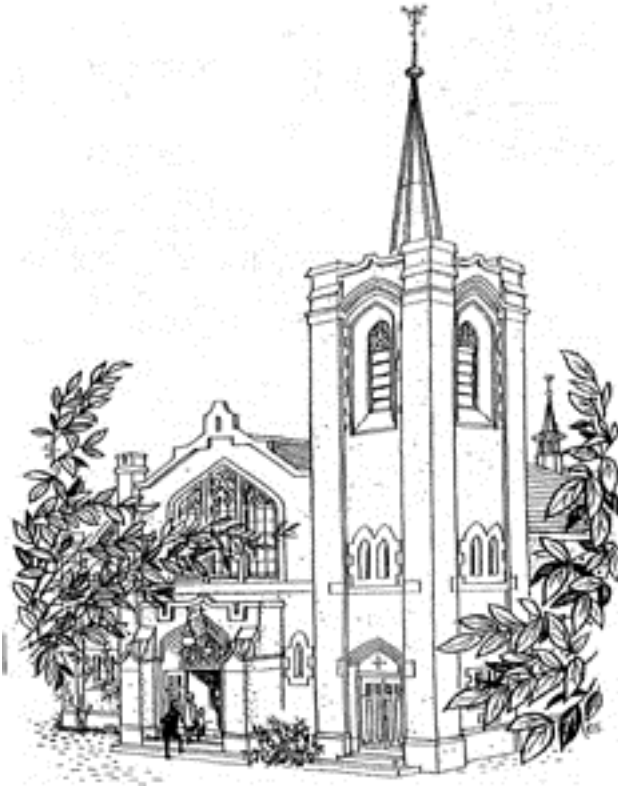


The Drive Methodist Church  
Eastern Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG1 3PP

# NEWSLETTER

February 2017



Minister: Revd Bernardino Mandlate

<http://www.the-drive-methodist-ilford.org.uk>

## **From Revd. Bernardino Mandlate Our Minister.**

Hi Friends

Greetings of the new season to all. The new year has begun with its new challenges. The change around us is happening. We are all pondering about what D Trump's presidency will mean to the rest of us, what his rhetoric and 'choice of language' will mean to America and the rest of the world. Our prayer has been and still is for a better world, a world that God intended, harmonious, where justice for all prevails, where peace and democracy are the pillars as against conflicts and wars.

As for me, we had a good end of the year, as some of you know, we went to Thailand for my 60th birthday and that was a blessing. We had a wonderful time there and Christmas was as good. I am so grateful to God for his kindness and mercies in our lives. Sitting in a resort, walking into the water in Thailand and somehow realise that those waters are linked with all the seas of the world brings home the work of God in creation, and one appreciates even more the work of God in the past and that fact that God is still, with us, creating and shaping the world today. We are really the same people that God created and charged us with caring for this magnificent world. Let us do it justice.

I am praying that we will all share in the joys of this world in this new year that now begins and that, as we promised in our Covenant service, we will commit to contribute to the improvement of love, harmony, justice and peace around us, our communities, and the world at large. We all have a duty however small to make this world a better place.

May the Lord, our God, be merciful and gracious to us, as we move on and continue to praise and worship him. May he fill us with love and grace so that we become his instruments of change. May the Lord touch and bless our leaders and fill them with wisdom.

God bless

***Dino***

## **Your Prayers are needed.**

At present we have a number of our members who are unwell. And others who are caring for them.

Frank and Catherine Sayers. Frank is in King George Hospital where he was taken during Saturday night the 21/22<sup>nd</sup> January. Catherine continues to need a carer at all times. This is being achieved by Daughter Jo Wright and son Nick, with further support from Justine, who has and does work amongst a number of our congregation.

Lorraine Bendon is commuting down to Sussex to care for her mother who is very poorly at this time.

Michelle Garner has been spending time with her sister, who is extremely unwell. All this and go to work as well.

Coreen Smith has been quite poorly and is now showing some signs that she is improving. We were pleased to see her in church last Sunday (22<sup>nd</sup> Jan).

Elsie Blanchard has a sad loss of sight which has made life very difficult for her, especially as she lives on her own she is regularly visited and supported by Ruth Joyce and Ann Dellow. Jo has spent time also supporting her but understandably cannot now that she has her parents to care for.

Please ask our Lord God to show compassion to these people as they face a difficult and demanding time.

***Roy Brunnen.***

## **Candle lit Carol Service**

Our annual carol service was on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December, and proved to be both popular and put many more professional events to shame.

