

THE



INE

Winter 2022 – 2023

EMMANUEL - GOD WITH US

by Rev Catherine Brobbey

Dear Friends,

I write shortly before the start of Advent. On Advent Sunday, 27th November, we begin reading (in the Church's lectionary cycle) from Matthew's Gospel. Throughout the coming year we'll hear, Sunday by Sunday, the account of Jesus' life primarily as told by Matthew.

Among the distinguishing features of Matthew's Gospel is his telling of Jesus' birth: the way in which an angel appears to Joseph; the coming of the wise men to Bethlehem, and the flight of Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus from

Bethlehem to Egypt to escape the persecution of King Herod. The Gospel opens dramatically and it ends in a similar tone. Matthew writes that after the crucifixion, Mary Magdalene and another Mary go to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid; the earth shakes, an angel rolls the tombstone away, tells the women not to be afraid and sends them off to share the good news of the resurrection with the disciples. As the women go, Jesus himself appears to them and repeats the angel's message. The gospel closes with the

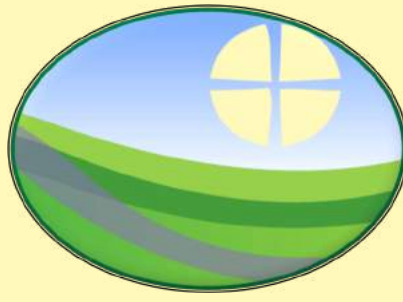
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All of us here at The Vine wish you

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS

and

A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

CHRISTMAS EVE

6.30pm Fairhill Methodist Church
Carol Service

6pm Glasbury Methodist Church
Crib Service

11.15pm Llanyrafon Methodist Church
Carol Service
with Communion

14 JANUARY 2023

10am-3pm Castle St Methodist Church
Safeguarding Training:
Advanced Module

5 MARCH 2023

4pm Blackwood Methodist Church
Big Sing

16 MARCH 2023

7pm Llanyrafon Methodist Church
Circuit Meeting

GWENT HILLS AND VALES CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE

Every Sunday evening, 6pm. Here's the link:
<https://zoom.us/j/94168420492?pwd=cjFTbzZUejhwTFBtVXdnL1lFVkdIdz09>
Meeting ID: 941 6842 0492
Passcode: 831858

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Deadline for items to be included in the Spring issue: 9th February 2023

THE UNCOMMON COMMON LANGUAGE

Rev Dr Gareth Edwards

Part of my Sabbatical over the Summer was spent looking at the ancient handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament, written in koine (*pronounced: "coin-a"*) Greek, the common tongue of the day. Specifically, I have been examining a process known as Textual Criticism, which seeks to evaluate the extant Bible manuscripts. For anyone wanting to hear my talk on this, and on the confidence that we have in the accuracy of the Bible that is in our hands today, then do please invite me to speak at your study-group or mid-week fellowship.

However, the bulk of my time on Sabbatical was spent brushing up on and improving my biblical Greek. I endeavoured to learn words, word-lists and grammars of koine Greek. My aim, at the end, was to translate the first few chapters of the Gospel of John.

John began his Gospel quite differently from the rest of the Gospel writers, who started with the historical accounts of the events that took place. Matthew and Luke talked about the circumstances leading to Jesus' birth. It is from these accounts that we get the story of the Christmas Nativity: Mary, Joseph, stable, manger, shepherds, angels – and the whole cast of Christmas.

Mark started off with Jesus entering into ministry, writing about a prophet, John the Baptist, who was preaching a message of repentance, preparing the people's hearts for the arrival of Jesus.

John talked about John the Baptist too, and the beginning of Jesus' ministry. But before he launched into this, he took the first 14 verses to lay down clearly the theme of his book – the gospel message that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save all people.

In the Greek, John begins his Gospel account with these words:

- 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
- 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
- 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν

Translating into English, it roughly reads:

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things through him became, and without him not one thing became which has become.

John takes us back further than the other Gospels, further than the first Christmas, further even than the first moment of Creation in the book of Genesis. The first picture we see of Jesus Christ is this – he is fully God. Eternal and infinite, uncreated. He is the Creator, for "all things through him became". Genesis tells us God spoke and the world was created. Both books proclaim in their opening verses that all things were created through the Word. All space, time, and material things – including you and me – exist today because of Him. Therefore, without him, nothing exists or could come to be.

