



# Bury St Edmunds Methodist Circuit

Newsletter December 2024  
January 2025



*Jyoti Sahi (b.1944 )*

*Methodist Modern Art Collection No. SAHI/2004*

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## **Advent and a modicum of Franciscan Orthodoxy of Incarnation with a tad from the Message of Angels:**

waiting, reflection, expectancy, hope, and more, and stint, again, to return and ground ourselves in the profound mystery and joy that the substantiality of the Incarnation of Christ offers. The words, Exuberant Wonder amid such Tumultuous Days, come to mind.

In a previous letter, I referred to the Franciscan tradition, with its rich spirituality. It can provide an embracing orthodoxy through which we can contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation. St. Francis of Assisi, in devotion to Christ and reverence for all of creation, invites us to see the world through the eyes of wonder and gratitude. For Francis, the Incarnation was not merely a theological statement but a living reality that touched every aspect of creation. His understanding that by taking on human form, God sanctified not just humanity but all creation. For Francis, God is Our Creator, and relationships are within all Creation. Birds, fire and wind are brothers; the moon, stars and water are sisters and our planet Earth who nourishes us is Mother. Creation is thus the whole of nature viewed with the Creator; it is fullness, life and community - our life is intimately connected with God's Creation. It is within Creation where divinity and humanity became one. The Incarnation, to Francis, revealed that the divine presence permeates all things, giving dignity and holiness to the created world.

Giving Dignity and Holiness to the created world: Consider the message of the angels at the birth of Jesus: heavenly messengers – manifesting on earth - as bearers of good news – and presence of God's constant presence among us. The birth of Christ is not an isolated event, but a cosmic moment in the unfolding of God's solidarity, redemption, renewal, and love of the whole creation.

The angels, in their praise and adoration, point us to the revelation that Christ's birth is a solid solidarity with all creation, a reconciling of heaven and earth, and dignity of holiness to our humanity.

In this season of Advent, could we cultivate spaces and time – stints if you prefer - to celebrate the holiness of creation and that which is holy within each other, to rejoice with the angels, to prepare our hearts and minds for the transformative presence of God among us?

The Franciscan understanding of the Incarnation invites us to see Christ not just in the manger, but in the beauty and wonder of creation itself. The angels announced Christ's arrival with songs of praise, in Great joy. Can we find the energy and vision to nurture joyful hearts, participate in the redemption of the world, celebrating the holiness and presence of God in all things? Introducing words of R.S Thomas may help shine a light to Exuberant Wonder:

Other incarnations, of course,  
consonant with the environment  
he finds himself in,  
animating the cells,  
sharpening the antennae,  
becoming as they are  
that they, in the transparency  
of their shadows, in the filament  
of their calculations, may,  
in their own way, learn to confront  
the intellect with its issue.

And his coming testified  
to not by one star  
arrested  
temporarily  
over a Judaic manger,  
but by constellations  
innumerable  
as dew upon surfaces  
he has passed over time  
and again, taking to himself  
the first-born of the  
imagination  
but without the age-old requirement of blood.

I hope a modicum of Franciscan Orthodoxy of the Incarnation, with a tad from the Message of Angels, offers a gentle and contemplative beginning into Advent, for our life is intimately connected with God's Creation and Incarnation: divinity and humanity are one. May we, with Jesus' Mother, Mary, treasure and ponder all this in our hearts (Luke 2: 19), and remembering the message of the angels, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people... you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger'. And, all 'the multitude of heavenly host' sang out in praise. (Luke 2: 10- 14).

Advent: waiting, reflection, expectancy, cultivation, hope, renewal, joy, peace – stint - Exuberant Wonder amid such Tumultuous Days - for God is with us, in all creation, through Incarnation, the unity of heaven and earth.

Revd Canon JC Vinyard



## What's going on in the garden

'To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul.'

*Rudyard Kipling.*

This is my final blog on the garden for 2024 – I started the blog back in January (which seems a long time ago now!) and I hope that it has been useful and enjoyable to read each month. To those of you who have said that they have enjoyed seeing it on the Circuit newsletter, a warm thank you for the positive feedback.

