



# CROSSGATES METHODIST CHURCH November 2023 Newsletter

MINISTER: Rev Becki Stennett

## **Scared of the dark...?**

As I wake up each morning and open up the curtains, at the moment I can see, in the upstairs window of the house opposite, a small grinning pumpkin.

I was first made aware of it when my six year old daughter had hopped on my bed and announced 'ooh there's a pumpkin staring at me', which was, to say the least, a little unsettling!

It opened up a fairly oft-repeated conversation in our household, about whether or not we will do anything to celebrate Halloween.

We don't celebrate Halloween in our family, but we do enjoy carving things into pumpkins sometimes (happy things, like angels or stars, or even, at the hands of my talented husband, Disney characters!) and I love all kinds of autumnal foods or activities, but Halloween doesn't feature on our list of celebrations. This is because I (and my hubby) feel worried that Halloween does two things which are of concern. Firstly, it's yet another hugely commercialised festival in which families are expected to spend vast amounts of money at a time when finances are so tight. Secondly, it causes many to focus on bad things, evil things, and I prefer to focus on the light, on hope in difficult times, and the abundant goodness of God, of creation, and of people.

But I want to add a nuance to this. One of the things I have been wondering is whether I'm trying to simply put those 'dark' things to one side because they frighten me. So I've taken time to reflect and think on this.

As children, we're so often afraid of the dark, of the unknown, the uncertain, the invisible, and this makes perfect sense I think. There is no

inherent danger in darkness, but being unable to see where we are going may cause us to trip, or a person emerging out of darkness may have skulked there for nefarious reasons. But the darkness itself holds no power.

What we need is a guide, a light in the darkness, a way to travel through dark moments, dark times and periods, without fear or falling. And I am reminded at this time of year, God is not just God of the light, but God of and in the darkness too. We have a guide, someone to set our feet on the right path even if we cannot see it, because God is always stepping out before us, holding out a reassuring hand, and casting an impervious light onto the way ahead.

Whether it's the darkening nights, the darkness we're confronted with in the news, or our own dark time, my prayer for you as you read this, and for me and my family too, is that we will remember that God is God in the dark as well as in the light, and God offers to walk ahead and beside of us as we put one foot in front of the other in faith, even if the path seems dim.

I think that the love and goodness of God, of nature, and of humanity will always eventually shine through, and is always something to celebrate! So whether it's a starry eyed pumpkin greeting people with joy, a light in the porch or a phonecall to someone who's having a hard time, perhaps we can all try to dispel some of the darkness, and bring the light as the evenings get darker. **Becki**

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### **November Services**

5 <sup>th</sup> November		Stewards & Worship Leaders
12 <sup>th</sup> November	Remembrance Sunday	Dr Richard Vautrey
19 <sup>th</sup> November	Holy Communion	Rev Becki Stennett
26 <sup>th</sup> November	Sunday before Advent	Rev Norma Davey

*The communion stewards for November are Carol Smith & Georgina Cressey.*

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The Vice-president of the Methodist Conference, Kerry Scarlett has been a guest on the Leeds Sanctuary podcast. Justice x Sanctuary: Toxic Masculinity, Misogyny and Modern Slavery Part one is available for you to have a listen.

## **Church Flowers**

**The beautiful flowers in Church at Harvest Festival were sponsored by Dorothy Tate and Beryl Gledhill**

Georgina and Barbara thank Dorothy and Beryl for their kind donations. Flowers on the 16<sup>th</sup> were made up from the harvest flowers.

The next main service will be Remembrance Sunday. Donations for that week, however small would be gratefully received.

If you would like fresh flowers to be arranged in Church for a special reason, for example in memory of a loved one, then please contact Georgina Cressey or Barbara Leeming. Help with the cost is much appreciated.

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## **Ladies Friendship Group**

**Meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 2.30pm in the Wesley Room. *All welcome.***

24/10	Bingo!	Carol Smith
14/11	Visit to Uganda to meet a sponsored child	Michael Brown
28/11	Advent	Rev Becki Stennett
12/12	Christmas carols and songs (jointly with Men's Fellowship)	
19/12	Christmas Lunch	

## **Men's Fellowship**

**Meetings are the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 2pm in the Wesley Room. *All welcome.***

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## **WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (YORKSHIRE)**

at CROSSGATES METHODIST CHURCH

**On Saturday, 28 October at 2.45pm, The Rev.Dr. Tim S. Macquiban will speak on: 'A Grain of Mustard Seed: the role of the Strangers Friend Societies in Methodism's engagement with the poor in the nineteenth century. *All are welcome to attend.***

## **Table Top Sale – 4<sup>th</sup> November, 9.30am – 12 noon**

Why not come along for a drink and a chat and then browse round all the items for sale. You might just find the item you have been looking for at a good price.

If you would like more information or to book a table, at a cost of £5 for Church funds, please contact Lynda at Church or phone 0779 9094472. Come along and pick up a bargain!

*Please note there will not be a sale in December or January*

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## **East Leeds History & Archaeology Society**

Methodist Church Hall Austhorpe Road Cross Gates  
Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2.00pm – Ms Jane Ellis will deliver an interactive quiz '**So you think you know Leeds. Part 2**'  
Admission £2.00 including refreshments. All welcome

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## **Pam Wilcox's Pedal Power**

Pam Wilcox is going to undertake a sponsored bike ride in memory of the late Ann Oates. Pam and Ann served for many years together on the local NSPCC Committee. All proceeds will be donated to the NSPCC. Please support Pam and sponsor her.