John spent the rest of the first 14 verses of his book painting us the entire picture of God's salvation plan for humankind. The Creator came into his creation – the world he made.



Papyrus 46 is one of the oldest New Testament manuscripts in Greek. It is written on papyrus, from the second or third century. This manuscript was divided into two collections, one part in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and the other half resides at the University of Michigan in their papyrus collection. The P46 manuscript contains most of the Pauline Epistles, with only some parts missing.

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THE CHURCH AT THE NODDING REINDEER

Rev Steve Boxall

Hi, I'm Alan, and if you have time I'd like to tell you about my church. I never used to go; I mean, it didn't make sense, wasn't part of my life; but that was a year ago. That first day God changed something inside me, can't put it any other way. This church is different. Don't get me wrong, Jesus is still at the heart of it, with songs and prayers and stuff, but you have time to talk and share. All I can say is that I connect with Jesus here, so here's my story of how this church started, and the day we all first met.

It's a cold, bright winter's afternoon as I step from the bus and make my way across the cobbles in the pedestrianised main street of Ponty, a small Welsh town in a narrow valley, with rows of terraced houses clinging to its steep sides. I am heading for a coffee shop somewhere on the main street. Pausing to pull an envelope from my pocket, I take out the note it contains, being careful not to drop the other somewhat unusual contents, and read it aloud: *'Look out for the nodding reindeer in the window.'* I look up and scan the shop fronts on both sides of the street. Trees line the route, decked with lights that give a glow to the scene. I shiver and murmur 'Great' under my breath, as there seem to be so many windows brightly lit with festive scenes. I decide to ask directions and approach a man picking up litter with a grab, his fluorescent jacket done up tight against the cold. Just as I am about to speak, the man looks up smiling and simply enquires, 'Reindeer?'

I step back in surprise, 'How did you know?'

He simply points with his litter picker, 'It's over there. Is there an offer on or summut, 'cause you're the third person who wanted to know?'

I reflect on this, 'Maybe that is why I decided to come today. Maybe it was the draw of having won something.'

I quicken my steps towards an inviting-looking shop, the smell of coffee strong as I pass the nodding reindeer in the window and enter the warmth. I stand for a minute taking in the theme – rustic with a log cabin feel. A young woman in a lumberjack shirt and jeans approaches, greeting me in a Polish accent: 'Good afternoon, would you like to be shown to a table?'

I hesitate, not knowing what to say as I read her name badge, 'Uh – hi – uh – Lena – uh – I was given a note saying to meet someone here?'

Lena's approach changes; she steps closer to me and, as if saying one half of a cryptic password, she whispers in her wonderful accent, 'Do you have what you were given?'

I feel for the envelope in my pocket and nod. Lena simply nods back, 'Good. Follow me.' I follow, all the while wondering if I have stumbled onto the set of a spy movie.

The contact, sorry, Lena, leads me to a long table with bench seats on either side, where two people are already settled: a red-faced man in his fifties and a tired-looking woman with a baby in her arms. They look enquiringly at me as I smile and nod and sit opposite them. Lena gestures, 'What would you like to drink? Don't worry it is paid for already.'

I look at the others and the red-faced man smiles. 'We didn't pay either.'

I notice they have ordered so I ask for a single-shot latte. We three look at each other and then the man opposite breaks the ice. 'Graham.' He offers his hand which is warm as I shake it.

The woman looks up briefly from her baby, 'Donna.'

'Alan,' I respond.

Just then the door opens again, and another bewildered person is led to our table: a young man,

in black hoodie and white baseball cap. He swaggers to the table, a questioning look on his face. We nod in unison and introduce ourselves. He swings his leg over the bench seat and sits, 'Elliott.' Getting out his mobile he is instantly engrossed, oblivious to all around as if hard-wired to the device.

I scan the faces around me at this table; a diverse group, but what or who has brought us together? Maybe it's a promotion they're running here. I am about to start a conversation when the bell over the door rings and in walks a tall woman in a navy business suit, scanning the room with an air of superiority. There is a short conversation with Lena and she is led to our table. She looks down at us; once again the introductions, then she sits on the edge of the bench seat, away from us. This, apparently, is Emma, chief executive for Boodles department store. She starts checking emails on her phone sighing, 'I don't know why I came.'