Well, Christmas is not far away now, and at this time of year there is little it seems to do in the garden. However, there are some jobs still to do. We are having a particularly cold, wet, and windy spell of winter weather as I write this. Trees, shrubs and garden trellis can all suffer damage so if you have not already done so, as soon as the weather calms down, you should stake plants, add mulch to your beds, wrap up pots and generally provide as much protection as you can to plants and shrubs that may suffer over the winter months. It's a good idea to put potted plants together in a sheltered spot to protect them from the winter weather when it is at its most fierce. Bubble wrap around pots can help to reduce damage to roots and I have placed my pots of agapanthus in my greenhouse to protect them. Wisteria, Japanese maples, roses and fruit trees will all benefit from a winter prune, and deciduous honeysuckle can be planted providing the ground is not frozen or waterlogged.

I have not, so far as I can recall, mentioned fish ponds this year, but with the wintry weather there is always the risk that the water will freeze over. If does, then melt the ice – one method is to place a hot pan on the surface. Alternatively, you can install a pond heater or just a water feature to prevent freezing occurring. Herons are always on the lookout for fish and need to be deterred from fishing. One method to protect your fish is to use nylon strings which you can string across the edges of the pond, making them at least 15cm (6in) from the ground and 15cm (6in) in from the pond's edge, but do

remember to continue to rake out any fallen leaves or shake off those that have collected on the netting.

What about the vegetable garden? Brussel sprouts are always, for me, a must with my turkey and roasties on Christmas Day, but I suspect that they are a bit like Marmite – you either love them or hate them! They can stand harsh winter weather, so what can be better than to pick fresh sprouts for Christmas lunch? If you haven't grown them this year, then consider doing so next year. Parsnips also are a definite addition to Christmas lunch and are frost resistant – many cooks and gardeners will swear that they improve after a frost, and so I have left mine in the ground thus far for that very reason! Another hardy vegetable is sprouting broccoli. It is unaffected by hard weather and, as soon as the conditions warm up, begin to develop shoots that go on for weeks and are delightful to eat.

As you harvest the last of your vegetables over the winter months, begin digging over the borders that are empty to prepare them for planting next year. Some of my fellow allotment holders cover their cleared plots with horse manure, leaving the manure to rot down and ready to turn over as they prepare to plant out their vegetables in the spring. The manure acts then both as a much suppressing weeds and as fertiliser for the vegetables to be planted next year.

We all think of our gardens as our own personal space, but in reality they are far from that. We share our gardens with a variety of wildlife, and we are now definitely in the season when wildlife could do with a helping hand from us. I have several birdfeeders in my garden, and just a few days ago I was thrilled to see so many birds in my garden obviously taking advantage of the food that I had put out for them – my friend the robin was there along with blue tits, blackbirds and a chaffinchee.

Birds need high-energy, high-fat foods during cold weather. You don't even have to have a garden – putting a feeding tray can attract birds to your windowsill or balcony. Just make sure that you place the feeders where the birds are safe so that they can eat undisturbed – preferably away from fences or dense hedges, where cats can easily get to them. If you can try to place the feeder near a small bush, birds can use this as a look-out point. When you buy

bird food, it's a good idea to get a good mix of seed, peanuts, suet and mealworms. Fruit will be popular with thrushes and blackbirds (particularly bruised apples and pears). You may want to make a bird cake for them using the ingredients above – cheese can be added as well but you must melt down suet or lard to bind the ingredients together. Once you have made the mixture, pour it into an upturned clay flowerpot, making sure that you have a string going through the middle so you can hang the cake from a tree.

Remember to offer a regular supply of clean water for birds. It's particularly important in the winter and in dry weather and especially so when conditions are freezing. Make sure that you clean the water containers regularly, and that you put out food and water on a regular basis throughout autumn and winter.

Use old, dead logs to You can make an inviting home and feeding ground for insects, toads, newts and bees by using old dead logs. Birds feed on insects that make their home in old wood so a great source of food for them. If you have a decaying tree with a snagged bough or a small cavity that can provide a nest site for a bird or bat. Heaven for a wide variety of wildlife would be rotting wood, flaking bark and the maze of little gaps between the logs that can be found.

