



Light of the World!

CHRISTMAS 2015

The Drive Methodist Church
Eastern Avenue Ilford

Minister Revd Bernardino Mandlate

Christmas and New Year message From Revd. Bernardino Mandlate.

Friends

We live in turbulent times as I write, with Paris massacre still fresh in our minds, and Brussels almost on lock down, and air bombing of Syria happening 24/7. Innocent children and adults are being killed in the process and being considered 'collateral damage'. Mali images are also fresh in our minds. Against this background, we are expected to think about and prepare for Christmas.

Against this background, we are expect to speak hope of the coming Messiah, the Saviour who will make things right in the whole world. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, the Son of God who brings a new way of viewing the world in which we live, a new way of being children of God.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said that the attacks in Paris caused him to 'doubt' God and so do many of us. How and why would God allow such horrendous killings to happen on a beautiful Friday evening. And yet we all have to talk about Christmas and the meaning of Christmas, God dwelling with us. God coming to be one of us and to endure the kind of life we endure. It is indeed difficult to reconcile the images of Paris, Mali, Syria, Nigeria with the God who lives with us.

But let us not let this somberness dump our Christmas spirit. We have a celebration to be had and let us go forward with it. God lives, God is with us in the midst of this crisis in our world. We still need veto be compassionate with those who find themselves in dire situations or in the midst of the bombs, shootings and suicide bombers, the refugees running away from wars and looking for safe spaces to live in and bring up their children. We need to be compassionate with sex slaves in our community, controlled by pimps at times and at other times taking that lifestyle as a way to make ends meet.

The coming of the Messiah, Emmanuel, should motivate us to be kind to others, to be caring and loving. We need to feel encouraged to share our Christmas spirit with those who struggle to take it in because of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

My earnest prayer is that we reach the end of the year 2015 with no more major incidents happening in any other city, I pray that all may

be as peaceful as possible and that more people are spared death through human atrocities, that stabbings on our streets may cease and that may feel the true sense of freedom.

The New year comes always with its challenges for all. What are our expectations of the New Year and what are we prepared to do to ensure that the New Year is really new and lifestyles improve and we can all feel at ease?! Whatever anyone is able to contribute towards peace, harmony, sharing, caring will be welcome. That is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. That is what Christmas is all about.

May the good Lord keep you blessed

Dino

Family news.

Catherine Sayers.

We regret to record that Catherine had a stroke on Wednesday 18th November, and was admitted to Queens Hospital, Romford. Frank joined us in church today (22nd November) and told us that Catherine has regained her speech, and is making progress, but there is still some way to go.

Elsie Blanchard

At the time of writing this Elsie has had an eye operation in Moorfields hospital, and is recovering. On Sunday 22nd November we were advised by Ruth that Elsie will soon be home to continue her recovery.

Janet Wragg

Has had an operation in University College Hospital, and is now recovering at home and wishes to thank everyone for their good wishes.

Our Jane Jane Shields

An orphan child, not yet four years old, was returned to the orphanage twice, but struck lucky with the third set of prospective parents who adopted her and gave her a secure and loving home and to whom she never stopped being grateful.

I think that those early rejections formed the pattern of her life for she was never entirely convinced that she was as worthwhile and lovable as she always was, she was never confrontational and she never failed to give everyone the benefit of the doubt, especially if they were vulnerable, unloved or rejected as she had once been.

She was devoted to her adoptive family and wore herself out looking after them and her sister-in-law in their old age and she was a sort of one woman waifs and strays society caring for anyone in any kind of need whoever they were or whatever they were and taking in an abandoned dog and two unwanted cats. She loved horses too and for some time she did voluntary work for Riding for the Disabled. She was a natural with children and for several years helped to run the mothers and toddlers group.

Her name was Jane.

Her door was always open, her car was always available, complete with chauffeur, and she accepted everyone just the way they were, warts and all, and never seemed to see, as everyone else did, that they sometimes took advantage of her kindness and generosity.

She travelled widely and made countless friends who will always give thanks that they were fortunate enough to have known her.