I take a deep breath, 'Sooo...what's brought you here? Is it the same as me?' I take out the envelope and place it on the table. Graham, then Donna, then Elliott all put identical envelopes next to mine, the latter without looking up from his phone. Finally Emma, with finger and thumb, lifts her envelope from her expensive handbag and, holding it at arm's length as if it is somehow contaminated, drops it on the table.

We all stare at these five envelopes, each with the words 'Come all that are finding life hard.' Just then Lena appears next to our table, leading a smiling woman with blue hair, wearing bright green-rimmed glasses. Her clothes seem to be a mix of fashions and colours. Spotting the envelopes on the table, she adds hers. 'I'm Billy,' she says and sits down. 'I love a bit of murder mystery, don't you?'

Graham shakes his head, 'I don't think this is anything to do with playing games. Does anyone know what's going on?'

I gesture to everyone around the table, 'Until this morning, we had never met each other. The only thing that connects us is these envelopes. I think the way to find out is to tell our stories, then maybe the link will be revealed. First of all, who gave you the envelope?'

Elliott, looks up from his mobile, 'Some woman who volunteers at the youth centre.'

Donna smiles, 'A woman who works at the clinic.'

Graham picks up his envelope, 'A woman who regularly visits the retirement village where I live.'

Billy pipes up, 'A woman I got chatting with in the charity shop.'

Emma, sitting a bit closer now, 'It was also a woman. I met her at Zumba.'

I finished off, 'It was a young woman I stood next to at the open-air carol service in the square, blonde hair, red boots.'

There is a clamour of voices as we all realise from my description that it seems to be the same person. With all the excited chatter, we don't notice the figure that appears at the end of the table at first, blonde hair tucked up under a winter hat, a broad smile that lights up the room, a winter 'Scandi' jumper and jeans. In her

(Continued on Page 6)



THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS

My favourite carol is “**Hark the Herald Angels Sing**”¹ because it is so full of prophetic, poetic, profound wisdom about what actually happened at that time that we call Christmas, the time when God came among us. The time when God became human – not only human but a helpless baby.

Stuart Townend puts it this way “*fullness of God in helpless babe*”². Wesley's version reflects the language of the 18th century “*veiled in flesh the godhead see, hail the incarnate diety, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Immanuel ... mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die.*”

Christmas is about the wonder of God becoming like us. God comes as one of the thousands of babies born each day. He comes born of a teenager in a hovel. Mary will go through what every mother goes through – morning sickness, fatigue, carrying burdensome weight, excruciating labour. God comes as a vulnerable baby.

When we think of the Messiah we tend to get caught up with the words from Isaiah, beautifully put to music by Handel in his oratorio “Messiah” – “*wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.*” That imagery, as wonderful as it is, can make us think of God as more of a superhuman rather than a few-pound vulnerable baby.

God comes among us defenceless: as the smallest, frailest, weakest – wrapped in swaddling bands, totally dependent. Birth takes place (when all goes well) when the baby is strong enough to live outside the womb and yet small enough to be able to move through the birth canal, and this is what God does. God becomes as one of us – totally: submitting to that process – being formed within a woman, unable to live independently of another human being.

God's desire to become our friend, our companion, meant that God was willing to become nothing more than a baby. Born of a young girl whose life was under threat of stoning; amongst animals before fleeing as a refugee. What Christmas does is that it enables us to see God afresh:

**God places his life in our hands.
God entrusts himself to us.**

¹Charles Wesley, 1707 – 1788

²“In Christ Alone”, ©Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2001

Rev Andrea Sims

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THE CHURCH AT THE NODDING REINDEER

gloved hands is a battered, stringless guitar that she holds close. Our conversation dies as we each recognise the woman and as if it has been planned, we all respond to her presence with, ‘Daina!’

Carefully placing the guitar on the table and looking from one to the other of us, she laughs, ‘I thought I might get that reaction.’

Excitedly, everyone makes room for her to sit down. As if on cue, Lena appears with a mug of hot chocolate which she places on the table in front of Daina, who smiles, ‘Thank you Lena.’ She looks at us, ‘I come here a lot.’ Taking a deep breath she continues, ‘So I can see you are wondering why **you** are all here. Well, some of you have known me for many years, others for a short while, but in the conversations we have had, and I treat them as confidential, I have got to know something of each of you. And what I sensed in you was a loneliness and a deep longing to find acceptance and community.’

THE CHURCH AT THE NODDING REINDEER

Gesturing to the collection of envelopes on the table, she goes on, 'You each received one of those containing a note inviting you here, and a guitar string loosely tied into the shape of a cross, signifying my Christian faith and what I believe. The note the guitar string will make when plucked represents your unique, wonderful selves, as if it was meant to be the first letter of your Christian names.'

