

# InTouch

Winter 2022-23



The magazine of  
Fleet and Beacon Hill  
United Reformed Churches

## FLEET UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

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## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR ALL FROM REVD HELEN EVERARD



*Dear Friends*

I am afraid that, for many people, this Christmas will feel more like 'In the Bleak Midwinter' than 'God Rest You Merry Gentlemen'. I live next door to a petrol station and I see the price of fuel rising almost every day at the moment. And with climate change and the war in Ukraine we are all feeling insecure, wondering what 2023 will be like.

When Jesus was born, circumstances for the ordinary people of that time, like Mary and Joseph, were tough and uncertain too. God chose to come to earth as God With Us at a difficult moment in Israel's history. Remember, Jesus was born without a comfortable home, and was laid in a feeding trough because there was no room for him in a strange town, where Mary had come at the arbitrary request of an occupying power.

God might have preferred, we think, to wait for a better time. Why would God send Jesus to such difficulty? His family were forced to flee to Egypt, for fear of Herod.

However this is always the promise of Christmas. God did not send Jesus to a comfortable home with plenty to eat and more presents than he knew what to do with. God is truly at home with those who don't know where their next meal is coming from. We can welcome him into our homes and our lives even if we feel we don't have anything to offer, because he knew how hard life is for those on the edge. Remember that the Magi looked for Jesus in the palace because they were expecting a King; but Jesus was a different kind of King, the Servant King, born as an ordinary child, not protected by power or money.

And when we welcome him in to our hearts, then he gives us the gift of becoming part of his family, welcomed as a child of God. So let our prayer be 'O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel', because with God everything is possible for 2023.

Have a blessed Christmas,

*Helen*



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT FLEET URC

This year I have chosen to base our Advent services around characters we find in Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus.

- On **27th November** it will be the Prophets, who were given the message from God that the Messiah would come;
- On **4th December** (our Parade and Gift Service) the Angels who announced news to Joseph;
- On **11th December at 10 am** our subject will be Joseph, who accepted God's call to be the foster father to Jesus. **At 3 pm** there will be a Quiet Christmas Service for all who find this a difficult time. There will be music, readings, prayers and time for reflection, with refreshments afterwards.
- On **18th December at 10 am** we will consider the Magi, who came from afar to find the new King. Our Carol and Christingle service will be held **at 4 pm**.
- On **25th December** we will have a Christmas Day celebration service for all.

Details of all Advent and Christmas services are given opposite. If you need transport to any of our services over the Christmas period please do contact your Elder or myself. You are most welcome to any or all of these services, and to bring guests, family or friends.

*Helen*



## GIFT SUNDAY—FLEET URC

Our Gift and Parade Service this year will be on **Sunday, 4th December at 10 am**, and will be led by Karen Smith. The gifts will go to *Step by Step*, a local charity supporting young homeless people. A representative from the charity will be coming to the service to receive them.

Suggested gifts are as follows:

(General) Chocolate, biscuits, sweets, slippers, key chains, games

(Female) Make up, perfume, hair accessories, jewellery, nail polish

(Male) Hair comb, after shave, Lynx sets, wallet, torch

Gifts should be unwrapped. No alcohol or potentially dangerous items such as knives, please, but monetary gifts are very acceptable, and will enable young people to have a present chosen specifically for them. All money collected in the offering that day will be donated to *Step by Step*. Thank you.

*Moray Henderson*



# Advent & Christmas Services 2022

*Everyone is warmly invited to join us for any or all of our Advent & Christmas services. We look forward to welcoming you!*

## Fleet URC

**Sunday 27th November—1st Sunday in Advent**

**10 am: Family Worship** led by Lay Preacher Anna Crawford.

**Sunday 4th December—2nd Sunday in Advent**

**10 am: Christmas Gift & Parade Service** led by Lay Preacher Karen Smith.  
Gifts will be donated to our local branch of *Step by Step*.

**Sunday 11th December—3rd Sunday in Advent**

**10 am: Family Worship** led by Revd Helen Everard.

**3 pm: Quiet Christmas Service** led by Revd Helen Everard.

A more reflective service for those who find Christmas a difficult time of year, with music, readings and prayers, followed by refreshments.

