

CALNE METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2025



Items for future editions can be sent to:

Jan Sayers

The deadline for the February 2025 issue is

Sunday 26th January

I was wondering what I could possibly write about this week.

I remember once catching up with an old friend from the police, at this time of the year. We had not spoken for well over a year. We shared stories of our lives, talked about the loss of our respective parents, the difficulties faced by our families and grandchildren, and also enjoyed the camaraderie that we have both so missed. It was like we had never been away from each other's company; the relationship has stayed the same despite the passage of time. The phone call lasted for a considerable time, but to me it did not feel like that.

The special thing that I learned when I came off the phone, was that I felt good. I realized that I had travelled the journey of life with this person, longer than I cared to remember. And during our journey, we had faced many things together. It is still the case today, and I look forward to meeting up once again when life allows.

The house was quiet as the call ended, and as I walked into the hallway, I could hear this wonderful soulful voice, raised in song, without music, praising God. The song drifted down to me from the upstairs, and it stopped me in my tracks. It was quite beautiful; I did not speak, but just stood still, listening to it for some time.

The voice was that of Elizabeth singing the '*Coventry Carol*'. The emotion in the voice was tangible, she did not know that I was listening, she was praising God, alone, in these difficult times.

Coventry Carol" is an English Christmas carol that dates from the early 16th century. The carol itself refers to *the Massacre of the Innocents*, in which King Herod ordered all male infants under the age of two in Bethlehem, to be killed. It takes the form of a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children. It is not exactly the message of a joyful time in a festive period, is it? And yet, as I listened, I found a peace, a peace that had been missing for some time. I heard in that voice, hope, and contentment. I heard the certainty that all would be well, that God is still with us.

So many have suffered losses of one kind or another during the last few years, my friend included. It has been, and still is, a time of difficult decisions.

Perhaps Coventry Carol is most appropriate as we mourn those no longer with us this year. Feeling sadness, as we reflect that some in the family cannot be present.

Coventry Cathedral also holds a special place in my heart, as this was the place that I was ordained into the ministry, for God's work. I have not yet been back, but one day I will return to relive my memories of that wonderful occasion.

Author Ian Pittaway heard this carol which was performed in Coventry Cathedral at midnight during a performance of the middle ages, '*Coventry Mystery Plays*'.

He says this, "*When I first heard Coventry Carol, sung spine-tinglingly in pitch darkness by a lone female voice; then, as the lights slowly faded up, two, then three voices, something very powerful happened inside me.*

I understood, I think for the first time, the full potency of a song. I understood it, not from an academic, intellectual, researched point of view – though all of that is important – but on the level of my experience, my gut, my stunned heart."

For myself it was not in darkness that I heard this soulful rendition, but in the light of the day, *sung with such passion and hope*. I too, felt the resonance inside of myself, my heart was also moved..... I know what Ian was trying to say.

***God's presence finds us all in the most unexpected of places.
God's peace changes the way we perceive the world around us.***

Despite the uncertainty Elizabeth and I experienced at Christmas this year, God is with us. The message of '*all will be well*', is a message of hope that I have received and understood. It is so easy to become fearful in these strange days and begin to consider the popular surge to 'end times', but I think this verse of scripture helps our rational thinking. '*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*' **2 Timothy 1:7 New King James Version**

This year we may have to strip away all the tasks, expectations, and traditions that flow out from Christmas, epiphany and our own New year expectations. So, what will we be left with? Perhaps we should consider the simple things that were present at that first Christmas over 2000 years ago. Those things that this year, may continue to shape our experience and understanding, namely, **Hope, Love, and Peace.**

Where do we find these things, well I found them within a telephone call, and in a disembodied voice heard from the foot of my stairs. Stay safe and well, may you all find some peace and contentment, and may God be with you wherever you are, *and wherever you go.....*

Craig

The link to the carol can be found below: press control and click!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wit-jGD4wCw&feature=youtu.be>



Forthcoming Services:

5th January	Rev Craig Manley including Holy Communion
12th January	Mrs Michele Gard
19th January	Mrs Elizabeth Manley
26th January	Mr Derek Gard



Pastoral News

Happy New Year Everyone.

May you know Love, Joy and Hope throughout 2025

We thank everyone who placed cards on the Christmas Card Tree in the vestibule sending you all thoughtful messages.

We pray for: all who are involved in education in any way as the new term starts; those who have suffered from the new virus; those who have long term health issues and for those who

care for and support them; those who are waiting for test results and consultations; those who are recovering from operations; and those who are caring for elderly family members.

Throughout January we particularly pray for all those people in our wider community who come to 'Warm Spaces'.

We give thanks for prayers answered and for improvement in the health of some of our congregation.

As part of our Christian commitment is to care for and support each other I ask that if you have any Joys or Sorrows that can be shared in our pastoral news please let me know.