The service started with the choir singing at the back of the church, and the first verse of Once in Royal David's city being sung solo by Theadora Garner. The choir then processed down the church to take their place in the choir stalls. There was choir pieces and carols with 6 readings read during the service by members of our congregation.

There were also two renderings from the Chorale group which is made up of church congregation members, and one of them "Mary did you know" was led by two of our members who also sing as "The Fabsisters", and we feel privileged to have them as members of our church.

Our grateful thanks to our organist Andrew who put the service together, and all those who took part in preparing and taking part.

***Roy Brunnen.***

### **Bible book study group**

We had our December meeting on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December where we discussed the Psalm 19, which is a very short book of just 14 verses. We found this a very interesting read none the less. The first section covered God's Glory in Creation and the second The Law of the Lord. If you have not read it please do and let Janet Pearson or myself what you think.

Our January read which was the book of Esther which we met to discuss on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January.

Our monthly reading list and meeting dates for the next three Months is:-

February- Psalm 119 verses 1 to 40 and we will meet on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February to discuss it.

March will be – the book of Joel to be considered on 24<sup>th</sup> March.

April we return to Psalm 119 to read verses 41 to 80, which we will discuss on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

Our meetings are held at Janet and John Pearson's house. For more information and their address please ask me. You would be very much welcomed, and to find we are increasing numbers and need to change to a larger meeting place would delight us. Please do come if you can. Our meetings are during the day at present, but if there is a demand for evening meetings I am sure we will try to accommodate that.

***Roy Brunnen.***

## **Crossing Barriers.**

The week of Prayer for Christian unity 2017 took place in The Vine United Reformed Church. For many years The Hospital Chapel on Ilford Hill has been the venue, but as one speaker said we were in "Exile".

As in previous years, each session was taken by a different Church. Revd. Marie of St Andrews Church, Bernardino our minister, Naomi Clifton of the Salvation Army, Monica from the Street Pastors, and Father Andrew of St Peter and St Paul Roman Catholic church all proved to be excellent speakers, guiding us through the set Bible readings of the day and inspiring us with their thoughts on each aspect of the theme of "Crossing Barriers".

Special thanks to Revd. Francis Ackroyd, the minister of the Vine Church for his warm welcome and for playing the organ. Also special thanks to Dulcie and the Ilford Methodist ladies for providing tea, coffee, and biscuits.

For once 92 year old Joy did not have to wheel her Traidcraft goods through Ilford town centre to the Hospital Chapel. I must find out how much she raised during the week.

Also thanks to Ann Ross for singing a solo and Philip Norman for playing the organ on Friday.

The course material was produced by the churches in Germany, where the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Martin Luther is being commemorated. An occasion for reconciliation.

I visited the East-West German border in the 1960s with my family and our German friend. It was a frightening sight. We were all pleased to see the Berlin wall come down, but I think even then there was a sense of foreboding. It was not until the Parliament choir tour of Berlin in December 2016 that I saw that formerly divided city. I am grateful to the German health authorities for dealing with my dislocated shoulder.

***Susan Ruckes.***

## **Circuit Meeting.**

On Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016, our church hosted the circuit meeting. We also provided tea and biscuits before the meeting started. The first fifteen or twenty minutes were taken up by devotions and two hymns. The next item was to confirm the minutes of our last meeting as a true record.

We are waiting for information as to whether we will be receiving another Probationer minister next September to replace Revd. Jan Atkins who is moving to be nearer her family. A normal stationing application is also being prepared for use if we are not allocated a probationer.

A vacancy was existing for a circuit steward as there had been no people wishing to be appointed at the last meeting. This position is now filled, but a further two stewards have indicated that they will be retiring. We were asked to consider replacements for these and any names be submitted to the circuit office.

Several of our churches reported that they have started Bible study in various forms. As you are aware, we are considering books of the Bible monthly led by Jan Pearson.

The planned circuit Advent service took place at Gantshill Methodist church on November 27<sup>th</sup> at 4pm, and the church was full on the ground floor, and there were some people who had to go into the gallery. It was therefore a success.

Revd. Ermal Kirby suggested that we should also plan for a Songs in Lent on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2017, and a summer festival on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2017. It was agreed that we should support these.

Our Minister Revd. Bernardino Mandlate will be taking a three month sabbatical commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, so there will be an increased pressure on the provision of preachers during this time. He does intend to mix work with pleasure by attending various courses and meetings connected to the Methodist church in other countries.

