

# FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES

The magazine of Sydenham Methodist Church



*December*   
2014

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## **FROM THE EDITOR**



Do you enjoy taking photographs? A selfie perhaps? Maybe you even like to video special occasions. This Christmas, maybe you'll do one or other as you gather with family and friends.

Obviously in Jesus' day there weren't cameras. But, in Luke Chapter 2, we read of the birth of Jesus. As we read, we can visualise the sights and sounds of all that happened when Jesus was born. As those images come to life, we can experience something of what it would have been like. We can imagine ourselves there.

I would have liked to have been one of the shepherds hearing the angel saying, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

Our Saviour.

**CAROLYN HALL**

With thanks to this edition's contributors.

Dear Friends

'Jesus is coming – look busy' a catchphrase we may have heard. Christ is always coming, always entering into a troubled, wounded world to bring healing and restoration. Christ's coming enabled and still enables the whole world to know God's 'hope', 'peace', 'joy' and 'love', four simple words spoken at this time of year. Yet for a hopeless, restless, angry, selfish world they hold such promise.

God's hope – that He is restoring His Creation back to Himself, and will carry it on to completion - until the day of Jesus Christ, when all of creation will bow the knee in declaring that Jesus is Lord.

God's peace – in the knowledge that Jesus Christ has conquered the world.

God's Joy – rejoicing in the inheritance we share as holy people in the kingdom of light.

God's love – which caused Him to give His one and only Son to the world.

During Advent, on four consecutive Sundays before Christmas day, we light candles on the advent wreath as we remember and celebrate that Christ is the Light of the World, and He offers hope, peace, joy and love to the world, represented by the four candles surrounding the central light, which is lit on Christmas day - to represent Jesus Christ.

May you have a Christmas full of hope, peace, joy and love.

Yours in Christ

**Karen**

## **Congratulations and best wishes to those who have recently married:**

Philip Patterson and Melissa Bryans  
David Reid and Carla Dickson  
Timothy Spence and Jennifer Doak

## **We welcomed the following to our church family:**

### **Baptisms**

Caleb Thomas, son of Simon and Deborah Corbett  
Sophia Isabella, daughter of Christopher and Joanna Sloan

### **Thanksgivings**

Ramzie Noelle } daughters of Peter and Carley Wilton  
Cora Kelly        }  
Zac, son of Harry and Kim Hawkins  
Ruan Theodore, son of Ally Gray

### **Deaths**

**We give God thanks for those lives which touched ours while they lived among us:**

Betty Hutchinson  
Stephanie Matthews  
Kathleen McFall  
Margaret Nesbitt

(As of 17 November 2014)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Christingle service at 6.30pm  
14th December

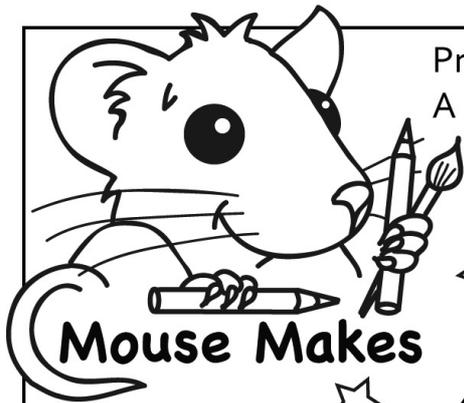


Carols by Candlelight at 7pm  
21st December



Christmas Day service  
at 9.30am





Presents at Christmas under the tree,  
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me.

*But what is Christmas? What is it about?  
Just look in the Bible and you will find out!*