**Sunday 18th December—4th Sunday in Advent**

**10 am: Family Worship with Holy Communion**, led by Revd Helen Everard.

**4 pm: Carols and Christingles Service**, led by Revd Helen Everard

**Sunday 25th December—Christmas Day**

**10 am: A Christmas Day celebration**, led by Revd Helen Everard

## Beacon Hill URC

**Thursday 15th December**

**10.30 am:** Carol Concert with Whitmore Vale Housing Association

**Sunday 18th December**

**11 am\*\*:** Carol Service, followed by Church Family Christmas Lunch  
**(\*\*Please note change of service time for this Sunday only)**

**Sunday 25th December**

**10 am:** Christmas Day Service

**Sunday 1st January**

**10 am:** New Year's Day Service

**Sunday 8th January**

**10 am:** Epiphany & Star Gifts service at 10 am



## NEW MEMBERS AND A NEW ELDER AT FLEET URC

During morning service on 20th November we were delighted to receive Carol Woods, Lisa Murphy and Ken Smith into membership at Fleet URC, all of them by profession of faith. Carol, Lisa and Ken are already well known to our congregation at Fleet.

Our minister, Revd Helen Everard conducted the service and at the same time ordained Grace Bagshaw as an Elder, inducting her into service at Fleet URC. Congratulations, and a very warm welcome to you all!



*From left to right: Grace Bagshaw, Carol Woods,  
Lisa Murphy, Ken Smith, Revd Helen Everard*



## AFTERNOON SERVICES AT FLEET URC

Starting in January, we are planning to hold an afternoon service perhaps once a month. All are welcome, but especially anyone who finds it a struggle to get to church in time for 10 am services. We will have these services in the church, and they will include Holy Communion.

We can offer transport, and each service will finish with refreshments. Please contact your Elder, or Margaret Armes or myself if you would like to come.

We look forward to welcoming you in the New Year.

*Helen*



## A CHRISTMAS MISCELLANY

Carols and Readings for Christmas  
with Coffee & Mince Pies

**Friday, 2nd December at 7.30 pm**

St Philip & St James Church,  
Kings Road, Fleet

**Donations to Christian Aid**



## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

with Hart Voices

**Saturday 3rd December, at 7 pm**

at All Saints Church  
The Bury, Odiham, RG29 1ND

Tickets £12, children under 12 free  
(includes refreshments and charity raffle)

Available from the Hospice Shop,  
or online at [www.hartmvc.org.uk/upcoming-events](http://www.hartmvc.org.uk/upcoming-events)



Phyllis  
Tuckwell  
Hospice



## 'NURTURING OUR FAITH' THROUGH BIBLE STUDY JOINT GROUP

We will meet on Zoom at **11 am** on the following  
Mondays: **5th December (Advent);**  
**16th January; 20th February**

~ Everyone welcome ~



## JOINT PRAYER GROUP

Our monthly Prayer Group will meet at **11 am**  
on Zoom on **Monday 12th December.**

There will be no meeting in January.  
Dates of meetings in 2023 have yet to be announced—  
please check on church websites.



## IN MEMORIAM

We have said goodbye to two members of our church at Beacon Hill in 2022. As the year draws to a close, we would like to remember them in prayer and share a little about their lives.

**Sybil Saunders**, dearly loved wife to Roger, died after some illness in the Spring of 2022. She lived a busy life, always on the go, committed to her faith, from a childhood living on a farm next door to a church, hopping over the wall to attend the services there, to serving as an Elder both at Liss URC and Beacon Hill URC. Sybil looked forward to harvest services that reminded her of her early years on the farm and her delight in preparing food for others.

She wasn't afraid of hard work, juggling jobs in school catering, training to be a teacher and, at one point, holding a night time job at the Hindhead telephone exchange. Sybil was involved in supporting charities throughout her life, bringing her professional skills in catering to bear on many occasions at church family celebrations, providing refreshments for the Grayshott Concerts and other charity events.

