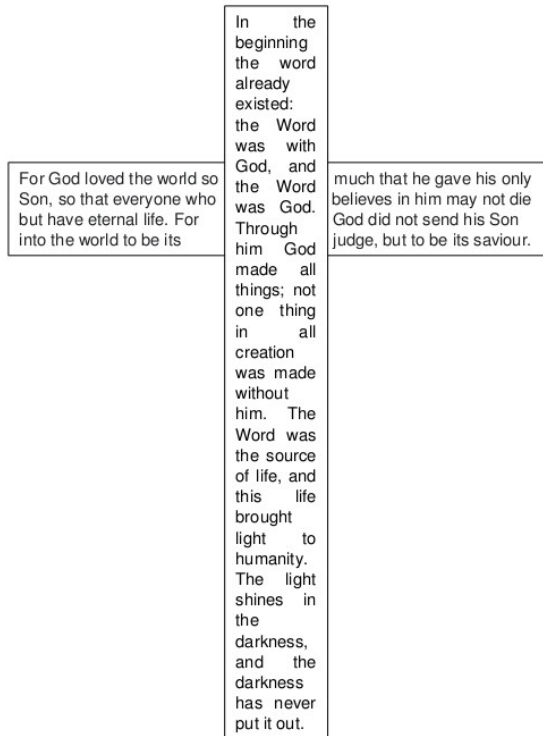


THE LINK

The Magazine of Portsmouth Methodist Church



January / February 2023

Minister : Rev. Ray Goddess

www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk

Reg. Charity No. 1178715

Minister's Desk

As we go into 2023, I am reminded of the hard times we find ourselves in. Times when our budget is being stretched, times when we are faced with uncertainties that seem to be out of our control.

This seems to be a time when we need to unite together and support each other, putting our differences aside and remembering that there is strength in numbers. The trick is that the “numbers” need to be in agreement with each other. There is one way to get that right – and that is to unite with like minded people, people with the same faith base that we as individuals have, praying together and meeting with each other with the sole aim of supporting each other.

I know a number of churches that only meet on a Sunday, but at Portsmouth Methodist we are blessed to have the opportunity to meet on other days during the week and share in love and caring for each other. This is a true blessing, and we thank all the volunteers who help with these events each week.

We also have an evolving leadership in our church. Many are filling new roles and are feeling their way into their new roles. We are thankful for their time and care.

We also have many members that support all of the events, and also support the leaders in what they are planning and doing. Without the members we would not be a church, and so thank you to all of you for your support of the planned events – even when it is freezing outside.

Looking at our church there is hope for 2023 – because of the people in our church. We are not always going to get it right, but we can keep on trying and supporting each other.

I am excited for 2023, I think that this is going to be a year of learning, learning new ways under new conditions but always focusing on Jesus to lead and guide us into the new year.

We can have a successful 2023 – with Jesus at the helm of our church. My prayers are with you all as we start this new year, be blessed and stay safe.

Yours in Christ

Ray

Thanks

Although at the time of publishing this issue we are in the middle of the Christmas period, we must record our thanks to those who have organised events that have already happened.

On December 10th our Christmas Fayre took place and the great sum of £425 was raised for Church funds. Special thanks to Shirley, Barbara and Fran for all their work towards this event, to everyone who contributed and to the stall holders on the day.

A wonderful array of gifts for the Roberts Centre was brought to Portsmouth Methodist Church on Gift Day. Unfortunately, Carol Damper from the Centre was unable to attend the service to give her usual update on her work because of illness, but she would have been very appreciative of your generosity. Thank you.

To this, Denise Foster would like to add the following:

At our Carol/Christingle Service on Sunday 18th December, I was chatting with a young lady and her 3-year-old daughter. She told me how a friend of hers has benefitted from the gifts given at our Gift Day Service, as they had received a hamper and presents for her children. This young lady told her friend that the presents were from our Gift Day service. Isn't it lovely to hear exactly who this helps and the friend couldn't believe the kindness shown to her family at this tricky time.

I told the young lady that I would pass this information on to our Link editor for inclusion in the next Link.

Well done to all those who gave gifts for The Roberts Centre. Together we make such a difference.

A magnificent Christmas meal awaited all those who attended on Wednesday 14th December. It was a good time of fellowship. Many thanks to Shirley and her helpers for all their work and time put in to provide this for us.

Finally, and most recently, on a very wet Sunday morning (18th December) we enjoyed a Carol/Christingle Service. Our thanks go to the organising team. It was a service based on the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols. A special feature was an item by the Junior Church. We are grateful to James and Diane who have re-started the Junior Church and also to all those who took part in the service.

And, of course, there are more events to come ...

Girls' and Boys' Brigades Update

The half-term running up to Christmas passed by at lightning speed.