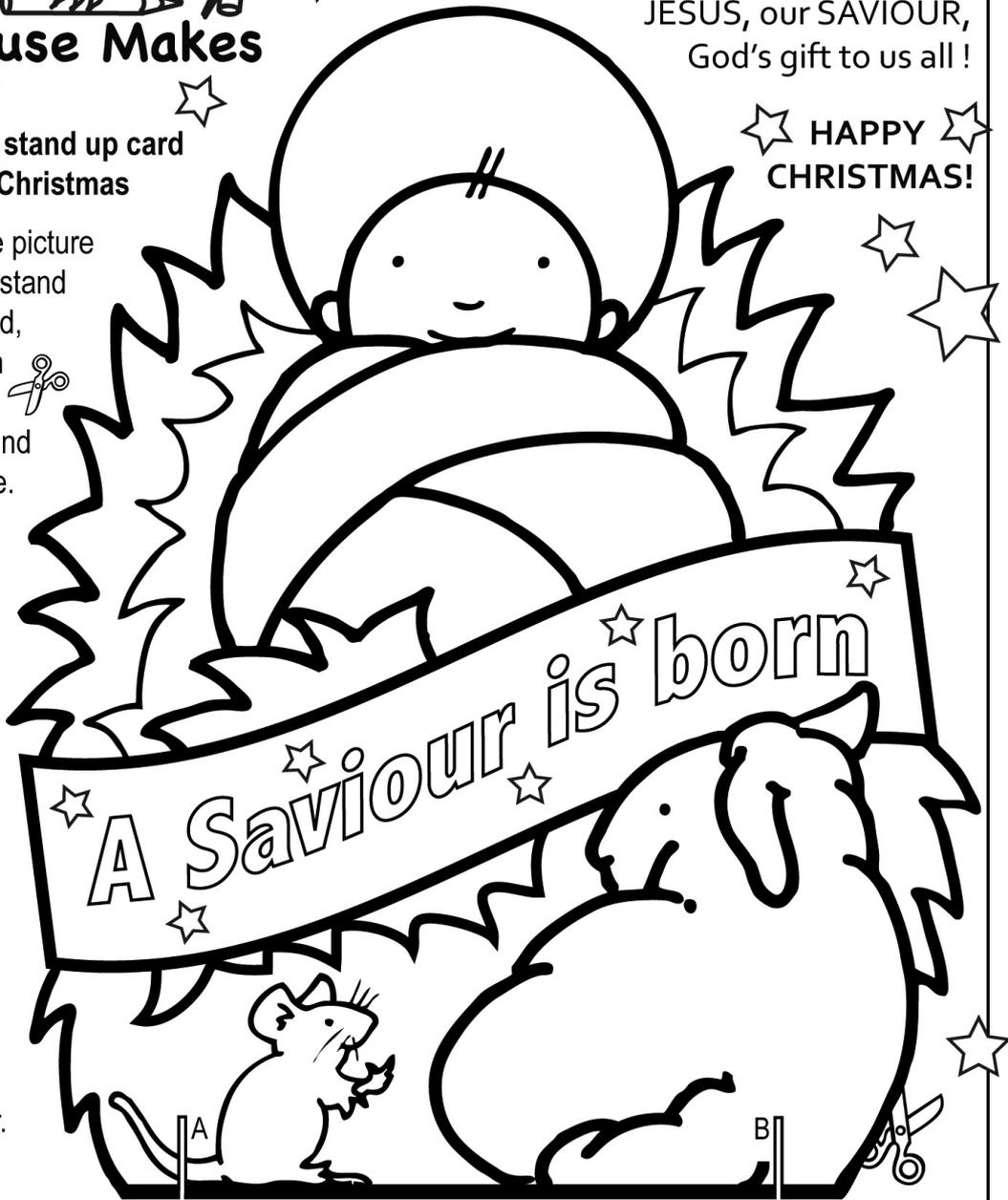
It's about JESUS, the best present of all,  
JESUS, our SAVIOUR,  
God's gift to us all !

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

**Make a stand up card  
for Christmas**

Glue the picture  
and the stand  
onto card,  
colour in  
then cut   
out around  
the edge.

Cut  
along  
the  
slots  
marked  
A and B  
on the  
picture  
and  
the  
stand,  
then  
slot  
together.



STAND

**Happy Christmas**

## **KING OF THE STAR**

Yonder star in the sky  
Shining bright in our eyes  
As we travel the wilderness wide;  
And we travel by night  
With the star in our sight  
May the heavenly sign be our guide.

For the star is a sign  
Of a new king divine  
So we come with glad hearts from afar;  
When a new king is born  
And a new age shall dawn  
Then we'll worship the King of the Star.

Precious burdens we bear  
Gifts of frankincense, myrrh  
And of gold for the new coming king;  
Then we'll all bow the knee  
When the new king we see  
And we'll offer the gifts that we bring.