Sybil's laugh was infectious, joyful and always made everyone who heard it smile with her. Her faith was a living, heartfelt and special part of her everyday life.

*(Written by Karen Smith, based on memories shared by Roger.)*

**John Archer** died in September, at the age of 93. His faith was very important to him. He had a long marriage with Pat and they moved about with John's job as a civil engineer, settling in Godalming for some time before moving to Grayshott, where they worshipped at Tower Road, Hindhead URC until its closure.

John was involved in many projects at Tower Road, such as gardening and decorating and redesigning the kitchen there. He was always prepared to give his point of view in church meetings. He joined us at Beacon Hill URC in 2003. John Harris remembers moving some church property from Tower Road to Beacon Hill URC with him: the two Johns wheeled it on a large trolley along the road between the churches in a somewhat erratic manner!

John had been in residential care for some time as his fitness decreased. Following Pat's death he moved to Farnham, and was about to transfer his membership to The Spire when he passed away.

*(Written by Karen Smith, based on memories shared by John Harris.)*

## OCEAN STARS UPDATE



Thank you to everybody who has been saving their silver (and copper) coins for me. The total raised so far is £83, just through *Save Your Silver!* I will be continuing to collect for the coming months.

During the month of October I ran the equivalent of a marathon, running roughly 1-1.5 miles at a time at weekends and after school. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who sponsored me—we raised a total of £717.60 (plus £127.65 in Gift Aid). If there is anyone who would still like to sponsor me and hasn't got round to it yet, the web

address is <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/AM-Bagshaw>.

In addition to this, I had a stall at the Craft Fair on the 5th November. We raised approximately £37 from this, and I am hoping to attend another Christmas fair to sell more of my homemade crafts.

On Saturday 3rd December, 3—5.30 pm, we are holding a Film and Craft afternoon at Fleet URC. We'll be watching *Polar Express* while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies, and then making some Christmas decorations afterwards. Come along at 2.40 pm for a 3 pm start. Tickets are £3 each.

All money donated goes straight to Ocean Stars Trust. Thank you again for your support.

*Alice Bagshaw, Fleet URC*

<https://oceanstars.org.uk/home>

## FLEET CHRISTMAS ANGELS



The format for distributing the Angels has changed this year. Instead of distributing these amazing works of art up and down Fleet Road, we will be handing them out personally to visitors to Hart Shopping Centre on Saturday 3rd December. The local churches will be taking turns, and our slot is at 10 am. I would love to see you there if you can make it.

I would really like to thank Sue Chenery for her amazing contribution of 150 knitted angels—many of them knitting whilst partaking of a warm beverage at our weekly coffee morning. Thank you so much, Sue.

Many, many thanks to all who have knitted these adorable, peaceful symbols of Christmas.

*Darrell Henderson*

## FLEET URC AUTUMN CRAFT & GIFT FAIR

Our annual Autumn Craft Fair started for some people on the day before, clearing the church and setting up the tables ready for the stall holders. That Friday evening saw many of the stall holders arriving with their goods to set up ready for the next day.

It was an early start to Saturday, and I arrived at the church at 7.30 am to find one stall holder already waiting. Most had arrived by 9 am, and it was a hectic rush to get everyone's stalls set up and ready for business.

At 10 am John Johnstone gave a Health and Safety talk, following which our minister, Helen, opened the Fair with a prayer.



*Ruth Hutton of SeeAbility  
with Carol Rayner*

At 10.30 am the doors opened and the customers came pouring in. Despite the rain and the economic crisis we had a record turnout. The talents and creativity of the crafters drew much admiration. Stalls included: knitted and crocheted goods, jewellery, beauty products, wooden goods, and even two stalls offering gifts for our four-legged friends—to name just a few. This year we were even able to hold a small silent auction.

As usual, the refreshments were very popular, with bacon and sausage baps for breakfast, soup and rolls for lunch, plus tea and cakes.

We were able to present a cheque for £300 to Ruth Hutton, a representative of SeeAbility, an organisation specialising in supporting people who have learning disabilities or autism, who may also have sight loss.

