on our first visit, subsequent services were held in the cellarium (picture above) which meant that at least it would be dry, even if it was cold.

We learnt on our later visits that it was necessary to wear several layers of clothing and to sit on the side opposite the wind direction, and against one of the pillars to afford an extra level of protection. The wind always seemed to blow cold at Easter.

The cellarium consisted of a long open arched corridor with a dirt floor, windows with no glass and a large wooden cross at the far end. Extra chairs were added at regular intervals as more people decided to join the service. The congregation, sometimes 100 – 150 strong brought with them bikes, push – chairs, numerous dogs of various sizes and temperaments and walkers young and old.

Music was provided by Ripon Brass Band. Playing in such an enclosed space made the music sound wonderful which increased the atmosphere in the building. Then came the clergy. One from each of the local churches, Methodist, Church of England and Catholic. They

came well prepared for the cold, so much so that with all their coats and scarves over their robes it was impossible to tell who was who.

The service consisted of Hymns, Prayers and Readings with one of the clergy giving a sermon. They stood in front of a rough table with a cloth over it for their books and bibles.

After our first experience, we returned each Good Friday, always at 3 o'clock for the next 10 years. The starkness of the ancient ruins with the rough, wooden cross and the simplicity of it all, was always a very moving experience.

Many people turned up year after year to remember the events of Good Friday and what it cost.



Beryl and Malcolm Woolf. Market Rasen



All We Can

Last Sunday, despite the best efforts of Storm Ciara to thwart it, the Circuit Service at Misterton raised £200 for All We Can! We were privileged to hear Mr Tim Baker, who works for the charity, “All We Can”, which is the operating name of The Methodist Relief and Development Fund.

Tim spoke passionately about their work across the world but especially about Ethiopia, where their work is focussed this year. He explained that in parts of Ethiopia the effects of climate change have meant harvests have been destroyed after many months of labouring in the fields and people struggle to feed their families. All We Can are helping to produce better harvests by introducing new seeds and vegetables – such as potatoes, which grow well in the changing climate. Communities are also being trained in new farming techniques and business skills which will help to ensure successful harvests in the future.

All We Can have produced some excellent resources for Lent: “A Radical Lent”, in which those of us who have decided to follow this devotional, are introduced to some fascinating ideas and stories that will hopefully inspire us to reflect in greater depth, on how the message of Jesus relates to climate change and what we can do to help.

In the foreword by Graeme Hodge, the Chief Executive of All We Can, he quotes St Francis of Assisi: “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”



Jo Kershaw - Misterton

Advertisement for the Role of Circuit Treasurer

As many know, Steve Bilton has been our Circuit Treasurer since the creation of the Wolds and Trent Circuit, and also for twelve years prior to that in the old Gainsborough Circuit. He would like a little rest “to re-charge his batteries”, therefore we are looking for someone to take on this role for a while. The treasurer is a circuit steward, and one of the responsibilities of the circuit stewards as a group is to manage the ‘circuit funds’.

The role includes:

- to receive the assessments from each church, set in discussion with the circuit team with a budget and amounts agreed at a circuit meeting.
- payment to the district for the circuit’s contribution to the national budget,
- collecting contributions to Methodist Funds from churches, and from circuit services and collections, and paying out to the various funds,
- to pay ministers’ stipends, travel and expenses, pay bills which arise from the work of the circuit, eg. manse repairs, administration costs,
- at the year-end, prepare a set of accounts that is audited, presented to the circuit meeting, and sent to district for the Spring Synod,
- prepare an Annual Report and Reserves Policy for the circuit which will be sent to the Charity Commissioners, with input from the CLT, and any other dealings with circuit money from other sources, eg. donations.

If you think you may be able to take on this role for a while, please contact one of the Circuit Leadership Team.

Nettleton

Nettleton Chapel

Lent Lunch on Saturday 7th March

Soup and Pudding

Or

Cheese and Biscuits

All Welcome

ALSO

Good Friday Service at 2.30pm

All Welcome to join us on this special day.

The followers of Jesus must have been bereft on that first Good Friday. How wonderful for us to have the knowledge of why the things that followed came to pass. Jesus paid the price for our sin on that Cross, on that day for all of us.

**HALLELUJAH! OUR GOD REIGNS!
FOREVER!**

Jean and Brian Field - Nettleton



Methodist Women
in Britain

Lincolnshire District - March Away Day

WAYS WITH WORDS

led by

Rev Margaret Doughty

Thursday 12th March 2020

at

North Hykeham Methodist Church

3 Chapel Lane, North Hykeham LN6 9QZ

Tea & welcome from 10.30am

11am to 2.30pm – Ways with Words

(Please bring a packed lunch – drinks provided)

2.30pm – closing worship & cake

Further information:

Sylvia Curry 01522 754928 s.curry789@btinternet.com

or Diane Patrick pdiane15@yahoo.co.uk

That poor, 'old' GAINSBOROUGH CHURCH MOUSE

It would inevitably happen sooner or later. My cover would be blown. Somebody would let the cat out of the bag. I hope not, I'm terrified of cats. So, who writes this particular column?... OK I'll come clean.

The GMC correspondent for the link really is called ANON.... my name is ANON- e-MOUSE, I have a famous cousin called Mick. No, I'm not one of them furry things with four legs - I'm one of them things that works your computer. I'm as poor as a church mouse and the jokes I find aren't really from crackers - I only search for the really POOR ones on t'internet.