Yet these gifts are a sign  
That this new king, divine  
Will wear thorns for a crown and be scarred;  
But he'll rise from the grave  
Through him all can be saved  
So we'll worship the King of the Star

For the star is a sign  
Of our new king divine  
And we come with glad hearts from afar;  
For the new king is born  
And a new age has dawned  
And we worship the King of the Star.

Well, let us pray that new hearts will worship the King this  
year!

**Nigel Beeton**

## AN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE!!

On the 24 February 2014, a team left the Parish Church in Hollywood to travel to the village of Kkalwe in Uganda. The purpose was to open the new school block built by Fields of Life, and to work with the children from the school doing sports, activities, craft and health. The team consisted of 17 people which included my dad Brian Maxwell, and myself.



Although this was my second visit to Uganda, nothing prepared me for the love we experienced from the villagers – it was overwhelming. These people have so little and yet so much – they are overflowing with joy, an appreciation for the things that matter in life, not totally distracted and occupied by materialism and society – we could learn a lot from them. Hollywood Parish supported this build financially, and also by donating crafts and materials, clothes, pencils, scissors, toothbrushes and toothpaste, as did some of our congregation. Thank you.

We travelled one hour to the village every morning to do educational crafts and sports with over 600 children. The 17 of us just about coped, so how the 10 teachers they have at the school manage is utterly amazing!

Every morning started with devotions by the Parish pastor, followed by choruses, memory verses and teaching the actions and words of St. Patrick's breastplate prayer. Then we split the children into 3 groups: pre-school, primary school age and secondary school age for activities and crafts. We included basic health education/awareness sessions, emphasising cleanliness and minimising the spread of germs/bacteria.



We taught them how to make tippy-taps, and the girls how to make reusable sanitary towels. The teacher with us that day was keen to use these same materials to make reusable nappies too. They were hopeful these ideas could generate some income for the village by selling them on.





Then came the day of the grand opening. The quality of the building work was excellent and the men had worked very hard to get it finished on time. There were over 1,000 people including the local newspapers, radio station, local Mayors and local district representatives. The Head boy and girl cut the ribbon to open the school and the celebrations continued long into the day.



17 people went out thinking they were going to help the villagers of Kkalwe, but each one of us came home having received much more than we had given.

On a personal note, since the opportunity arose to go on this team it has been a huge journey. I have been really challenged as to what it means to 'step out' and get 'wet feet' and TRUST God completely. I learned about a state of heart that involves total surrender of our most precious possessions (in my case my family). Then, more shaking,

uncertainty when serious illness hit my family. My uncle who was my link on this team, was unable to go due to a tumour and emergency surgery. Yet, each time the worries and anxiety hit, God's perfect peace was there for the taking.

I feel blessed by God by having a wonderful African experience - meeting special African people, having a fully recovered and healthy uncle and now having a new Christian family in the special bond now shared with the team. A bonus for me was being able to experience all this with my dad.

I can't remember where I heard this, but it stuck with me: 'It's God's work, God's mission (whether in Sydenham or overseas), he just asks us to step out and be part of it.'



**Julie Armstrong**

## CONSUMER DETOX

The other night I was sitting in McDonalds with my niece and nephews, enjoying a McFlurry (hey, everyone deserves a treat now and then!). As I glanced round the restaurant I noticed a group of teenagers sitting nearby. They weren't being yobbish (someone let the Daily Mail know). They weren't being loud. In fact they weren't making any noise at all. Their heads were buried in their phones.

Later, as we walked to the exit, we passed a father having quality time with his young daughter. Or at least she was attempting to have quality time with him, showing him her new balloon, courtesy of Ronald McDonald. Sadly, he was unaware of its tremendous helium qualities, as he, too, had his head buried in his mobile, oblivious to both the balloon and his young girl.

I'm old enough to be labelled ancient by our youth, and youthful enough to still be invited to Young Adults outings. In the fifteen or so years since I last called myself a teenager, a lot has changed. Technology has comprehensively, yet perhaps subtly, transformed how we do life - for better and for worse.