Although she never actually became a member of the church she was very active in church life and she would always give a hand with coffee mornings, children's parties, church lunches, bazaars, St Georges Day celebrations, special events and Harvest and Christmas preparations. She could turn her hand to anything and couldn't have been easier to work with. Her warm and friendly personality brightened everyone's day and she gave liberally to any good cause or anyone who was having a hard time.

She had more than her share of trials, sorrow and suffering, but her sense of humour never failed and she faced up to whatever life chose to hand out to her with quiet courage. Her faith never faltered.

She was a very rare and a very special lady and we will never, never forget our Jane.

Betty Griffiths.

JMA Presentation Service

I was delighted to report at our JMA Presentation Service on 15th November, that The Drive had raised £720 for JMA funds. Of this amount, £345 came from proceeds of our Beetle Drive in March and the rest was from our JMA collectors and donations. Receiving badges and certificates were:

Thea Garner, Rochelle Inbakumar, Feyi, Toju and Tunrayo Fadina, Paige Fordree, Iris Bennett-Wright, Yetunde and Folake Fadojutimi.

Sanya Strachan led a lovely service. At the beginning the young people were invited to draw 'picture prayers' which were later used in the prayers of intercession. The Chorale sang a song new to us, from *Singing the Faith*, Praise is rising.

Hearing the story of Mary, from the summer issue of *Rainbow* magazine, whose family had been deeply affected by the Ebola crisis, we learnt about the kind of world issues where money raised from JMA is used. Sanya asked us to reflect on our mission and how it is in our giving, through charities like JMA that those who benefit from this generosity may know more about Christ.

We finished the service by gathering in a circle to say The Grace.

Thank you all for your continued support of JMA.

Diane Foster

Fundraiser by the Junior Church

As you may know, our previous minister here at The Drive, Revd. Stephen Normanton and his wife Philippa are in the early stages of developing a charity to help people with depression. Their project is called 'PeerTalk'.

After the dress rehearsal of the Junior Church's nativity play, we are holding a fundraiser in aid of 'PeerTalk'. The fundraiser will take place **from 2-4pm on Saturday 12th December**. Activities will include arts and crafts, a bake sale, bring and buy/table top sale and more, so there is something for everyone!

Rochelle Inbakumar & the Drive Junior Church

Christmas Concert

*What sweeter music can we bring?
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly king?*

Start your Christmas by joining the New Essex Choir for music and mince pies in the church. There will be some familiar carols as well as less well-known music, and opportunities for audience participation.

7.30 pm Saturday 5th December 2015

Tickets £10(concessions £8) in advance
from Kathleen and Brian Taylor.
Tickets on the door £11/£9, under 14 free.

VALENTINE SINGERS

With the Valentine Singers Community Chorus

FAMILY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday 19th December at 7:30pm
St Andrew's Church, The Drive, Ilford
£10 (£5 students/benefit holders)
(Buy in advance - £2 supplement on the door!)

or visit our website www.valentinesingers.org
or see Andrew Taylor

MUSIC MATTERS

Join us for our annual service of

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Readings telling the familiar Christmas story
Carols for choir and congregation

Sunday 20th December at 6:30pm
in the church

Followed by Christmas refreshments in the Parlour

The Choir is already busy rehearsing for our Carol Service on Sunday 20th December. This year we will be featuring some of the familiar carol arrangements by Sir David Willcocks, a former Director of Music at the famous King's College Chapel in Cambridge, who died earlier this year at the age of 95. David Willcocks is responsible for much of the familiar sound of Christmas music that has been used in churches and concerts around the world for over 50 years, and he was an active participant in Britain's choral scene right to the end of his life.

The Carol Service is always a highlight of our musical year and made more so if there is a large congregation, so do come along if you can and bring your family and friends. If the music and carols are not enough to tempt you, there are also mince pies...

Following its latest appearance at the JMA service, the Chorale will also be taking part in the Carol Service, and we will have practices after the Sunday services on 29th November, 6th December and 13th December, as well as in the afternoon of the 20th before the Carol Service itself. Anyone is welcome to come and sing with the Chorale – no, really, anyone! Try it out.

