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| ALLERTON  CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH |

A silhouette of a nativity scene

Description automatically generated

December 2024/January 2025 Newsletter

Dear Friends

From my young years I remember various people saying that the years just flew by, but back then I found that hard to believe. However, as I get older I can begin to see what they meant! It doesn’t seem like almost a year since last Christmas, or a year since I was writing my last Christmas newsletter article, but there we are. As Christians our focus at Christmas should be on the birth of the Lord Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem.

The nativity scene itself has often been cleaned up in paintings, tableaus, and artistic representations to make it more palatable for us. It’s not just the smell and dirt that’s missing, though, as far too often the significance of His birth is missed too. Why does it matter to us that Jesus was born in a physical manger in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago? Most basically it matters because without Jesus’ birth He could not have died in our place taking upon Himself the punishment we deserved for our sins.

There are, however, two other reasons why Jesus’ birth matters. Firstly, it shows us that He was both fully man and fully God. He was the son of Mary, flesh and blood, and because of this He could take our place on the cross. He is also the Son of God, fully divine and therefore capable of living without sin. Again, this was necessary as only a perfect, spotless sacrificial lamb was acceptable as a sacrifice for our sin.

Secondly, the details of His birth point us towards the fact that Jesus’ coming was in fulfilment of prophecies that God had given to Israel hundreds of years beforehand. Jesus was from the line of King David, as had been prophesied. He was born in Bethlehem, as the prophet Micah had foretold (Micah 5:2). In other words, Jesus’ birth shows us that we can trust God’s promises and know that He has a wonderful plan for our salvation.

Finally, even in childhood, Jesus entered this world “full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) His coming to earth speaks of God’s love for us that He would reconcile us to Himself through the death of His only Son. However, His love is undeserved and is given to us as a gift that we could not earn. It is also a love that exposes the dark truth of our sins, and the darkness of this world, and then call us to faith with repentance. What a truly wonderful thing it is for us to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ at Christmas!

Fred

**Philip James Barfield MBE – 16.07.1944 – 17.10.2024**

We said our goodbyes and paid our respects to Philip at his funeral service at Shay Grange Crematorium on Tuesday 12th November. Philip had been a much loved and respected member of Allerton Congs since 1981. During that time he had been involved in the work and worship of the Church, both as treasurer, organist and in various other roles.

He had also been involved in numerous other activities, including membership of Great Horton Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society, briefly with Allerton Congs AODS, working in hospital radio for over 30 years, (for which he was awarded an MBE) with St Luke’s Sound, playing the organ for other churches, including Fagley, Stanningley, Eccleshill and Idle Upper Chapel, and helping out once or twice accompanying the Chaplaincy Shared Memories Services at the hospital.

I’d known Philip since 1975 as a friend and colleague, and he will be sadly missed by family and friends alike. In spite of health issues curtailing his activities, he retained his sense of humour right to the end.

We remember in our prayers Pauline, Helen and Susan as they come to terms with their loss.

As Philip always signed off his radio broadcasts, ‘When will I see you again?’

David

**Dates for your Diary**

**Allerton Congregational Church Events 2025**

Saturday 11th April - Leprosy Mission Coffee Morning

Sunday 11th May - AGM following service

Saturday 12th July - Ladies Circle Coffee Morning

Saturday 20th September - Harvest Supper

Sunday 21st September – Harvest Service

Sunday 19th October – Church Meeting after service

Saturday 23rd November - Christmas Coffee Shop

Janet

Thornton Singers present

A CHRISTMAS WELCOME

At 2.00pm on Saturday 7th December

At Allerton Congregational Church

Tickets £8.00 (including refreshments)

Available from Choir Members or on the door

**Finance Report**

After more than a year we can now confirm that a Smart Meter was installed on 13 November 2024. This has hopefully tidied up the cellar electrics, which together with the recent preparatory works, means we may well be able to take a pause before continuing with further works. It does seem that there may have been a few minor technical issues since this was installed, so bear with us and let the Finance Committee know of anything that is not working correctly.

We are about to make an insurance claim to get the damage caused by the storm rectified.

I think this is all we have to report.

Chris

**Flower Rota** – flowers provided by:

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| December 2024 | January 2025 | |
| No Flowers in December | 5th | Mr & Mrs B Haley |
| 12th | Mrs North |
| 19th |  |
| 26th |  |

On Sundays not listed, silk flowers will be used.

**Preaching list**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| December 2024 | |  | January 2025 | |
| 1st | Rev Fred Rich |  | 5th | Rev Fred Rich |
| 8th | David Robinson |  | 12th | Rev David Muschamp |
| 15th | Rev Fred Rich |  | 19th | Rev Fred Rich |
| 22nd | Trevor Hippey |  | 26th | Rev Jonathan Davies |
| 25th | Rev Fred Rich |  |  |  |
| 29th | Rev David Muschamp |  |  |  |

**Coffee Rota**

As we have returned to having coffee after services, it would be really helpful if those on the rota could come a little earlier to set things up. You will not need to bring milk.

The coffee rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

**Bible Reading Rota**

If you would like to offer to read the Bible for Sunday services, the Bible reading rota is on the notice board in the vestibule and will be on the table in the hall on Sundays.

**Note from the Editor**

The next newsletter is due on 26th January 2025 – please let me have any items for inclusion by 19th January 2025.

Thank you – Carole

Sundays - Services at 10.30 am.

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