I'd like to recommend a book which helps us to reflect a little on the good, the bad and the ugly of this brave new world in which we live. It's called ***Consumer Detox*** by **Mark Powley** and I encountered it through our Book Club in Church. Powley thoughtfully guides us through some of implications of living in a shallow, instantaneous, consumer-driven society. I appreciated how he wasn't over-reactionary against the culture we find ourselves in, for there are a lot of benefits from living in the period of time in which we do. He

points out, for example, that even royalty throughout history did not have access to the sheer variety of food stuff which we do. I'll try not to take Tesco for granted again.

Yet the consumerism which saturates our daily lives brings with it a host of negative effects on us. We're probably becoming more impatient and less content. The second part of his book helpfully sets out several 'rhythms' which challenge us to live a little differently to the norm. I found the sections on being fully present with others, and on choosing deep rest over shallow rest, especially helpful. He grounds his advice on the advice God has given us through the example, teachings and completed work of Jesus.

So give this book a go. It might change how you do life. You can probably even download it onto your Kindle.

## **Sammy Stanfield**

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**1 Cross**

**+**

**3 Nails**

**=**

**4 Given**

**On Killarney Methodist Church Notice Board**

**(submitted by Don and Norma Murdock)**

## SUMMER IN CHEMNITZ

As many of you know, I went to place called Chemnitz in East Germany during the summer. I went through the IMYC (Irish Methodist youth and children's department). Going to Germany was one of the best things I have ever done in my life. It was great to get to know the other people on the team who were from all over Ireland. I was worried at first, as there were 22 of us going, but soon everyone was great friends by the second day.

In Chemnitz we were working on a street called the Brühl. The Brühl is a rundown street that suffered greatly when the Berlin wall fell down. When Russia was in control of East Germany, The Brühl was a main street supplying everything from bread to clothes. When the Berlin wall came down, many people left Chemnitz for the more developed West Germany leaving many streets like the Brühl abandoned. One of the main aims when we were out there, was to regenerate and try to improve the Brühl and make it a better place for the community.

We were working alongside Barry Sloan and a team that he helped set up called the Inspire team. Their aim is to show God to the local community.

The first day was spent doing gardening and making the Brühl look nice. The street itself was really run down with graffiti on all of the deserted shop windows. Along the middle of the street, there were trees planted with flower beds at the base of them. These were full of weeds, so one of our jobs was to pull all the weeds up and plant bright, colourful flowers in their place. Even though it may not sound like it was, it was really enjoyable, and was a great way to get to know the other team members. That night was spent doing a prayer walk around the local area praying for all different aspects of Chemnitz, for example, the schools, families, and the churches.

The next three days were spent preparing and hosting a street festival. This was the main missionary focus of the trip and was a great way to get the community together. For the children, there was face painting, different sports activities and a bouncy castle. For the adults, there was a café which was really successful. Each day there was a different craft activity which was also really popular.

As part of the street festival, there were night time activities. The first night was an open mike night when Barry and his band, the Greenisland played. Some of the other team members also played. The next night was my favourite night. This was an Irish themed night where Irish music was played, and a lot of Irish dancing! At the start it was only the Irish ones who were dancing but soon we got other people up. It was really encouraging to see that we were helping to bring the community together.

The third night was meant to be another music night but as Germany were in the semi-final of the world cup, we ended up going into the town centre and watching the match alongside 3000 other Germans. The atmosphere was amazing and the buzz when Germany won was unreal.

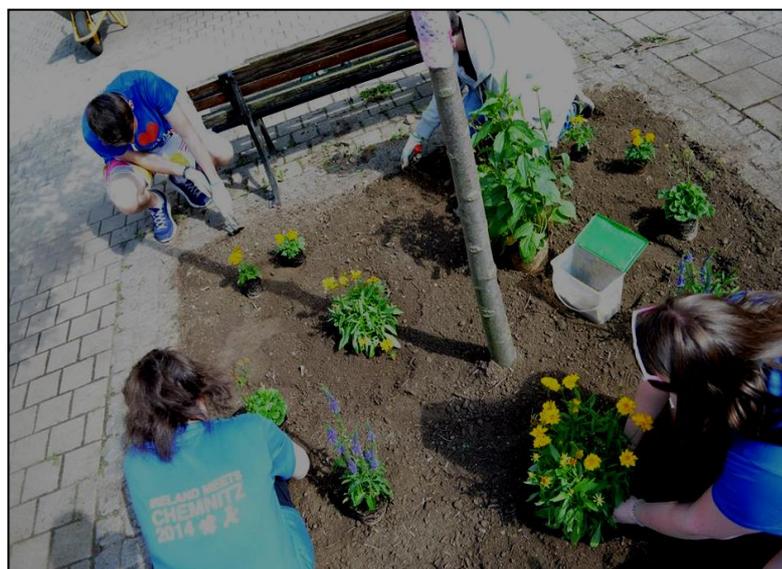
On the Saturday, we had a day off and travelled into the nearest major city which was Leipzig. Here, we got a mini tour and then were let loose to do what we wanted! Once we had finished in Leipzig, we went round to a member of the inspire team's house for a barbeque.

