



The Methodist Church  
South Warwickshire Circuit



December 2019  
Circuit Newsletter ... Issue 6

**Wishing everyone in the South Warwickshire Circuit a very Happy Christmas**

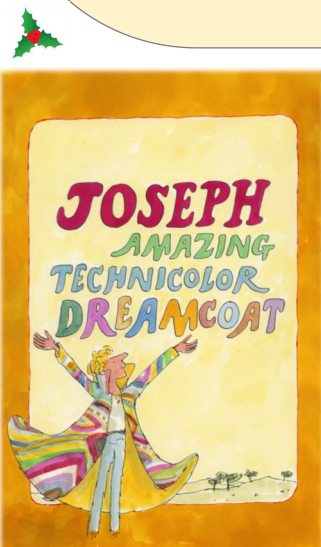
“If you could write something about Christmas for us please that would be great. But please don’t make it too long as space is limited!”. There are so many other good things to bring to people’s attention it is almost as if there is no room for Christmas. Of course, ‘no room’ is one of the realities of the Christmas story. As if refugee or homeless, there was no room anywhere for the holy family.

Jesus was born a traveller, a theme that would mark his life and ministry. ‘For the Son of man has no place to lay his head’. If there had been room things would have been very different. The story would not be the same and some of the charm we see in it from the distance of millennia would be lost to us. We all know ‘it wasn’t like that. We can acknowledge that the only joy and delight of the first Christmas was that of loving parents.

The rest of the story is not pretty despite what we have done to it over the centuries. Who in their right mind would want anyone they care for to be born ‘in stable bare’? Or to be hounded by soldiers in the early years of life?

Making room in life is one of those things that we may be called upon to do once in a while. Make room for someone on the bus or the train. Make room at the table for the extra guest. Each year I try to remember about making room at Christmas for Jesus in all that goes on around his nativity and in doing so carry that through into the next year making room for those for whom there is none. May you and yours find a place with Christ in the blessing and joy of Christmas.

**Rev. Peter Powers, Superintendent Minister**



In early Spring SWC will be presenting a travelling “Sing along a Joseph” which will take place at every church across the circuit between 1st February and 29th March. We would like to invite you to join the chorus and request that everyone attends at least 2 rehearsals (below), one of which should be the last one at Wellesbourne

Dale St – Jan 7th @ 7.30pm

Stratford – Jan 14th @ 7.30pm

Warwick – Jan 21st @ 7.30pm

Wellesbourne – Jan 25th @ 2.30pm

***We look forward to seeing you there!***

## God in Love Unites Us

Last Summer, the Methodist Conference discussed the Report on Marriage and Relationships called 'God in Love unites us'. This is the latest in a long line of reports stretching back to 1979, on different aspects of marriage and divorce, relationships, singleness, and family life. Sadly, they have not been widely read.

The latest report is a response to questions raised by the Conference in relation to the changes in marriage law in Scotland, England and Wales, and the changing pattern of relationships that we have witnessed since the last official Statement on Marriage in 1992. The working party set up to look at these came up with a set of recommendations for the Conference to consider including attitudes to cohabitation (people living together either before or after marriage), the marriages of people of the same sex, and how we live with Christians who profoundly disagree with us.

At this point, let me deal with a couple of technicalities. The vote at Conference was provisional which means the Synods now have a chance to discuss, change and vote on the proposals and advise the Conference who must vote again in 2020. Even if the proposals go through, it will still be up to each local Church's managing trustees to decide whether their building should be registered for the marriages of same-sex couples. It will be entirely up to the members of the church council whether or not to do this and it will not affect your

standing with the rest of the Connexion, no matter what you decide.

The proposals recognise that, despite four decades of discussions, Methodists still hold different views on the subject of marriage. The proposed new rules on marriage affirm that belief in marriage between one man and one woman only remains perfectly acceptable. Alongside that, those who affirm marriage as open to any couple are also affirmed. This model has been called the 'Mixed Economy' and seeks to allow everyone to follow their consciences, whilst respecting those who do not share their views. It is far from perfect, but may be the best way to help the Church live with contradictory convictions.

Over the next few weeks, conversations will be taking place around the Circuit to which all are welcome (see below). It will be a chance to listen to each other and share our own experiences of relationships and how that has shaped our thinking. This will help us to offer advice to the Circuit's representatives to the District Synod.

In preparation for those conversations, you are encouraged to read the Report and Study Guide, available online at [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk). Paper copies are also available from the Circuit Resource Centre. Sessions are currently scheduled at Kineton (28/11 2.30pm), Warwick (7/12 2.30pm), Kenilworth (11/1/2020 10.30am) and Stratford (18/1, 10.30am).

*Rev Sam McBratney*

## Christmas Events around the South Warwickshire Circuit

**There's a lot going on in all our churches over the Advent and Christmas period—here are a couple of highlights ...**



Tysoe—Saturday 21st December @ 4pm Pantivity

Radford Road—from Tuesday 3rd to Thurs 7th December @ 2pm Nativity Exhibition