Now to our spiky friends - the hedgehog, for which I have a real soft spot. Hedgehogs are mostly insectivorous, so they will feed on earthworms, caterpillars and beetles. They normally hibernate from November until mid-March; exact timings depend on the weather. In mild years hedgehogs have been found to be active as late as December. Often hedgehogs will often wake up from hibernation; they will search for food; they move their nest site at least once before they go back to sleep. Hedgehogs can travel around a mile every night and they may need help to get into and out of your garden. Cutting holes in fences, removing bricks from walls, or digging tunnels under the garden boundary all make it much easier for them. The gaps do not need to be large - hedgehogs can travel through gaps as small as 13x13cm.

Encourage hedgehogs into your garden by providing food and fresh water, by leaving out foods like tinned dog or cat food and crushed cat or dog biscuits, or

providing good quality, meaty hedgehog food from wildlife food suppliers. Please never try to feed hedgehogs milk or bread - milk can cause diarrhoea and bread isn't very nutritious. Many hedgehogs will die if fed milk and bread so please avoid doing so. Make sure that you always clean the bowls you use - do this outside and not in the kitchen, every day using hot, soapy water and then rinse well. This will help to reduce the risks of spreading disease between them. It also applies to any bowls you use to provide food and water for birds.

Finally, you should check the food and water bowls each day; top them up with fresh water and food and remove any food that hasn't been eaten – failure to do so may attract less welcome visitors!

It only remains for me to wish everyone a Christmas that is peaceful and joyful Christmas. See you again in January and if you have photos of your garden or the visitors, perhaps, that share your garden with you, do please send them in for us to share.

Jane Brooker

## Art Days

Some of you will remember that a few years ago Stella Davis arranged for those who enjoyed painting or another craft to meet together at one of our churches in the Circuit. I am looking to see if there is any interest in revitalising this, perhaps meeting together at Bradfield Church maybe 3 or 4 times a year. We used to have lunch together and it was always a productive day for those attendees and a chance to share with and take inspiration from others.

If you would be interested in having “Art days” again please let me know & I will set up a diary to book the hall at Bradfield, and we could perhaps invite folk from other churches – I remember that a friend of mine (Anglican) came along and very much enjoyed the day. *Jane Brooker*







**“When you go home, tell them of us and say,  
For your tomorrow, We gave our today.”**

You might have noticed that these are Scottish Poppies – slightly different from the English ones. Clive and I found ourselves near Edinburgh on Remembrance Sunday, so we joined the small Methodist congregation at Cockenzie where we

received a very warm welcome (A lesson to us all in noticing newcomers and making their presence feel valued).

We all walked down the road to join the locals at the memorial gardens (all the uniformed organisations and a pipe band!) where the Methodist minister led the remembrance service, and many wreaths were laid. Back in the Methodist church we were all given a cup of tea to warm up and then had a shorter service including Holy Communion. We discovered that they will soon be experiencing boundary changes and the WHOLE of mainland Scotland will become one Circuit!!

If you attended church that Sunday you might recall that the Gospel was the story of the “Widow’s mite” who put into the collection box all that she had-giving “more” than those who contributed out of their wealth.

Following on from that well known remembrance quote above about giving, it set me thinking. For the tomorrow of our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, we need to give today out of our excessive wealth and consumption. Generations to follow may know poverty of life opportunities and experience if we do not sacrifice some of our wealthy and consumerist ways. Am I prepared to sacrifice some of my life experiences and choices so that those after coming after me are able to experience them too?

These choices are never easy, and sometimes extraordinarily difficult. Some of you will be aware that we hope to welcome a first grandchild very soon. She will live 900 miles away – which creates big dilemmas for an eco-

granny!!! Human nature is not tuned to sacrifice, which is what makes Remembrance so important. On a lighter note – later in our holiday I enjoyed the comedy value of 4 grown adults being ridiculously absorbed and focussed on 49 bits of cardboard as we played the boardgame “Labyrinth”. The tension was palpable especially when one player reached the point where he could win by getting his counter back to the home square. This required the other three players to stop focussing on their own moves and work together to stop the game coming to an end. Another parallel for sacrifice – it was really hard to set your own goals aside and concentrate on saving the situation.

As we move towards the time of year when we resolve to do things differently, let us all consider the sacrificial changes we could make to enable others to live a full life.