Our last day, the Sunday, was my favourite day. On this day, we went to the local church. It is totally different to our churches. For example, they stay seated whilst singing but stand up to pray. The minister only talked for around 10 minutes and there was a 10 minute long violin solo!

Even though most of the time we had no idea what was happening it was still a really good experience. In the afternoon, we held our own service with all members of the team taking part, and Barry giving communion. This was a great way to end our trip.

Going to Germany was a great eye-opener and really showed me that God works in ways that you don't expect. I came away with some really good friends, and will always have the memories of going away.

## Laura Gray



## SYDENHAM EXPLORER SCOUTS

Back at it again, this year so far has been action packed.

Our summer camp this year was to Gosford forest park. The weather started fine as we started to pitch the tents. With eleven Explorer Scouts at camp we had a few small tents and one large tent known as the guest house but as soon as we pitched it, it began to fall down. No one had noticed that the poles were falling apart again (as they had been repaired so many times before). Various antics followed including shelter building and then testing. Just to point out, the testing part involves a large container of water being poured over the shelter and its builders!



One day we will be able to build a water tight version! This was followed by the Scout challenges as devised by Andy Gray. Most involving running around with water balloons! The main event of the weekend was the Go-Karting. After a good route march to the track we were issued with suitable attire and helmets and shown to our machines. The races were divided up so each race had four racers and 3 or 4 laps. This was a hotly contested event.

Clearly Ian McGuffin had the die hard skill to keep his foot planted through the corners, whereas Andy Gray was skilful in defensive driving. Others including the Steeles and Knoxs were ice cold in their driving style leaving lesser racers in their wake! It all changed once it started raining, I turned out to be a master in the wet and quickly the score boards changed. By the end the final race turned out to be Ian McGuffin, Andy Gray, myself and Adam Steele. This ended in very close quarters with Andy Gray crowned the winner! Everyone raced superbly and it was great fun.



For our autumn camp, we returned to Slievenaman, always a favourite location. The weather was superb all weekend as we hiked and ate our way around the Mourne. As Scout numbers are down this year, we joined up with the one adventurous Scout that could come and we headed off on Friday evening. After a night hike we settled down for an uncharacteristically early night (1am!) and got an early start the next morning.

Saturday is traditionally the big hike day. So we set off for the Mourne. Our minister, Rev. Karen Spence joined us on our walk up Slieve Binnian. The Walk was only 5 miles but it was very steep, but worth it for the views at the top over Spelga Dam.



Tuesday night programmes continued unabated with some new games and the usual activities, with one or two exceptions. During one of our meeting nights a movie quote was written on a whiteboard in the wee room. This was considered serious enough to put the accused on trial. As Luke Sunerton was the most guilty looking, he was placed on trial for the crime in front of a jury of his peers. The council for the prosecution's case was purely circumstantial and I believe Luke could have been acquitted of the crime, if his own defence team had not accused each member of the jury of the crime complete with possible motives and evidence! Unfortunately he was found guilty and made to clean the white board to as new standard, which he did to good effect.

## **Explorer Scout Leaders**

# **AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE NEILANDS**

## **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S WORKER**

### **Did you get married recently?**

I did, yes, and three months in I am still trying to get used to the name change and the fact that when someone calls me Mrs Neilands, I think they are referring to my mother-in-law! But so far it's been great, not too many disagreements, and when there is one, it can always be easily fixed with bunch of flowers!