I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone who contributed their time and talents to ensure that this year's fair was such a success.

*Carol Rayner, Fleet URC*

<https://www.seeability.org/>





## LINK TO HOPE APPEAL 2022

Once again, Beacon Hill URC has supported the *Link to Hope* Shoebox Appeal.

Our thanks to Bridget and Robert, who coordinated and delivered the donated boxes again this year. Here they are when they drove to Worthing in October to deliver the 17 boxes they filled with the help of financial donations from members of the church family. From there the boxes will begin their journey onwards to be distributed in Eastern Europe.



*Link to Hope* not only distributes donated shoe boxes, but rebuilds lives through education and social care. To find out more about their valuable work visit <https://linktohope.co.uk>, or see their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/LinktoHope](https://www.facebook.com/LinktoHope).

*Beacon Hill URC*



## MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

### MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNINGS

This year members of the church and the volunteers who run The Hub Coffee Shop once again baked, dried seeds, potted up garden plants, and donated raffle prizes to help raise funds for the annual MacMillan Coffee Morning drive. We were delighted to welcome friends from St Alban's, the Anglican church in Beacon Hill, as well as our regular customers, to chat and enjoy the tempting range of home baked goods. (Michael makes a wonderful lemon drizzle cake!) We were pleased to send £173.65 to MacMillan.

*Beacon Hill URC*



## ‘STAND BY ME’

In the last copy of *In Touch*, we heard a bit more about Laurith and her community in Columbia. This time, let's find out some more about one of our other sponsored children, Arsema



Arsema lives in Bekoji, Ethiopia, and is 8 years old.

Bekoji, at 2810m above sea level, is four hours' drive south of the capital city, Addis Ababa, and has historically produced a number of world and Olympic champion distance running athletes, including Deratu Tulu, Kenenisa Bekele and Tirinush Dibaba. Bekoji is an extremely poor town with no paved roads, no clean running water, as well as an intermittent and not widespread electricity supply and little to no health care provision. Arsema lives with her family of seven in a one-room rented house in Bekoji with a wooden bed, and only old blankets to keep warm, having moved there when their previous town became too expensive for them to live in.



Arsema

*Stand By Me* adopted the Bethany School in Bekoji in 2006, when it consisted of two mud-built rooms with no toilets, running water, or even books or pencils, but was still providing education to 220 of the poorest children in the town. Over the past 15 years it has grown into a purpose-built school with 12 classrooms, dining hall, kitchen and library, and

now provides free teaching, hot meals and health care for over 500 children each day. There is also a children's village, which consists of several family homes run by dedicated house parents, typically widowed mothers. These were created to care for orphaned and abandoned children from the area, many of whose families have been affected by HIV/Aids.

Arsema had been unable to attend school as her parents, who work as daily labourers, could not afford to send her or her siblings (three brothers and one sister). She is now thriving at Bethany School, becoming more confident and sociable, and tells us that her favourite lessons are maths and science. She wants to be a teacher when she grows up. Her favourite pastime is skipping, and pasta is her favourite food.

In Ethiopia as a whole, only 20% of girls and 31% of boys enrol in secondary school. This year, two children who joined Bethany School in 2006, when aged 11 and 9 (and in similar circumstances to Arsema), graduated from university with degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering and Bio-System Engineering respectively, breaking the cycle of poverty to create a better future for themselves and their families.

For more information on *Stand By Me's* work in Ethiopia, look online at:  
<https://www.standby.me/news/bringing-hope-to-guacamayal>, and  
<https://www.standby.me/countries/colombia/news>

*Helen Bailey, on behalf of Footsteps, Fleet URC*



## PALANI MISSION UPDATE

The following message has recently been received from Revd John Abraham, giving a progress report on the work of the Mission following the transfer of £3,000 from Fleet URC. This represents money raised specifically for Palani in 2022. Following the damage from the monsoons, it will be used to build more houses. More often than not the recipients of these new houses dedicate them to spreading the Good News by allowing them to be used as cottage churches on Sundays.