*Stella Davis Eco Circuit Lead*

## **Stowmarket News**

Mince Pie making is in our diaries, as our usual gifts to Whitechapel of Mince Pies, Chocs and Socks, Harvest and other goods will be transported there on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Over 30 Shoeboxes were blessed and then taken to the “Link to Hope” Distribution Centre <https://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal-2024/> to go to families and elderly in Eastern Europe.

We are Carol singing in the town on two Thursday evenings (12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>) before Christmas.



## **From the stewards at Trinity Methodist Church**

We are happily in full swing with our weekly coffee morning/coffee shop on Wednesdays from 9.30-12. If you come to Bury St. Edmunds for the market do please drop in and see us for excellent coffee, tea and homemade cakes and scones and good company. There is also a stall for bric-a-brac and books.

The installation of the new fire alarm system is now complete and has been commissioned. By the time you read this, we will also have completed the installation of security cameras and a new front door entry system, and we thank the Circuit for their financial help with this. After that, we will move on to completing a number of other smaller repairs and security measures.

We are looking forward to the Trinity Carol Service this year on 15th December as it will be at 10a.m. (rather than in the previously customary afternoon or evening) and our new Music Group is beginning rehearsals for the music we are looking forward to hearing and sharing in.

We wish all across the circuit a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



**IXWORTH METHODIST CHURCH**

**CAROL SERVICE**

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup> at 3pm**



**Led by Rev  
Canon Jason  
Vinyard**

**Followed by  
festive  
refreshments  
in the  
Schoolroom**

**PLEASE COME AND JOIN IN OUR  
CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

# ***Advent Group***

***“Looking at the Holy Family;  
through song, scripture and art”***



***Tuesdays 3rd, 10th and  
17<sup>th</sup> December  
2pm until 3pm***

***Glemsford Methodist  
Church.  
Led by Revs Julia, Mary  
and Ruth.***

***Everyone is welcome!***

***Refreshments provided.***

***Contact Rev Ruth 07447 091182 for more info.***

# **The Martins Christmas Fair**

**on Saturday 7th December**

**from 10.30 to 12noon**

Do come and support our MHA and join in the fun of stalls, games, raffle and wonderful refreshments. Money raised is for the residents Amenity Fund which provides life enhancing extras and trips out, plus a Christmas gift for each resident.

Even our presence at the Fair gives the Home a boost, so do come along.

Also, if you have any items for the raffle or bottle stall, craft items or contributions to the cake stall they would be very welcome.

Either take them to the Home or to Val Spencer.

Val's tel no is 07968 276701

and email [valspencer14@icloud.com](mailto:valspencer14@icloud.com)

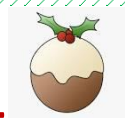
in case you need anything collecting.

Thank you so much for your support. Val S





## CHRISTMAS LUNCH SPECIAL



Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> December

12.15 – 1.30, Old Newton Chapel

Do join us for this special Christmas lunch.

Our raffle will be in aid of  
Action for Children.

NB There will not be a lunch in January.



## CHRISTMAS MONDAY MEET UP



Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> December

Old Newton Chapel - We're open 11-3

Our meetup session will have a Christmassy flavour  
this month. Do come and join us.

It is a drop in session so come when you can  
and stay as long as you like.

Let Joy Wood (01449673433) know if you would like  
a lift.

The January Meetup will be on 13<sup>th</sup>.



# Coffee, Cake and Carols



Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> December

10.30 – Old Newton Chapel

Come and enjoy familiar carols

in our decorated Chapel

with the Chrismon tree,

decorations and candles.

There will be coffee, tea and plenty of nibbles.

*\*The wearing of Christmas jumpers  
at our Christmas activities  
is encouraged but not essential!\**







*Our December*

## ***COFFEE MORNING***

*on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER*

*Old Newton Chapel*

***10.45 – 12.00***

*will be a*

## **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

*Come and begin your celebrations with us.*

*Our raffle will be in aid of*

***Action for Children.***

*Our January Coffee Morning will be on 21<sup>st</sup>.*

# CRAFT CIRCLE



Our Craft Club meets in the Chapel Hall on  
the third Tuesday of each month.

It is a very friendly group of folk who enjoy meeting  
together to practise familiar crafts  
and learn new ones.

There is also plenty of time for chat and tea drinking.  
You would be most welcome to join us. You don't need  
to be expert at any craft – it's all for fun and friendship!