Highlights include:

- The boys doing some cooking as well as entering a colouring competition (they're hoping for some prizes!).
- The girls enjoyed Christmas crafts and a party on the last night before the holidays with plenty of games and some nibbles.
- The boys had their awards night – it was great to celebrate their achievements of the past year.



- Our oldest girls enjoyed a session looking at coping with stress and how we can calm ourselves down when life gets tough.

- 15 girls and 10 leaders attended an Alice in Wonderland themed activity afternoon and sleepover in November. We had lots of fun and games including

Mat Hatter hat decorating, pinning the grin on the Cheshire Cat and much, much more!



- Several of our boys and their families enjoyed a night out at the panto. They watched Robin Hood at Groundlings Theatre, on Friday 9 December 2022, and enjoyed the singing, dancing and storytelling put on by the fantastic cast.

Dates for your Diary

- The next Church Council meeting is being held on Tuesday 24th January at Eastney. A reminder that reports should be with the Church Council Secretary, Mark Barton, by 10th January please.
- Bible Classes are on 9th and 23rd January and 6th and 20th February and will be held at Mark's house at 7 p.m.

Preachers for January and February 2023

<i>Date</i>	<i>Preacher</i>
1st January	Rev. Dr. Beryl Wright - Holy Communion
8th January	Mrs Barbara Noakes
15th January	Dr. Mark Barton
22nd January	Rev. Ray Goddess
29th January	Mrs Shirley Haynes
5th February	Rev. Ray Goddess - Holy Communion
12th February	Rev. David Muskett
19th February	Mrs Shirley Haynes
26th February	Dr. Mark Barton

From the Circuit

Update from the Circuit Stewards

Following a match in round 1 of the Stationing process and a visit, Revd Pauline Crispin has been invited to fill the vacancy in the southern part of the Circuit from September 2023. She is currently based in Wimborne.

Following a match in round 2 of the stationing process and a visit, Rev David Faulkener has been invited to fill the vacancy in the northern part of the Circuit from September 2023. He is currently based in Surrey.

There are of course two further rounds of Stationing to go so we are hopeful of getting a match for the vacancy in the North of the Circuit. Round 2 takes place later this month and the final round in January.

Community

Knitting Scheme report

When the knitting scheme first began, I didn't keep any records, so all I can say now is that it was going strong from 2006. It started in support of my sister Eileen's church (Newton Park Methodist, Port Elizabeth S. Africa) whose Women's Auxiliary - strange name! - were helping street children and founding babies with knitted garments, cot blankets and hand-knitted teddies. The

scheme didn't stop when the WA finally disbanded (too few younger women were joining). Instead, we found that Drayton United Church (Meth/URC) had a scheme in support of refugees in Syria, so we supported them. Sadly, the authorities in Syria eventually insisted that we hand over our parcels to them to distribute. This we of course refused to do. Instead, we found that Cosham Baptist Church were supporting some very poor people in Romania. This group collected winter clothing for people of all ages and sizes, sending out van loads of things every September. Eventually the organisers of this scheme were unable to continue the sorting and packing of the gifts for their own health reasons. Meanwhile our knitters were still knitting... One lady moved to Cornwall to live with her daughter and continued to knit. After she died her daughter sent us a huge parcel of jumpers and teddies that her mum had made for us.

Looking for another group to support, this time, perhaps locally, we found the Roberts Centre were glad to receive our knitted things collected during this year including the teddies. We were able to let them have 16 "bags for life" bags full. The question now is how to find a suitable body to receive our things, ideally in support of some of the neediest children in the world. Please let me know your ideas about this, and if you would like to join the knitters, I can give you a pattern for the "Oxfam jumper" for a start.

Sixteen years is not bad, is it, so to those of you who have been (or are!) knitting or supporting us in other ways (e.g. with wool, or in the early days, postage,,) on behalf of the children, thank you very, very much.

Beryl Wright

Phoenix Players

The Phoenix Players who have been entertaining Portsmouth for 70 years are presenting their Half Term Panto from Wednesday 15th February until Sunday 19th February.

We are asked to 'join our hero Dick Whittington and Tommy the Cat as they travel to London to find fortune and fame, and defeat the dastardly King Rat – all while making lots of new friends!'

There will be lots of fun and laughter as well as great songs.

Evening performances on the Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday will be at 7.30 p.m. and there are matinees at 2 p.m. on the Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets are £12 with concessions at £10. A ticket for a family of four costs £40 and groups of more than 10 pay £8 each.

Please get in touch on www.haltermpanto.com or www.ticketsource.co.uk/bookit or by telephone 0845 467 6462.