The request over the Harvest festival period for donations of food to be sent to the circuit and eventually to a central collection point for forwarding to the Calais refugee camp. The circuit was thanked for their support. This took place just as the camp was being cleared,

and it not clear who received the donations. I raised the fact that this request had interfered with churches making donations to organisations they normally support, and this has resulted in donations to the Whitechapel Mission, a Methodist Mission, which normally receives sufficient food to see them through the winter months being denied much of their expected receipts, and are now very worried. Revd. Kirby said that the Calais request had been meant to be an additional and separate appeal in support of the Churches decision made centrally.

Another member stated that it was poor timing for the initiative, and the effect on Churches should have been considered. Other speakers made their point in favour of the normal local charities such as the Whitechapel Mission. (we sent our harvest to the mission as normal)

The circuit budget for the next year is not yet complete. The next meeting will take place on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2017 at 7.30pm in Becontree Heath church.

***Roy Brunnen.***

### **Fundraiser brunch**

Thank you for your support so far in helping me fundraise for my trip to Ghana. I still have quite a bit to raise and so on the **11th of February** i will be holding a brunch. It will be in the church parlour from 10:00-12:30.

There will be lots of tasty food to enjoy as well as some yummy cake to fill the gap breakfast and lunch. Please come and enjoy talking with friends and eating whilst helping me fundraise for Ghana.

***Thea Garner***

### **A Christmas message from The President and vice President Of the Methodist Conference.**

The shabby collection of rooms was perched on the edge of a steep hill above Amman in Jordan. We were visiting a family of Syrian refugees who had just had a baby, and were being helped by funding provided by the Methodist charity, All We Can.

A woman, who we assumed was the grandmother, answered the door and invited us in. We sat on the floor, along with a local health worker. The father appeared with the baby, Yosra, and three other small children. It turned out that the woman was not the grandmother, but rather the mother of the family. She was just in her 30s, prematurely aged by the privations and stresses of recent years. They had left Syria four years ago, and now lived in a couple of basic rooms. The three children were similar ages to my own, but were tiny. As a refugee the father was banned from working and the family was reliant on support from a charity in order to be able to survive.

What an unpromising situation they were in. The family were underfed, with very little prospect of being able to improve their circumstances. They were desperate to go back to Syria, but recognised that this was unlikely any time soon. And their tiny baby, who slept in my arms, faced growing into adulthood in a foreign country, in poverty.

And yet. When we asked the father of the family what he wanted for the future, instead of talking about better housing, more food, or even a return to Syria, said "I want my children to be the best people that they can be". It was breath-taking. A family were facing immense poverty and dislocation, yet had the highest hopes for the character and contribution of their children.

A similarly unpromising set of circumstances surrounded another young family less than 50 miles away in Bethlehem two millennia ago. A young girl had given birth to a baby, far from her home and her family, in an outhouse, shared with animals. She had become pregnant outside marriage, and was only rescued from shame and rejection by her fiancé taking on a baby that wasn't his. Ahead lay real danger, as the ruler of the area would soon order his soldiers to slaughter all the baby boys. A dirty, shameful, dangerous situation. An unpromising set of circumstances. And yet. This is exactly the place the Messiah, the son of God, was born into.

But should we really be surprised? This is a God who said that the kingdom of heaven belonged, not to the rich or powerful or religious, but to little children. This is a God who chose women, tax



collectors, fishermen to begin a worldwide movement for the salvation of all people. Unpromising is not a word which seems to put God off; on the contrary the Bible seems to suggest that God seeks out the unpromising, the weak, the outcast in order to build his kingdom. The apostle Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, said "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God." (1 Corinthians 27-19)

We are living in times which might be described as unpromising, or even "interesting" according to the old Chinese proverb. We face great uncertainty in our politics, our economics, our relationships with one another. Around the planet there is apparently relentless violence, and the poorest, as ever, bear the consequences of our inability to restrain our use of resources. Our own Methodist Church is seeing a continuing decline in members and a shortage of ministers for the churches we have. The future is surely unpromising.

And yet. Our faith surely prompts us not to turn away purely because any situation looks unpromising. This doesn't mean facing it with blind and passive optimism. Instead we have a hope which is grounded in the foolishness of God, which is wiser and stronger than wisdom and strength of the world. And God is at work in our world, and invites us to join in. As the theologian Ken Leech said: "hope isn't a state of mind; it's a piece of work". In the unpromising situations in our world, where is God inviting us to join in? Where is God asking us to see the treasure that is hidden within the clay jars? Where is God asking us, not to be optimistic, but rather to be hopeful?

We would like to suggest that you do three things over this "unpromising" Christmas season.