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## **Condolences**

Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:

The families and friends of **Tom Morrison** and Brenda Dean on the death of Tom in hospital on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

The family and friends of **Kathleen Gee** who died in St Gemma's Hospice on 29<sup>th</sup> September.

We have also heard of the death of **Philip Wright** who was a member of our Church for many years before transferring to Scholes. Our thoughts are with his wife Avril and their family.

## **and our Harvest Festival**

On behalf of everyone at Leeds South and East Foodbank I would like to say a huge thank you to you and everyone at Crossgates Methodist Church who contributed to your Harvest Collection. In total you donated 251kg of food and £60 which will provide 660 meals to local people in need.

*The cost of living is rising rapidly and increasing numbers of people in our local community are finding it impossible to cover their essential costs because their income is insufficient to cover the basics. People with money worries are turning to charities and being forced to take on debts. We are working towards a future without foodbanks, and together with the Trussell Trust we are campaigning for a benefits system and a living wage that reflects the true cost of living and ensure it keeps people from falling into hunger and poverty. However, people need help now and we want to do our very best for the people that use our service, and your donations help us to do this.*

**Many thanks again, Wendy Doyle, Operations Manager**



If you are able to donate there is a basket in the Galilee or contact John Best, or email [jvbest39@hotmail.com](mailto:jvbest39@hotmail.com) who will gladly collect from you.



## Pray for Israel and Palestine

Loving God

I see the news and I am afraid. Violence is spiralling out of control  
I don't know what to think or feel.

The temptation to fall into hatred, or despair feels very close at hand.  
Help me to remember that nothing in all creation can separate me from  
your love that I know in Jesus.

May your perfect love for me cast out my fear and free me to discern what  
is mine to do amidst the chaos of this suffering world.

**Amen**

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## Christmas & New Year Dates for your Diary

<b>Saturday 25/11/23</b>	<b>10am – 2pm</b>	<b>Church Christmas Fair</b>
<b>Sunday 19/11/23</b>		<b>Deadline for Christmas Greetings</b>
<b>Sunday 17/12/23</b>	<b>4pm</b>	<b>Carol Service</b>
<b>Saturday 23/12/23</b>	<b>11am</b>	<b>Carols on the Church Steps</b>
<b>Sunday 24/12/23</b>	<b>4pm</b>	<b>Children's Crib Service</b>
<b>Sunday 24/12/23</b>	<b>11.30pm</b>	<b>Communion Service</b>
<b>Monday 25/12/23</b>	<b>9.30am</b>	<b>Christmas Day Service</b>
<b>Sunday 31/12/23</b>		<b>Sunday worship</b>

*Services in the coldest months – January to March - will be taking place  
in the Church Hall rather than the Church itself. This is in order to save  
money on heating costs whilst ensuring we all stay warm.*

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## Christmas Greetings

Why not send Christmas greetings to the Church family via this newsletter  
and support Action for Children at the same time. You will reach everyone  
and save money on cards and postage. In return for a small donation  
your messages will be printed in the December edition of the newsletter.  
The deadline for messages is **Sunday 19th November** and can be sent  
to Tracy via any of the methods below. Donations should be brought to a  
Church service, sent to Linda Booth (clearly separated from your  
collection), or posted to Church.

Tracy Dick [tracylouisedick@gmail.com](mailto:tracylouisedick@gmail.com)

Come and join us at  
Cross Gates Methodist Church

# Christmas Fair

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November

10:00am to 2:00pm

There will be Christmas cards, gifts, toys,  
cakes, tombola

## Refreshments

Breakfast baps / Turkey sandwiches  
Toasted Tea cakes and more

*Proceeds from the Fair are to be  
split between:*

*Cross Gates Methodist Church &  
Leeds Area Riding for the Disabled*



**Service Options:** If there are any people or situations you would like included in the prayers in worship, please let Becki know by Saturday morning, (having got permission from the individual to be named in our prayers). Please do contact Barbara if you would like to receive details of worship via email or would like to have printed worship sheets delivered.

**Please remember in your thoughts and prayers:** All those people in our prayer book and those we know who are unwell, in hospital, in Nursing Homes, going for tests at Hospital, recently bereaved and who find this time of year particularly difficult.

**Free phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church:**

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514. Listen to news: 0808 281 2478.

Pastoral message from the President & Vice-President: 0808 281 2695

Content is updated weekly on a Thursday evening.

**Websites:**

Circuit: [www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk](http://www.leedsnandemethodist.org.uk)

District: [www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk](http://www.yorkshirewestmethodist.org.uk)

**Your Financial Contributions:** Thank you to all those who have continued to contribute to the Church's running costs. If you do not attend Church, please continue sending them to Linda Booth or to the Church's address. If you would like to change to contributing via **standing order** please get in touch with Amanda Brow. She can be contacted by email [amandajbrow@gmail.com](mailto:amandajbrow@gmail.com)

**Spotlight On:** Please consider writing a few words about your life for inclusion in a future Newsletter, as have many of our Church family already. Please send your contribution to Tracy Dick (contact details below).

**Newsletter:** Please email contributions for the Newsletter to Tracy Dick [tracylouisedick@gmail.com](mailto:tracylouisedick@gmail.com)

Deadlines coming up: Sunday 19th November (for December and January editions), Sunday 21st January 2024.

#### **CROSS GATES METHODIST CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT**

**We are a group of people who are seeking to celebrate and share God's love for all.**

**Through Worship, Witness and Service in the Community we aim to follow Christ's example of open arms, hearts, minds and doors**

*Cross Gates Methodist Church, Austhorpe Road, Cross Gates, Leeds, LS15 8QR*