### **Occupation:**

Well I have two! I work for two churches, the first you hopefully already know, which is Sydenham as family and children's worker, which seems so far so good! Well, no one has told me otherwise yet... so I will assume until you do it's going well! Seriously though it is great! Sydenham is full of wonderful people whom have made my first few months that little easier, as I try my hardest to remember names. So far I have gained links with two primary schools, and I am visiting both weekly, helping with scripture unions and assemblies. I also have the pleasure of taking assemblies in Mitchell house School. I have had the privilege of working alongside the Girls' Brigade and the Scout Company, taking badge work for both. I also have the pleasure of being part of mums and tots and crèche each week, which is just fantastic and it is just a blessing to spend time getting to know the young children, babies, and parents who come.

The second is Ballynafeigh Methodist Church where I am a pastoral assistant and I have been there for about a year now. I

get the honour of visiting pensioners and church families, alongside doing the minister's bidding...

### **Favourites:**

**Food:** Ohhh far too many... but I will go for two if that's allowed... Fajitas and Spaghetti Bolognese, not together of course! It would be an interesting mix though!

**Music:** My choice in music changes all the time... depending what my mood is! If I want a good car sing along it would probably be Lady Antebellum. For work purposes, to help focus and inspire me, probably a bit of Hillsong or Kari Jobe.

**Hymn:** This changes all the time too! However, one of my favourite hymns at the moment is 'Be Thou My Vision'. I love the line 'Heart of my own heart whatever befalls, still be my vision, of ruler of all' it reminds me that no matter what happens I want to have God's heart, I always want to hold on to him and his plans for the world and myself.

**Worship Song:** Probably 'Your love never fails' by Jesus culture as it simply shows that God is always with us through the good and the bad, that he never fails us and that we are never alone. 'And when the oceans range I don't have to be afraid because I know that you love me, your love never fails'.

**Bible verse(s):** My favourite Bible verse is Psalm 91 verse 4, some may already know this, I think it shows both the strength, yet gentleness of God. When I think of the feathers I see the soft, gentle, loving and safe character of God, in which I see the powerful, strong, protection and graceful character of God, I just love how he is all those things and more.

**And another thing:** Ummmm... I always struggle with this part, as I never really feel all that interesting! For some, this will not be at all interesting, but I absolutely love Christmas... Christmas songs, movies (Elf and The Grinch are just the best!), Christmas jumpers (mine is at the ready), spending time with family and mainly celebrating the beginning of a special life that became the life that died in place of mine! Currently having the how soon can I put the Christmas tree up argument! Is the middle of November really too soon?

# Why all the fuss?

## Bible Sketchbook



Amazing birth! Mary is pregnant, but she's a virgin. Impossible!! Her fiancé, Joseph is seriously embarrassed. But an angel tells him this is a 'God thing'. "Don't worry" says the angel. Some strange men turn up talking about a "star". They are following it. But Herod - the local Big Man - goes ballistic. "Kill all the babies!" He orders. The family escape at night - refugees. Why all the fuss? A Happy Christmas??

Read more in Matthew 1:18 to 2:15



## **CHURCHES RELEASE POPULAR ‘CHAT SHOW STYLE’ RADIO ADS FOR CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN**

An award-winning stand-up comic, Paul Kerensa, has teamed up with the Christian communications network – ChurchAds.net – to raise awareness about the true meaning of Christmas.

Kerensa, also a writer for sitcoms like *Miranda* and *Not Going Out*, and author of books including *So A Comedian Walks Into A Church...Confessions of a kneel-down stand-up*, features as a number of character voices on three new ads scheduled to hit the airwaves in early December as part of the Christmas Starts with Christ Campaign.

“For me, Christmas normally ends in a mess but this campaign reminds us it starts with Christ. These excellent ads spoof the daytime tabloid talkshows and hopefully, these commercials will remind listeners that in the birthday party this Christmas, we shouldn’t forget the birthday boy,” said Kerensa.

The campaign, backed by all major Christian denominations, has been making in-roads in recent years, one in three 18-24 year olds remember hearing the radio commercials, according to a ComRes survey.