*From Revd John Abraham to all the dear friends of Palani Mission:*

*We greet you all in the name of the matchless Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

*We have received the amount which you have transferred for the upliftment of the believers of Palani Mission, and support for the ANM (Auxilliary Nurse Midwife) girls. Words are insignificant to express our gratitude towards the generous donation of yours. May God bless each one of you individually, as families and as a church, for the great work of yours for this downtrodden people.*

*Amutha Priya and Priya Leela are good at their studies and doing well. Please remember them in your prayers. They convey their regards to you.*

*About the roofing project and construction of small houses: we plan to do it for four members. The details and type of work will be sent to you soon.*

*Once again, I am appreciating your sacrificial contribution.*

*Praying for you; in His vineyard,*

*Revd John Abraham*

## GOLDEN JOTTINGS NO 7: EMBROIDERED KNEELERS

*A series of reminiscences by Bernard and Mavis Potter, marking their 50 years of membership at Fleet URC.*

Not many people will remember these embroidered kneelers. Where did they come from? What were they for?



In 1977 All Saints Parish Church embarked on a project to refurbish the church with embroidered kneelers. Three hundred were produced by members of their own fellowship together with children from local schools and local churches in the town, as well as local organisations and businesses.

It was an enterprise which embraced much of the town. The youngest embroiderer was 11 years old, the oldest 88 years. Pictures of our embroidered kneelers are part of this jotting, and were produced by members of the Afternoon Women's Fellowship.

Unfortunately I think most of the kneelers were destroyed by the All Saints fire in 2015, which almost destroyed the church building as well.

I am grateful we have a photographic record of our contribution, if for no other reason than it reminds us of the part Fleet United Reformed Church has contributed over the years—and still does—in the role the local churches play in the life of Fleet.

As a matter of interest, kneelers were also provided for the choir stalls showing the opening bars of Stanford's *For All The Saints*.

*Bernard and Mavis Potter, Fleet URC*



## CHRISTMAS WREATHS

As I prepare to make the Advent Ring for our Christmas services, I thought I would explore the meaning of the Christmas wreath.

Hanging a wreath on a door or a wall is almost as essential to Christmas as putting up a Christmas tree.

They say that the tree gave birth to the wreath. Pruning the tree was a part of the preparation process just as it is today: limbs are cut off to make the tree a better shape and to fit into our homes. Instead of throwing the pieces of greenery away, the excess was woven into wreaths.

Before the wreath became associated with Christmas, it was a prominent emblem of victory and power, especially in ancient Greece and Rome. A crown of leaves or flowers represented honour, glory and joy.

The first Christian wreaths originally served as Christmas tree ornaments, and not as the standalone decorations we're familiar with on our doors today. They were formed into rounds as it was easy to hang them on to the branches of a tree; but the shape was also significant as a representation of divine perfection, symbolizing eternity, as a circle has no end.

Equally important was the material forming the wreaths. Evergreens were looked upon with awe and admiration, living things that survived the harshness of winter. It was also the symbol of power, of resilience and, in a way, of hope. Holly leaves and berries represent the crown of thorns and Jesus's blood. The pine cones symbolise the resurrection and, together with the circular shape, make the wreath a representation of eternal life.

Christians in Europe often place candles on the wreath during Advent, to symbolise the light that Jesus brought into the world:

The candle lit on the first Sunday of Advent represents HOPE and the prophets of the Old Testament; the second candle represents FAITH and Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem; the third candle signifies JOY and the shepherds; and the fourth represents PEACE and the angels, with their message of peace on Earth and good will to all men.

The fifth candle represents the BIRTH OF CHRIST. The flame of this candle reminds us that He is the light of the world, and that if we follow Him we will never walk in darkness.

Despite its widespread popularity today, the wreath started with humble beginnings. We live very much in a throwaway culture, and it is nice to think that our wreaths are born out of discarded tree cuttings.