So, that's my bit of GOOD NEWS, now you know ... glad to get it off my chest!

I like to keep my ear (or that flashing light on my belly) to the ground and will give you some snippets from Gainsborough. Some of my fellow mice around town often tell me what they know - others?? Well they appear to be sleeping off an excess of cheese.

At GMC I've still heard nothing about rent-a-donkey for Palm Sunday celebrations. The Girls Brigade helped with that a few years ago, the celebrations that is, not as the donkey, may be next year.... the celebrations, not the donkey.

I did hear the planners saying that GMC will be hosting another hilarious Easter Bunny Drive and that will be on the Saturday evening, the day before Palm Sunday. It's a bit like a beetle drive only dafter.... and the MC has loads of my bunny jokes left over from last year. Best of all... there will be F O O D.

I also heard them reporting on a "cultural" evening in mid- May (food too)... GASP is visiting us from Scunthorpe as part of its Spring concert tour. Apparently, GASP stands for Gilbert and Sullivan Performers, up to three dozen talented voices together. They bring their own MC who is so talented and funny he doesn't need a script writer.

Whilst clicking around recently I found an odd story about an old Church Baptism Tradition. It appears that every Easter the Baptismal font was filled with water and consecrated. Infant Baptism was at its peak during Easter. The water remained until the following Easter. Imagine the resulting colour!

May we at GMC share our blessings for a wonderful Eastertide, through to Ascension, Pentecost and beyond.

Fond regards.....ANON

GMC ONWARDS!



**Easter
Bunny
Drive**

Saturday 4th April 2020 at 7.30pm
light refreshments
£5 per adult accompanied children free
GAINSBOROUGH METHODIST CHURCH

GASP!
Gilbert and Sullivan Performers

**SING! SING!
SING!**

Wherever you are
Greatest Showman Medley
* Singing in the Rain
Annie's Song
Unchained Melody
and many more!

GMC ONWARDS!

Gainsborough Methodist Church
Friday 15th May 2020
7.30pm tickets £5.00

Jesus is risen

(John, chapter 20)

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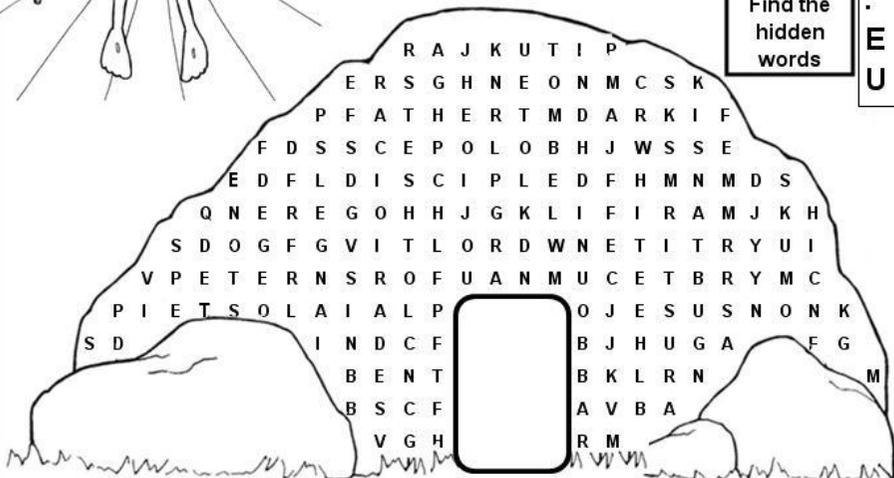
JESUS
MARY
DARK
TOMB
STONE
ANGELS
WHITE



PETER
DISCIPLE
CLOTH
BENT
LORD
RABBOUNI
FATHER



Find the
hidden
words



Mary of Magdala
went and announced
to the disciples,
“I have seen the Lord.”

John 20:18

God Pod Good News and Messy Church

The God Pod has been active around Hemswell Cliff for many years delivering by various means the Good News of God's love. In reality, it could fall under the umbrella of Messy Church, as we share similar activities. Every two weeks on Sunday afternoons we are greeted by enthusiastic children from a wide variety of families in the community. During this time, we have enjoyed sharing with well over 200 children and numerous adults and are accepted as 'good' people by those of the travelling community.

In recent weeks, due to the unserviceability of the God Pod, we wondered and prayed about what to do. Our prayers were answered when we began to understand this was a wonderful God given opportunity to encourage the children to come to Glenthams Chapel and share in both Family and Messy Church.

With their parents' permission five children were allowed to come and on two occasions what a wonderful morning we've enjoyed with eight small children in the congregation, singing and having fun.

One of the Dads said he believed it was so important children learn about God at an early age.

Jenny & Peter



And Finally from St. George's School What is **Good** about **Messy Church**?

I like making cakes and praying. **Octavia**

All of it. **Edie**

I like seeing new people, coming to Church. **Savannah**

I like the crafts. **Shannon.**

I like the action songs. **Emily**

Having fun. **Oceana**

And the adults...

All age worship.

Good for interacting with the children.

We're glad you are back" We missed it.

I haven't been before but I really liked it.

What the Bible says about love is like out school values, respect, patience.

These are like the rainbows we did for hope - I loved them.

As adults we enjoy being amongst the families & in the school. We have an extra chu4ch community.

**HAPPY
EASTER TO
ALL!**