The ads jog the memory about the nativity story in the style of a confrontational chat show: The Three Wise Men defending why they did not tell King Herod where to find baby Jesus (“We’re the three wise men, Herod, the clue’s in the name”); the Archangel Gabriel facing complaints about waking up everyone at 3am with the Hallelujah Chorus (“We had shepherds and environmental health on our backs, they

thought we were having an illegal rave!"); and the donkey, that Mary rode to Bethlehem, trying to get in on the act ("How else were Mary and Joseph going to get to Bethlehem? By shuttle bus?")

The 30-second adverts are available totally free of cost for churches to place on their local radio stations to promote the true meaning of Christmas. A number of leading key industry experts donated their time to producing these commercials free of cost.

"We believe these radio ads reach out in a creative and imaginative way to young people, many of whom know little of the Christmas story. We hope this will encourage them to find out more about the birth of Jesus and the continued relevance at Christmas in 2014," said Francis Goodwin of the ChurchAds.Net. The national advertising campaign is funded by long-term supporters Jerusalem Productions.

Research has shown that the campaign, now in its 6th year, has resulted in an increasing number of people who say they understand more about the true meaning of Christmas.

The radio adverts can be downloaded for free use at: <http://www.ChristmasStartsWithChrist.com/resources/>

## **WITH CHRISTMAS IN MIND:**

May the joys of Christmas also be the joys of your tomorrows.

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We must never allow anything to blind us to the true significance of what happened at Bethlehem so long ago. Nothing can alter the fact that we live on a visited planet.

### **J B Phillips**

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For all the greeting cards, I do not think that much rejoicing happens around Christmastime, least of all about the coming of the Lord. There is, I notice, a lot of holiday frolicking, but that is not the same as rejoicing. In any case, maybe outbursts of either frolicking or rejoicing are premature, if John the Baptist has credibility. He identifies REPENTANCE as the message and the sentiment of Advent.

### **William Stringfellow**

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We are better givers than getters.... The Christmas story – the one according to Luke, not Dickens – is not about how blessed it is to be givers but about how essential it is to see ourselves as receivers.

### **William Willimon**

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We must speak in practical terms. Either Christ's coming has meaning for us now, or else it means nothing at all.

### **Christoph Blumhardt**



"Sometimes I wonder about the Jones's attitude to Christmas."



Sara preferred to let people work out the hymns for themselves

# A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

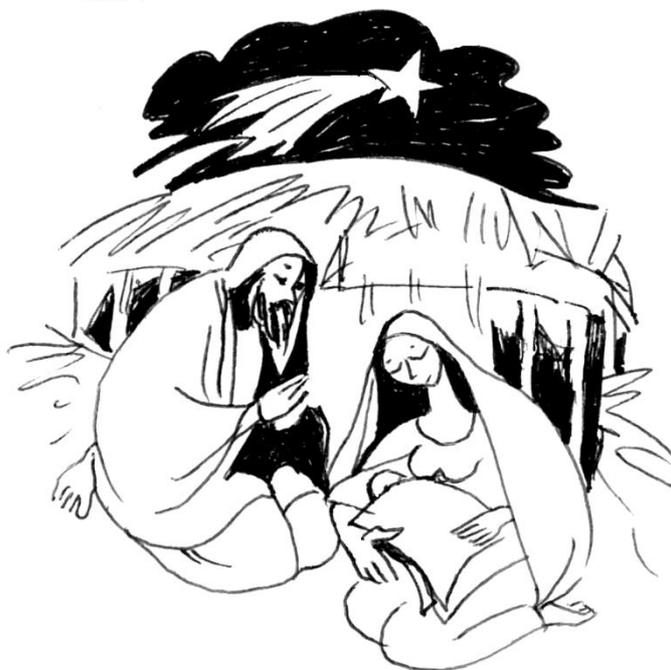
Generous Father,

At this busy time of year, help us to remember the important things. In all the rush of sending cards and giving presents may we make time to be still, to acknowledge your sending and giving of the greatest gift of all, Jesus. Thank you that he didn't stay in the stable in Bethlehem, but lived and died and became the Saviour of all who put their trust in him. May we receive afresh the gift of your presence with us in Jesus, now and for ever, with great thankfulness.

In his name, we pray.

Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*



# Colouring Page





The Team who visited Chemnitz, Germany.