*Darrell Henderson, Fleet URC*



## SOME THOUGHTS ON RECYCLING

I recently read that the concept of recycling plastic was broken from its inception. It is certainly a difficult substance to recycle, especially when combined with other substances, eg in a tetrapak. Many products claim to be recyclable, but that depends on local facilities. In Hart the only plastic that is recyclable is anything bottle shaped. This is the best quality plastic as it is strong and can be recycled most easily. All other plastics are best put in your black bin. These will then be burnt and the energy recovered. The best thing that we can all do is avoid plastic at every opportunity.

There are many opportunities to recycle other items, some of which I have mentioned here previously. At Fleet URC we have four collection tubs, two of which are new. For quite a while we have had a stamp collection box and a pen collection box. Pens get taken to Rymans and are put into their Terracycle collection point. The best alternatives to disposable pens are refillable pens and traditional wooden pencils!



The two newest collection boxes can be found in the corner by the kitchen hatch. The first takes **milk bottle lids only!** I am currently hand sorting every lid as there have been quite a few non-milk lids left in the box! Please make sure that any milk bottle lids you collect are clean. These are being bagged up and will be taken to a collection point from which they will be taken to be recycled. Proceeds from this will go to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

The second new box is for **clean foil**. I am also hand-sorting the foil that has been donated. So far it has all been clean, but hasn't all been foil! Blister packs from medication should not be included (these can be taken to Superdrug for recycling). Some peel-off, foil-like lids appear to be foil but seem to be layered with plastic, so should not be included. Please check the packaging if you are not sure, or try tearing the foil. Real foil is easy to tear, but trickier if layered with other materials.

And then we come to Christmas... a wonderful, but often wasteful time of year. In Hart commercial wrapping paper is not recyclable as most is poor quality, has glitter on it, or is layered with plastic! Alternatives **are** available... Fleet Scoop sells both coloured Kraft paper and Christmas patterned Kraft paper, along with paper tape, which is all fully recyclable. At home we now use fabric and ribbons to wrap presents, which we reuse year after year. The Japanese use Furoshiki, which is the name for both their traditional wrapping cloths and the techniques for tying them! There are lots of tips online if you

fancy trying this, but it really is as simple as wrapping a gift up in a square of cloth and tying the ends together over the top!

Similarly, many cards have glitter or embellishments that make them unrecyclable. It is very simple to tear off the front of the card and recycle the back, if you receive any like this. Ultimately, the best we can do is to be mindful when buying anything from food to gifts: is the item made from natural materials, is there an alternative without plastic, can it be purchased from a local business or second hand, is the gift really wanted? If everyone pulled together, the world would benefit from having a much greener Christmas! Happy recycling!

*Grace Bagshaw, Fleet URC*

## NEW EXERCISE CLASSES AT FLEET URC

From January 2023 three new exercise classes will be starting up in our church, led by Carol Woods (known professionally as Carol Ainsworth). Carol, who is a life member and Associate of the Royal Academy of Dance, was a movement therapist for adults with learning and physical challenges at Grenoside Hospital, Sheffield, and has taught children with various physical and mental challenges in Malaysia, bringing the joy of dance into their lives. She has also had many years' experience of teaching ballet, kinaesthetic expression, and movement therapy in England, Singapore and Malaysia.

Carol is offering three different exercise classes, all starting in the week commencing 9th January 2023:

### **Pilates for the Over 50s:**

Mondays, 12.15—1.15 pm (£30 for 6 classes)

### **Music and Movement for Pre-Schoolers:**

Fridays, 12—1 pm (£18 for 6 classes)

### **Adult Ballet for Beginners:**

Saturdays, 10—11 am (£30 for 6 classes)

All sessions of 6 classes will include a free 'bonus' class as week 7, ensuring that those who have been unable to attend a full session for whatever reason, will not miss out.

Come along and keep fit, while enjoying a time of fun and friendship!





## A PRAYER REFLECTING ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF THE URC

*'And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'*\*



Lord,

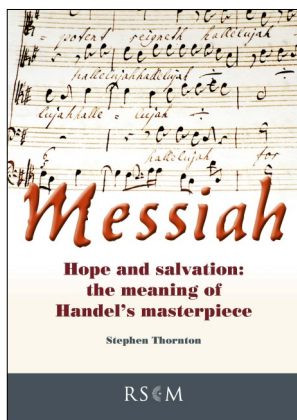
Today we remember all that has come to pass since the United Reformed Church was born, 50 years ago. There have been many happy, joyful times and some sad occasions. Sometimes, when we least expected it,

our way ahead was enveloped in a dark cloud as we passed through a period of anxiety and uncertainty; but with you ever by our side, guiding us along the path, we found the inner strength to overcome the difficulties we encountered.