Firstly, the Methodist Church, together with the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Union and the Church of Scotland, have produced a short film, "A Very British Nativity", which suggests how Mary and Joseph might have fared arriving in the UK as asylum

seekers. Why not [watch it](#), share it and perhaps show it as part of your Christmas celebrations at church - and reflect on what this unpromising small family might mean for others, asylum seekers and refugees in particular, and how we can make their future more hopeful.

Secondly, we invite you to reflect on something that initially appeared unpromising. This might be something in your own life, the life of your church, or in the wider society or world. How was the potential or transformation within each situation revealed? What was the treasure in the clay jars?

And thirdly ask yourself: what is unpromising in your life or church or community at the moment? What might God be doing there already - or what might God do if only you would join in?

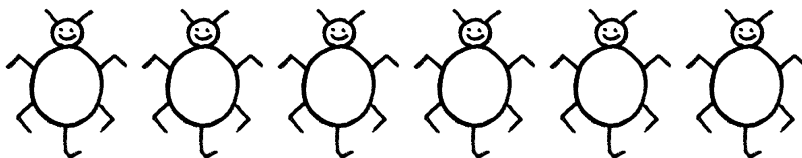
In this season we pray that you will have a happy and peace-filled Christmas, and that you will know the love of God who acts through the most unpromising things and people to bring about his kingdom of holiness and justice.

***Revd Dr Roger Walton and Rachel Lampard MBE***

## **Work Morning**

The Property Committee have organised a Work Morning on **Saturday 18th March starting at 10.00am**. Your help will be much appreciated.

***Jeremy***



**Our annual JMA FAMILY BEETLE DRIVE  
and TEA (and raffle)  
will be held on:**

**SATURDAY 4th MARCH 201**  
**2.30 pm for 3 pm START**

**THE DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH HALL**  
**Adult: £5; Children (under 16): £2.50**

All profits go to JMA (Junior Mission for All)  
raising funds for projects both at home and abroad.  
Come along and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship, food and fun!

***Tickets are available from me now  
so please tell all your family and friends.***



With Thanks,  
Diane Foster

# Table Top Sale

Need to make some space, or raise some funds?  
Come along and sell something or pick up a bargain!



Join us at The Drive Methodist Church Hall on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March  
from 10:00am to 1pm

Rent a table for £10 and raise money for a charity or yourself.

Refreshments available, including bacon and sausage rolls.

For more information or to rent a table, please contact Michelle

## **An appeal from Redbridge Voluntary Aid**

Hello Kathleen and Roy,

I have read your latest newsletter – in particular I like your Mission Statement and just wanted you to know that, in Redbridge Voluntary Care, there are lots of opportunities to be good neighbours for anyone who is interested in joining us.

You can do as little or as much as you have time for and if you are interested in helping with our answering service, you can do that from home – so you don't even have to go out, just deal with the incoming phone calls, find a suitable volunteer from the records and make a few notes about your actions on the day. Training is obviously given. Otherwise people might be interested in visiting/befriending in your local area, hours to suit yourself, and we don't think you need any training for that! obviously we are always looking for drivers too, as this is the majority of our work, but without enough people to answer our phone we can't really function properly.

If anyone is interested in learning more they can check out our website [redvolcare@gmail.com](mailto:redvolcare@gmail.com) or give me a call – details below.

Best wishes  
Jan Cheal

### **Matthew 11 verses 28 to 30.**

Come to me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit: and you will find rest. For the Yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.

## February Church Diary.

Wed	1 <sup>st</sup>	8.00pm	Finance committee meeting
Thu	2 <sup>nd</sup>	7.45pm	Choir Practice
Sat	4 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Fundraiser brunch – see page 6
		5.00pm	Small Choirs Festival London
<b>Sun</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11.15am</b>	<b>Morning Service led by Mr Allan Ramsden</b>
Wed	8 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Church Life committee meeting
<b>Sun</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11.15am</b>	<b>Morning Service led by Mrs Jean John</b>
Thu	16 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Church Council meeting.
Fri	17 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Coffee morning at The Gardeners Café Valentines Mansion, Emerson Road, Gantshill.
<b>Sun</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11.15am</b>	<b>Morning Service With Holy Communion led by Revd. Bernardino Mandlate</b>
Fri	24 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Last day for newsletter items, Bible book study meeting at Janet & John Pearson's House.
<b>Sun</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11.15am</b>	<b>Morning Service led by Mr Robert Debrah</b>

## Dates for your Diary.

Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March at 2pm.	Women's World Day of Prayer at St Peter and St Paul Roman Catholic Church, High Road, Ilford.
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 5pm.	Ilford Methodist Church Ilford Lane. 150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the Ilford Lane Site. Our Choir will be taking part.

## **Church Mission Statement of 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.

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.