Thank you. Ursula



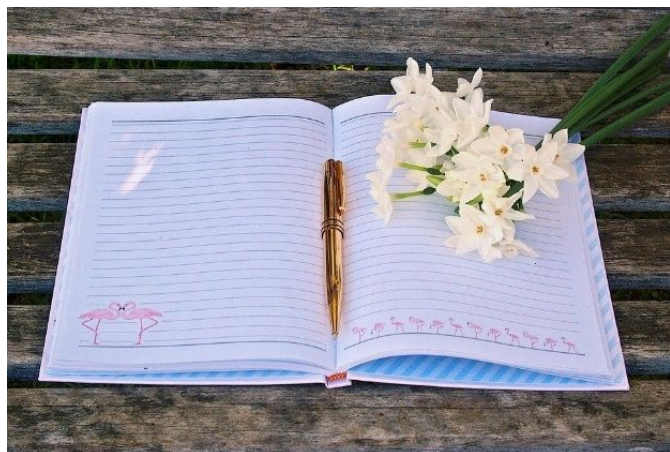
Refugee Prayer Focus January 2025

Teach us to engage with the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, as all are our neighbours and all are precious people to you. In Jesus' name we **pray** and for his sake, Amen.

Calne Food Bank

Calne Food Bank – Please visit their website for details of their opening times - www.calnefoodbank.co.uk

They are currently asking for: **Tinned vegetables Tinned tomatoes Instant noodles Small Pasta Sauces**
Please make sure that any food donated is in date.



Dates for your diary

*All are very welcome to
come along and join in.*

Tuesday January 14th, 21st, & 28th.

Coffee and Chat

Time: 10.00am - 11.30am

Venue: Church Hall

Wednesday January 15th, 22nd, 29th.

Warm Spaces Free food and drink for all

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm

Venue: Church Hall

Saturday January 25th

**Singathon raising Money for the Methodist Church's
International Development Charity 'All We Can'**

Time: 10.30am till 4.00pm

Venue: Church hall

Join in anytime. Come and go as you please.

See article in this magazine for more details

Saturday February 22nd

Dance Show

Time: 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Venue: Church Hall

Followed by afternoon tea

Saturday March 8th

Coffee and Craft Fair

Time: 11.00am - 2.00pm

Venue: Church hall

Thursday March 20th

The Making of Casablanca

An illustrated talk by Edward Barham

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: Church hall

Including Refreshments



An informal church for all ages and all the family.
Have fun and explore the Bible through crafts, songs,
games, drama, activities and food.

**Sunday afternoons at Calne Methodist Church from
3.00pm - 6.00pm**

Dates for 2025

12 January

9 February

9 March

13 April

11 May

8 June

13 July

No session in August

14 September

12 October

9 November

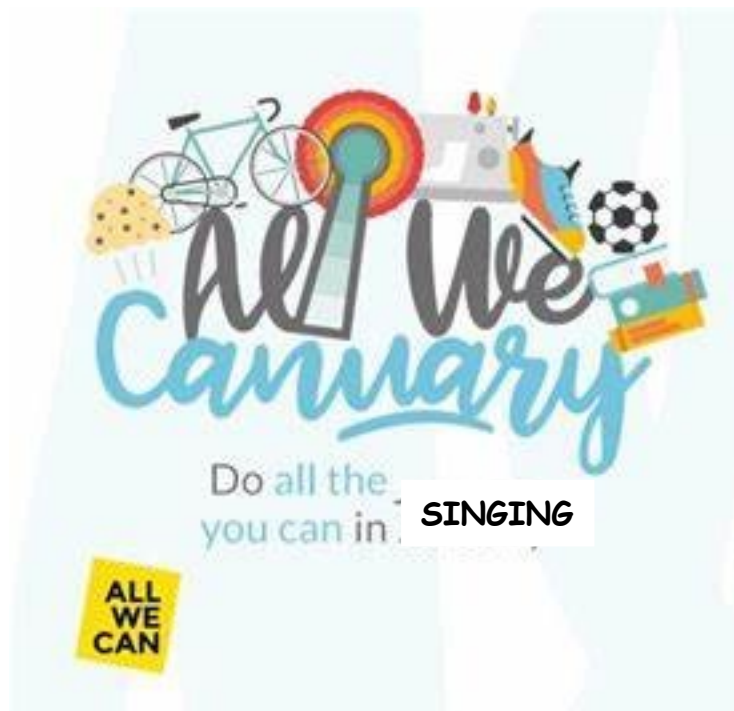
14 December

All are welcome - no need to book - come and join in!

A Calne Partnership of Churches activity

Children must be accompanied by an adult please

For more information, contact Michele Gard on calne.methodist.church@gmail.com



**COME AND JOIN US FOR A SINGATHON ON
SATURDAY 25TH JANUARY ANY TIME BETWEEN
10.30AM AND 4.00PM IN THE CALNE
METHODIST CHURCH HALL**

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

**SPECIAL REQUESTS FOR SONGS OR HYMNS TO
URSULA BY 18TH JANUARY PLEASE**

**ALL DONATIONS WILL GO TO ALL WE CAN THE
METHODIST CHURCH'S INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CHARITY**

SEE JAN SAYERS OR URSULA BARHAM FOR DETAILS