We thank you for your everlasting, steadfast love and support, and ask that you will stretch out your reassuring, guiding hand as you lead us into the next 50 years and beyond. *Amen*

*Michael Orchard, Beacon Hill URC*

\*Matthew 28:20



### 'MESSIAH'—HOPE AND SALVATION: THE MEANING OF HANDEL'S MASTERPIECE

Handel's Messiah is well known to us, as it is performed by choirs and choral societies across the world every year. We are very familiar with the sublime music. But how often do the singers—or the audience—stop to think about what it is all about? This new book by Stephen Thornton (a previous minister at Fleet URC) brings to life the meaning behind the music.

David Jenkins, a former Moderator of the URC General Assembly, writes:

"Stephen Thornton has produced a brief and accessible book taking us through the amazing words in Handel's 'Messiah'. His passion for the work as a whole and the inspiration of the text shines through... We can now understand the thread linking all the passages, the sweeping themes being explored in word and music. We are provided with another dimension... If the light has gone out of Scripture for you, be prepared to be reawakened!



“This book is helpful in many ways! The RSCM and Stephen Thornton have provided us with a much needed exploration and stimulus. Thank you.”

‘Messiah’ (ISBN 9780854023349) is published by The Royal School of Music, and costs £5.95. The easiest way to order it is via the Royal School of Church Music Shop. Search under ‘Messiah’: <https://www.rscmshop.com/books/>.

It would make an ideal Christmas gift!



## SOME WORDS TO PONDER

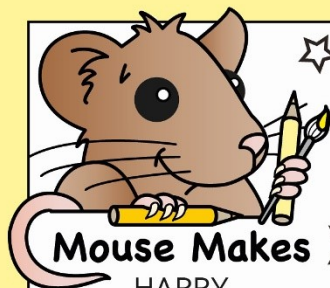
*This reworking of the 23rd Psalm seems particularly appropriate for this busy time of year:*

### THE 23rd PSALM FOR BUSY PEOPLE

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush.  
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.  
He provides me with images of stillness,  
which restore my serenity.  
He leads me in ways of efficiency, through calmness of mind,  
And His guidance is peace.  
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day  
I will not fret, for His presence is here,  
His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.  
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity.  
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity,  
My cup of joyous energy overflows.  
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours.  
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,  
and dwell in His House for ever.

*Toki Miyashina*





## Mouse Makes

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

Read the Christmas story in **Luke 2:1-21**.

Answer the questions, colour the picture and colour one star each day until Christmas.

Where was Mary's baby born?  
Why were Joseph and Mary there?

What did Mary dress her baby in?

Where did Mary lay her baby and why?

Why were the shepherds afraid?

What good news did the angel tell?

What did the shepherds do after they had seen the baby?

Who appeared praising God, what did they say?



G L  
 J O Y  
 M R C  
 S A Y G P  
 O N V O J  
 G B A B Y N G O O D A B L F  
 V O S H E P H E R D S A V I O U R  
 D A Y T M A R Y N E N F R R O  
 S C H R I S T E P G L T D  
 A L A I D R W H E O H  
 E P R A I S E L C  
 H E I V A L L S K  
 E E A N I G H T O L D  
 S M C N D E C R E E B  
 E A E I S I G N  
 E T D E

ALL • DECREE • JOSEPH • DAVID • BETHLEHEM • MARY • BIRTH • SON • LAID • MANGER  
 INN • SHEPHERDS • FLOCK • NIGHT • LORD • GLORY • GOOD NEWS • JOY • DAY  
 SAVIOUR • CHRIST • SIGN • BABY • GOD • PEACE • ANGELS • GO • SEE • TOLD • PRAISE