Andrew Taylor

Welcome Service

Notice of the Induction Service for Revd. Ermal Kirby and his wife Revd. Jenni Kirby Will be on 3rd January at 4 pm in The Drive Methodist church. Please support this circuit service if you possibly can.

Brian Taylor

Support King George Hospital League of friends.

I am a volunteer at the league of friend's shop which is situated in the main entrance if King George's Hospital, and all profits go to the hospital.

A list can be found at the shop which shows what has been purchased, for example pieces of equipment, courtesy packs given to emergency admissions, Christmas presents for all patients and many other things.

We are constantly in need of donated books (any kind) and also used stamps (please leave plenty of the envelope attached)

We are also keen to have more volunteers. It would only be for a morning or afternoon a week, you make friends and you will certainly appreciate your own good health when you see all those sick people.

Please let me have any books or used stamps any Sunday or hand them directly into the shop if you are there and also let me know if you are interested in volunteering.

Ruth Joyce.

Religious Education Resources Project.

Carol Dawson RERP writes:

My visits started this week with 3 lessons on Infant Baptism, explaining how , why, when and doing a mock 'Baptism' on a dolly. These lessons are always very popular with children and teachers alike. Children are intrigued as I try to explain the reasons behind every element. It was a sobering thought that none of the 90 children had any recollection (in personal experience or seeing on TV) of an infant Baptism or Christening. It really was a starting from scratch visit with no reference point for the children to start with.

Again the next day I spoke to a different 90 children about Advent who had no recollection of the Christmas story at all (although they were quite young); it was a challenge to explain Christian meaning to the sights around them as we build up to 25th December. Nevertheless, we tasted mince pies, listened to Christmas carols, smelt cinnamon and eventually moved around to the question of 'why is the birth of Jesus so important', not an easy task but one I was glad to find the correct vocabulary and level in which to explain. I left each class with a Christingle. A teacher said that they had done the lesson a few weeks before but had not included anything about the Christian meanings. A cuppa tea that lunchtime with the people of Gantshill was very welcome, I did feel a little discouraged.

Friday turned out to be Children in need day and 5 sessions of Godly Play for me so it was to be a busy day. 'Why aren't you dressed up as a superhero like us?' I was asked by a child, 'all the other grown-ups are'. As I sat there with the Frozen princesses, Spidermen, Hulks and Batmans (all sitting together for support) I thought, this is going to be a tough crowd. Iron man in particular sat right in front and refused to take off his helmet. With arms folded and his intense glare he was intimidating (even though he was only age 5). The sessions that day were for 150 children in total. Teacher support was very much with me and they had prepared children with a brief introduction to the Nativity before my visit. This made a huge difference. By the end of each session the children were freely playing with the story, baby Jesus was cradled in the arms of Elsa. The Batmans were sitting with the shepherds on the fields protecting the sheep and the Hulk was filling up Bethlehem city walls with 'all the people in the Nativity' there was apparently going to be plenty of room at the inn for Jesus and everyone else. Here finally children had the means to access the Nativity, to share it with each other and experience the feelings hidden within it. I left hopeful and much encouraged. It made me think about the challenges ahead with the new quite demanding RE syllabus for Redbridge; of how to find the right vocabulary and ways to introduce the Christian story to children with no personal reference and how to make this come alive.

Many thanks for all of your support and encouragement.

God bless,

Carol

Harvest Festival (No 4)

The Mersea Island choir came to St Alban's church in Albert Road, Ilford, to lead the Choral Solemn Evensong on Sunday 11th October. It was the church's Harvest Festival.

I am very grateful to Father Stuart Halstead, vicar of St Alban's, for giving me the text of his sermon.

Father Stuart spoke about children in our area thinking that food just comes from supermarkets

He said, "We no longer see animals in the fields, the crops ripening to be harvested, the orchards bowed down with apples and pears, the hedgerows brimming with juicy blackberries.