Our next meeting will be on  
**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December**  
from 2.00 till 4.00 and will be our Christmas celebration.

Our January meeting will be on 22nd.

Just turn up at Old Newton Chapel hall  
or phone Liz Kearsley 01359 272617  
if you'd like to know more.



## NET ZERO BY 2030



Thank you to those churches who have returned their **Carbon footprint Survey** to me - if you have not done so yet, please could I have it by **Mid December**. Very many thanks.

For the next two months I will be analysing the results of the survey and getting my head around the revised A Rocha Standards for Eco Church and Circuit. **(Link below)** A quick look has shown that they have been well updated – caring for the environment is a moving target as behaviours adapt or not, and science tracks and improves.

The aim, as always, is to reduce what we put into the earth's atmosphere in the way of gas emissions and compensate for that which really can't be helped.

Earth and seas matter too – what we throw away does not go away.

### Useful Links:

<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/resources/>

Check your carbon footprint:

Churches and businesses [The Collaborative Carbon Calculator for Churches, Synagogues, Charities and Small Businesses](#) • [360°carbon.org \(360carbon.org\)](#)

Personal carbon footprint calculator [Measure – Reduce – Offset](#) • [footprintr.me](#) by Climate Stewards

**MERRE-USE**

Last year's tree  
or a  
tree in a pot



**MERRE-DUCE**

Clean plates,  
No food wastes!

**MERRE-FILL**



soaps and  
liquids

**MerREY  
Christmas  
Everyone**

**MERRE-USE**

favorite  
decorations

**MERRE-CYCLE**



Cards and wrapping

**MERRE-DUCE**

avoid Plastic and  
choose wood, glass, paper  
and metal

**MERRE-PAIR THE EARTH**



# GUARDIANS & TIDDLERS

Baby & Toddler Group  
Newborn - Preschool

**£1**  
PER  
FAMILY

**THURSDAYS**  
**1PM - 3PM**  
(TERM TIME ONLY)



The Methodist Church  
Northumberland Avenue  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP32 6NA



## Stay up to date with our Podcasts



10 minutes on: Our current podcast series features 10-minute episodes where the Joint Public Issues Team and others share their knowledge and passion on topical issues. Recent topics include the US Election, the Government Budget, and the Assisted Dying Bill.

[Listen Here](#)

<https://jpit.uk/politicsinthepulpit>

Politics in the Pulpit: We ask how the justice issues present in the Bible spur us to be good news in the world today. Each week, we welcome a different guest, discussing the political dimensions present in the Bible readings explored by many churches the following Sunday, and reflecting on how they connect with the week's current news and our calling to be justice seekers.

[Listen Here](#)

<https://jpit.uk/politicsinthepulpit>

# **CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES**

**Glemsford Methodist Church**

**10.00am – Revd Ruth Ridge**

**St John's Methodist Church**

**10.00am – Jane Brooker**

**Stowmarket Methodist Church**

**10.00am – Revd Rita Carr**

**Old Newton Methodist Church**

**10.30am – Francis Carr**

**Trinity Methodist Church  
with Northumberland Avenue  
and URC joining**

**10.00am – Revd Canon Jason Vinyard**



***The image on the front cover is part of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.***

There are over 50 works, including some by well-known artists such as Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink, William Roberts, Patrick Heron.

Most of the pictures depict scenes from the life and teaching of Christ: some artists were or are believing Christians, others not. Works are still being acquired to ensure that the ideas and concerns of today's artists are represented in the Collection.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/browse-the-collection/>



***\*Should you have an image/painting/drawing/photo etc that you feel will be suitable for the cover of the Circuit Newsletter and you have copyrights for it, please feel free to email it to me – [circuit.admin@hotmail.com](mailto:circuit.admin@hotmail.com) \****

**Anyone wishing to submit articles for the combined February and March Newsletter please send through to the circuit office [circuit.admin@hotmail.com](mailto:circuit.admin@hotmail.com) by 16<sup>th</sup> January, we look forward to hearing your news.** If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter or information from Bury St Edmunds Methodist Circuit please ring 01284 731082 or email [circuit.admin@hotmail.com](mailto:circuit.admin@hotmail.com)

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