And finally

Unicorns in the Bible

Old versions of the bible such as the King James version have in Numbers 23 v 22 the word unicorn and indeed it is used eight further times Numbers 24:8, Deuteronomy 33:17, Job 39:9,10, Psalms 22:21, 29:6 and 92:10 and in Isaiah 34:7. However, more recent versions use the word ox. For example, that Numbers 23 is “God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.” (KJV) and “God brought them out of Egypt; they have the strength of a wild ox.” (NIV). So, what is this unicorn that the old versions refer to. The mystery becomes easier to work out when you look at the Catholic Douay-Rheims version which uses the word “rhinoceros.” It becomes even clearer when you look at Young’s Literal translation which simply does not translate the original word leaving it in the original Hebrew *re’em* and that is the key – we have no idea what a *re’em* is.

The late Jewish author and sceptic Isaac Asimov’s *Guide to the Bible*, offers that it refers to the “wild ox (an urus or an aurochs) which is ancestral to the domesticated cattle of today. Re’em still flourished in early historical times and a few existed into modern times, although it is now extinct. It was a dangerous creature of great strength and was similar in form and temperament to Asian water buffaloes.” Some other Biblical scholars agree, Bert Thompson says “When the first Greek translation of the Bible was prepared about 250 B.C., the re’em was already rare in the long-settled areas of the Near East. The Greeks, who had no direct experience with it, had no word for it.”

So, in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew, they used the Greek word *monokeros*, which means “one-horned.” This became, when translated into Latin, the word *unicornis* — which means “one-horned” — but does not necessarily mean a horse with a single horn. So, in 1611, rather than speculate, the King James Version scholars made up a new English word “unicorn,” just as they did with *baptismo*, to avoid offending the King James I, who had been sprinkled.

So, despite what might sound like a fantasy creature this is a real creature just one that does not have a modern name as it is now extinct. We do know from Job 39:9–12 that this animal has great strength which is made use of in the later comparisons but also is useless for agricultural work as it does not obey man or plough. You can see why some translators think “re’em” describes a rhinoceros

which is a moody and unpredictable animal that, unlike buffaloes, elephants or horses, defied any domestication. We of course get confused as we when we hear the description, we forget many creatures have a single horn.

Extinct since about 1627, aurochs were huge bovine creatures. Julius Caesar described them in his account of the Gallic Wars as: “a little below the elephant in size, and of the appearance, colour and shape of a bull.

Their strength and speed are extraordinary; they spare neither man nor wild beast. Not even when taken very young can they be tamed.” There are Georgian and Victorian naturalist accounts that record mentions of this type of creature in Africa.

We must remember that the bible has several creatures we do not know what they really are; Job also has the behemoth and the leviathan, a powerful sea creature. So, this is not the only creature that has become extinct since the Bible was written but just because they are not around now it does not mean they are fantasy creatures.

Deadline for March Link

Items for our next issue of The Link (March) must be with the editor by **Sunday February 19th**.

Where in the World?

Last month's picture seems to have stumped everyone, but was actually taken on a very cold December afternoon at Petersfield Heath Pond. I suspect that the rather different angle of this shot as well as the strange lighting, generated by the low sun reflecting of the frozen lake surface may have confused. So, no winners this month.

Now something a little different from a foreign country, but still very relevant to the season. This gold monument shown on the next page is alleged to be the final resting place of the remains of the three Magi. But does anyone know where it is? As usual, no prizes but a mention in The Link for any correct answers.

Since this issue should 'hit the streets' right on Christmas we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our contributors over the past year (keep your items coming please!) and wish you all a Happy New Year.

Christine and Ralph



When , What and Where

For more information about these activities and other community organised activities, please see the Portsmouth Methodist Church web site

www.portsmouthmethodists.org.uk

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Where</i>
Monday		
6:30 p.m.	Girls Brigade	St Joseph's
7:00 p.m.	Bible Study Class (January 9th and 23rd ; February 6th and 20th)	Contact markbartonrn@gmail.com or 07766252554
Tuesday		
10:00 a.m.	PMC Under 5s (during term time)	Trinity Building
2:30 p.m.	Friendship Group	Copnor (Wesley Rooms)
Wednesday		
12:00 noon	Fellowship Lunch (1st Wednesday of month)	Trinity Building
12:00 noon	Soup and Pud (3rd Wednesday of month)	Trinity Building
2:30 p.m.	Wednesday Club	Trinity Building
Thursday		
2:30 p.m.	Games Afternoon (2nd & 4th Thursday of month)	Eastney Halls
6:00 p.m.	Boys Brigade	St Joseph's
Friday		
9.30 a.m.	Stay and Play Group for Toddlers and Parents	Eastney Halls
Saturday		
10:00 a.m.	Coffee Morning	Trinity Building
10:00 a.m.	Coffee and Light Refreshments	Copnor (Wesley Rooms)

During the holiday period, please check with organisers that meetings are taking place before travelling.