Father Stuart spoke about American thanksgiving and notes that the most advanced and sophisticated society that the world has ever known still gives thanks in some form for the good things we have in life. He noted that Halloween has largely replaced harvest in this country but Father Stuart says it matters now that we give thanks to God for all his goodness.

We are called to be stewards of the earth no one should live in hunger and poverty. Although there is not much ploughing and scattering in the borough A lot of food is being produced on the allotments. Peter, Corinne and I found this when we went again to Goodmayes allotment festival in September

As Father Stuart said we can all give thanks to God whether or not we ourselves, plough the fields and scatter or just carry that bounty home in our five pence a go carrier bags.

Susan Ruckes

Iraqi Christians in need

Carl Bahoshy was born in this country to Iraqi Christian parents. He is giving a series of piano and organ recitals to raise money for the above charity.

You may recall a notice in a previous newsletter about his concert at St George's Church Woodford Avenue.

On Saturday 24th of October Carl played the organ and piano at Christ Church Wanstead. It was not as well supported as at St Georges, possibly because of the miserable weather and other events elsewhere.

It was a wonderful concert including Schubert's Ave Maria, Chopin's fantasiae impromptu and Widor's famous Toccata. Slides were shown of scenes in Iraq and it really brought home to us why we were enjoying such wonderful music.

Susan Ruckes.

Coventry 75th anniversary.

Saturday 14th November was 75 years to the day since Coventry was destroyed during the Second World War.

Members of the Parliament choir were invited to join the St Michael's singers to perform the Mozart Requiem in Coventry Cathedral in front of HRH the Duke of Kent and guests from Dresden in Germany.

Before the concert a light for peace human chain was formed on the Cathedral steps and a two minute silence was observed.

I understand that Beethoven's "moonlight sonata" was played, as it had been the code name for the bombing.

For all these years, peace and reconciliation have been symbols of Coventry Cathedral.

We stood for a minutes silence before the concert to remember those affected in the Paris massacre.

I wonder how far we have come in the 75 years.

Susan Ruckes.

December Diary

Thu	3 rd	7.30pm	Choir Practice
Sat	5 th	7.30pm	Christmas concert by the New Essex Choir in the church.
Sun	6th	11.15am	Morning Service with Holy Communion led by Revd. Bernardino Mandlate
Thu	10 th	7.30pm	Choir Practice
Fri	11 th	10.00am	Coffee morning at the Gardener's Café, Valentines Mansion.
Sat	12 th	2.00pm	Junior Church fundraising afternoon Finishes at 4.00pm.
Sun	13th	11.15am	Morning Service and Nativity play led by Dr. Leila Knight.
Thu	17 th	7.30pm	Choir Practice
Sun	20th	11.15am	Morning Service led by Mr Robert Debrah
		6.30pm	Carol Service led by Revd. Bernardino Mandlate
Sun	27th	11.15am	Morning Service led by members of the congregation

January Diary.

Sun	3rd	11.15am	Morning Service with Covenant and Holy Communion led by Revd. Bernardino Mandlate
		4.00pm	Circuit welcome service for Revd Ermal Kirby, and Revd Jeni Kirby.
Sun	10th	11.15am	Morning Service led by Mr John Nicholls.
Thu	14 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice
Sun	17th	11.15am	Morning Service led by Revd. Ermal Kirby
Thu	21 st	7.45pm	Choir Practice
Fri	22 nd	10.00am	Coffee morning in the Gardener's Café, Valentines Mansion.
Sun	24th	11.15am	Morning Service led by Revd. Bernardino Mandlate.
Thu	28 th	7.45pm	Choir Practice
Sun	31st	11.15am	Morning Service led by members of the congregation.

Mission Statement The Drive Methodist Church.

The Drive Methodist Church aims to be faithful to the commandments of Jesus, and the calling of the Methodist Church.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission, and to fulfil the promises detailed in the Methodist worship book.

In seeking to be faithful The Drive Methodist Church is committed to:

Provide a weekly opportunity for all people to worship God in Christ,

Enable people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care.

Be a good neighbour to the immediate and wider community.
Sharing our faith with others through pastoral care, church activities and communication.

March 2013.