Daina picks up the old guitar, 'This was given to me by a man in a hard hat who found it in a cupboard in my church just before they started to demolish it. I held it in my arms as the machines went to work, with a deep sadness in my heart. The sound chamber in this guitar has not resonated to music for a long time, just like my old church which had stood silent for many years. But look around: you all have a longing for community; maybe this is it, sat around this table, each of you with your own string.'

Daina pauses and I will never forget what happens next. Taking each string in turn, she attaches them to the guitar and finally plays a chord which sounds discordant and out of tune. She explains, 'Each string is new and needs to settle.' Gradually she tunes and retunes the strings until the chord she plays sounds rich and full. The guitar seems to come back to life as Daina plays different chords, the strings now settled both into their own individual notes and into harmony with each other. She surprises us by singing about brothers and sisters serving each other, her voice stilling the whole coffee shop. The lyrics speak of being there for each other whether we are sad or happy. In the face of someone caring that much for me, I can't speak. I shake my head – no one has ever been willing to be there for me like this.

As applause rings out at the end of the song, Daina lays down the guitar. Over a meal, conversations begin; each of us reflecting how out of tune we feel; how life sometimes pushes us even further out of tune. But in the midst of this group of seven, I sense a special atmosphere seeming to settle over us, somehow lifting our spirits.

I later realised the Holy Spirit was at work that night, the discordant notes of loneliness replaced by the in-tune true notes of each life finally resonating with the presence of Christ, and a community with which to harmonise. Each of us left that night promising to meet up after Christmas around this same table. I felt alive, with new friends and the beginnings of a support network. For me it came at exactly the right time in my life; OK at first I didn't like the religious angle, but I don't see it as a religious group, more a Christ-centred support group.

Also later, Daina told me that she walked home that night holding the guitar close, with a prayer on her lips for every one of her friends around that table; that the spirit of Christ would be the companion on each of our Emmaus Roads and one day when we sat there, we would recognise Jesus in our midst.



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New Places for New People (NPNP) is a Methodist project focused on forming new Christian communities for those not yet part of an existing church. They may look quite different from established churches because they will always reflect the new people that come together there.



“There is Room” is the Methodist Church’s 2022 Advent and Christmas campaign. It seeks to demonstrate the Methodist Church as an open, welcoming and inclusive place for all. Through the lens of a Methodist Way of Life, it offers content relevant for today’s world, aiming to encourage and support anyone who wants to find out more about Christian faith and the Methodist Church.

“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” *Luke 2:7*

In the Christmas story, we are made acutely aware that there was no room for Joseph and Mary to rest when they arrived in Bethlehem, in the more traditional places reserved for hospitality in Jewish culture. This meant they had to use other spaces which **were** available.

Jesus' birth changed everything and made room for us in God's Kingdom. As part of the Methodist Church, we seek to demonstrate our open, inclusive and welcoming nature by saying to all people, **'There is room for you.'**

Many of you are already actively involved in this by participating in the Warm Spaces scheme, providing a comfortable place for folk to come and spend time with a hot drink, food and company. Let us all continue to pray that our Lord will keep showing us ways in which we can extend his welcome to everyone! In the meantime, enjoy the poem on the next page written for this Christmas by Tim Baker from the All We Can team, and also this edition’s Word Search on Page 10, which is based on the Advent study for “There is Room”, printed below:

Advent 1

There is room for you and me, featured character: You and me Isaiah 2: 1 – 5; Matthew 24: 36 – 44

Advent 2

There is room for difference, featured character: Wise men Isaiah 11: 1 – 10; Matthew 3: 1 – 12

Advent 3

There is room for all of nature, featured character: Sheep Isaiah 35: 1 – 10; Matthew 11: 2 – 11

Advent 4

There is room for all ages and genders, featured character: Mary Isaiah 7: 10 – 16; Matthew 1:18 – 25

Christmas Eve / Crib

There is room for people experiencing poverty, featured character: Shepherds Isaiah 10: 1 – 4;
Luke 2: 8 – 20

Christmas Day

There is room for God, featured character: Jesus Isaiah 9: 2 – 7; Luke 2: 1 – 14

1st Sunday after Christmas

There is room for refugees, featured character: Joseph Isaiah 63: 7 – 9; Matthew 2: 13 – 23

Epiphany

There is room for revelation, featured character: Angel Isaiah 60: 1 – 6; Matthew 2: 1 – 12

There is room.

There is room for you.

There is a space in the world for you.

There's a place in God's story for you.

Love actually is all around in the glistening lights,

the warmth of the fire on winter nights,

the "here-ness" of you, and you, and you.

Of course there is room.

How could there not be

when the music is playing,

the people are praying

and all of the universe is saying,

"You are loved!"

This is where the story starts,

the story that God is not apart.

She's here, right here.

Whether you're a wise man or a shepherd,

feeling like an angel,

or holding a story that's hopeful or shameful,

this is the time when we welcome the stranger,

like Mary welcoming men to the manger,

and discovering that these strangers are angels

with messages of love for you and me;

messages to hang on the Christmas trees of our hearts.

This story is yours because

God is here, not there,

near not far.

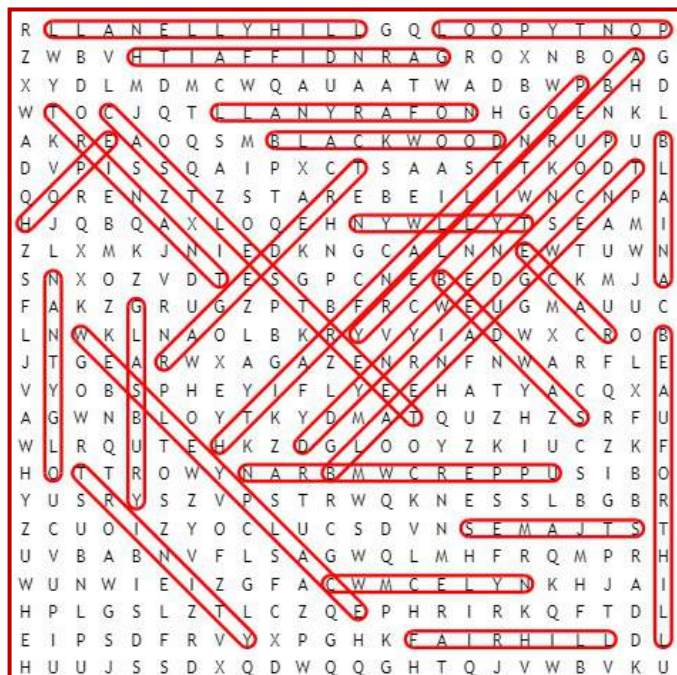
Because Christmas is coming and of course...

There is room.

Tim Baker, All We Can

SPECIAL THANKS FROM UPPER CWMBRAN

SPRING WORD SEARCH SOLUTION (with apologies for the confusion – better late than never!)



Thanks to the generosity of all the visitors who attended our Saturday Afternoon Teas in August, we have raised a grand total of £1000 (which included a very generous donation from one family). This is now going to help the running of our chapel. Thank you all so much – we are overwhelmed. God Bless!

Carole Welsby

*Rob and Karen
Powell enjoying an
August Afternoon
Tea at Upper
Cwmbrân
Methodist Church,
with their dogsitting
charges Moose and
Mabel.*



*Puzzle created by Joanna
using wordmint.com*

ADVENT
AGES
ALL NATURE
ANGEL
CHRISTMAS
DIFFERENCE
EPIPHANY
GENDERS
GOD
JESUS
JOSEPH
MARY
POVERTY
REFUGEES
REVELATION
SHEEP
SHEPHERDS
THERE IS ROOM
WISE MEN
YOU AND ME

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

EMMANUEL - GOD WITH US

disciples and Jesus gathered on a mountain in Galilee from where Jesus sends the disciples out to preach, baptise and fulfil his mission. 'And remember,' he says finally, 'I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

'I am with you...': Matthew ends as he began. When the angel appeared to Joseph to tell him of the birth of his son, the name given to the child was 'Jesus' and in fulfilment of an ancient prophecy he is also called 'Emmanuel', which means 'God is with us.'

God is with us: this promise opens and closes Matthew's gospel.

God is with us: as Advent begins, as Christmas approaches, as a new year beckons.

I am reminded of the words of a poem by the poet and academic, Minnie Louise Haskins. It is said that the young Princess Elizabeth (then aged 13) gave the poem to her father, King George VI, who quoted it in his 1939 Christmas radio broadcast to the Empire:

'And I said to the man
 who stood at the gate of the year:
 "Give me a light
 that I may tread safely into the unknown."
 And he replied:
 "Go out into the darkness
 and put your hand
 into the hand of God.
 That shall be to you better than light
 and safer than a known way.'"

To a nation facing the uncertainty of war, the words struck a chord. They echo something of the promise in Matthew's Gospel that in Jesus, Emmanuel, God is with us: today, tomorrow and always, however uncertain, unclear and unpredictable the way may be.

The Anglican priest and poet, **Malcolm Guite**, weaves the beginning and ending of Matthew's Gospel together in a sonnet based on Jesus' final words. He writes:

**Your final words fulfil your ancient name,
 A promise hidden in Emmanuel,
 A promise that can never fade or fail:
 I will be with you till the end of time;
 I will be with you when you scale the height,
 And with you when you fall to earth again,
 With you when you flourish in the light,
 And with you through the shadow and the pain.
 Our God with us, you leave and yet remain
 Risen and hidden with us everywhere;
 Hidden and flowing in the wine we share,
 Broken and hidden in the growing grain.
 Be with us till we know we are forgiven,
 Be with us here till we're with you in heaven.¹**

'Our God with us': Emmanuel.

May the promise of God's constant presence bring you peace and hope as Advent gives way to Christmas and a new year unfolds.

With every blessing,
 Catherine

Rev Catherine Brobbey

¹"I Will be With You", Malcolm Guite, *Parable and Paradox*, Canterbury Press; Norwich, 2016

(Continued from Page 3)

The Creator became flesh and made his dwelling among his creatures.

This is so momentous and significant. Imagine this:

- * Jesus who owns the universe, came into this world, and had to find a place to be born.
- * Jesus who is Almighty, came into this world, and needed to be carried by human hands.
- * Jesus who caused everything to become, came into this world, becoming a newborn baby.

This condescension was a big thing. Martin Luther wrote of it: "The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that he sunk himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding." God, being God, is beyond my reach, but I'm not beyond his reach. He lowered himself so that I can reach him. Christ's birth brought the infinite God within reach of finite man.

And I come to understand his heart to me – he loves me and longs to communicate his love to me. He wants to bless me and save me. Whatever language, whatever season, this is the Christmas message. This is the Gospel.

Rev Dr Gareth Edwards

THE UNCOMMON COMMON LANGUAGE



PRAY WITHOUT CEASING...

HAPPY NEWS!!

As the life of our Circuit grows and evolves, we join together in praying for God's grace over the necessary transitions that accompany this process, sometimes joyful, sometimes painful, and more often than not a bit of both! Below is an excerpt from our Superintendent Presbyter, Rev Catherine Brobbey's recent announcement to the Circuit. In it, she asks us to pray for both presbyters and their families; please add prayers for all of us involved in the below-named circuits and churches, that our Lord would give each of us a renewed vision for this upcoming new season!

A PRAYER: FOR THE LATE QUEEN AND THE NEW KING

Creator God,
We give thanks for the life of
Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
We honour her life of service
built on a firm foundation of faith
and an exemplary commitment to duty.
At this challenging time for this nation,
grant us words to speak
when words are all we have
to ease the pain of those who mourn,
and to show our loving care.
We especially pray for King Charles III,
that he might lean upon Christ,
the only perfect Word,
whose Kingdom is love.
We pray that God will enfold him,
Christ will uphold him,
and the Holy Spirit will guide him
in all things until all weeping has passed;
and flickering hope parts the shadows at last.
We offer our prayer
in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

"We are pleased to share with you the news that following her visit to the Circuit on 10th November, Rev Lorette Hinson has accepted the invitation to minister in the Gwent Hills and Vales Circuit from September 2023. Lorette is currently a presbyter in the South West Wales Circuit, with pastoral charge of churches in Carmarthen, Kidwelly, Carew and Milford Haven. She will take over from Rev Dr Gareth Edwards as minister of Beaufort Hill, Blaina, Nantyglo, St James (Ebbw Vale), Tredegar, Tyllwyn and Wesley Place (Beaufort).

We are also pleased to inform you that Rev Dr Gareth Edwards has accepted an appointment as the new Superintendent presbyter of the Neath Port Talbot Circuit, beginning September 2023.

*Details of the farewell and welcome services will follow in due course, but in the meantime **please remember in your prayers Gareth, Lorette and their families as they prepare to move.**"*