

S*ParkLife 27



aka Lockdown News 44

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64th Annual Toy Service





64th Annual Toy Service



Sabbath, 14th
December



Photos taken by Dan Sabatier with two on page 3 by Arto Keshishian.



◆ THE ANNUAL TOY SERVICE — AFTER THE SERVICE

Most regular worshippers are well aware of the beginnings of the Toy Service; how Pat heard of the service held every year at Ealing Church where Brian Davison's father (her boss) was the elder – he got the idea from the Wood Green Church. Sadly neither church continues the tradition. Pat's father, Alf Kelly MBE who was awarded his medal for 'services to the people of Watford', embraced the idea and persuaded the members to donate toys for local needy children, thus beginning this long-standing tradition. For Pat this is a very special annual event which she has continued since her father's death. This is the 64th service now, and tradition dictates that the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of Watford attends and thanks the members for their generosity. (Those unfamiliar with the story can read about it on page 14.)



Audrey usually arranges the display with her helpers and you can see her influence in how the staging is formed in the photo! A team of helpers sorting and arranging toys and producing the floral arrangements are also in attendance beavering away on the afternoon before the Toy Service. This year they finished their task sooner than usual. This may be because there were fewer toys as the display seemed smaller than usual but, to be fair, there were lots of small toys this year, fewer large ones, and they seemed more along traditional lines: lots of jigsaws, books, stuffed toys, rather than the expensive ones that require batteries which have been increasing in number in recent years, which would affect the size of the display. In addition, several sacks were filled when the children brought their toys to the front of the church. After the service they posed for the traditional shot with the Mayor.



Many thanks to Dan Sabatier for filling in at fairly short notice as photographer and also to Arto Keshishian who was on standby as Dan hadn't been well and, took a few extra shots during the service. The 'sermon' was given by New-



bold Church's Pastor Janos Kovacs-Biro whose talk on God's gift to humanity so perfectly matched the illustration produced by Charito Lilley on page 10, despite it being drawn six months ago — some coincidence?



Pat has come across many charity representatives through her work in the Welfare Department and some were there during the service and made their way to the front at the end of the service to pick toys for their clients. Soon the stage had been emptied of toys and, having been packed into boxes of all shapes and sizes, were swiftly transported to waiting cars.

One social worker who attends every year, struggling under the weight of bags of toys explained, "They will make such an incredible difference to the families and will bring such joy." The Pastoral Lead at Beechfield School, another regular, brought along a colleague for the first time. "I'm here because of this service.... And the spirit of community ... to get this together is phenomenal And Pat is phenomenal," stressing that the toys will help the families in the school. Tim Whittaker, from the local refugees' group, brought his 'shopping list' as usual and thanked the members for their generosity explaining that the toys would help them to put together the 87 hampers that they need to provide for their clients.



Not all the toys will be given out at Christmas as some will be held in store by the case workers to be given out as needed during the coming year.

An Unlikely Story*

Copied from Messenger Vol. 115 No 26—Article based on information taken from www.irrefutablefacts.com/?m+200911 ('The Stanborough Press does not accept as fact all of the content of the website from which this article was taken: it is, however, a source of humour.')



It is truly heartwarming to know that millions of people around the world believe in Santa.

Sure, most are under four feet tall, but still it's amazing that so many believe in

the big guy in the red suit. Consider the following: around the globe today live approximately two billion children. Santa wouldn't visit all of them, of course. Subtracting the number of Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, or Buddhist children reduces Santa's Christmas Eve workload to 15% of the total, or 378 million children (according to the Population Reference Bureau). At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, and presuming that there is at least one good child in each home, Santa would have to visit about 108 million homes.

Santa would have about 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west. This works out to 967.7 visits per second. That means that, at each household with a good child, Santa would have around one thousandth of a second to park the sleigh, hop out, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks had been left for him, and get back up the chimney, jump into the sleigh, and get on to the next house.

For the purposes of our calculations, we will assume that each of these 108 million stops is evenly distributed around the earth, although, of course, they aren't. We're talking about a trip of 0.78 miles per household; a total trip of 75.5 million miles, not counting bathroom stops or breaks. To cover that ground in 31 hours, Santa's sleigh would have to move at 650 miles per second - 3,000 times the speed of sound. By comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second, and a conventional reindeer can run (at best) 15 miles per hour.

The payload of the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child

gets nothing more than a medium-sized Lego set (two pounds), the sleigh would have to carry over 500 thousand tons, not counting Santa himself. On land, a conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. In air, even granting that the 'flying' reindeer could pull 10 times the normal amount, the job couldn't be done with a mere eight or nine of them - Santa would need 360,000 of them. This increases the payload, not counting the weight of the sleigh, to roughly seven times the weight of the RMS Queen Elizabeth.

Six hundred thousand tons travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance - this would heat up the reindeer in the same fashion as a spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer would absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy per second each. In short, they would burst into flames almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team would be vaporised within 4.26 thousandths of a second, or right about the time Santa reached the fifth house on his trip.

Not that it matters, however, since Santa, as a result of accelerating from a dead stop to 650 miles per second in 0.001 seconds, would be subjected to centrifugal forces of 17,500 Gs. A 250- pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of the sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force, instantly crushing his bones and organs and reducing him to a quivering blob of pink goo. Considering all this, it's amazing that some children (and even a few adults) have no problem believing in Santa. By comparison, the story of the little baby in the manger is relatively easy to believe. The life of Jesus Christ is a fact, recorded not only by

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

John 1:14 MESSAGE paraphrase.

biblical writers but by secular historians as well. Some historians declare that there is more evidence for the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ than there is evidence that Julius Caesar ever lived at all.

Even in the face of the written testimony of eyewitnesses, many people refuse to believe in Jesus. They consider him nothing more than a myth. But for those willing to believe, Jesus promises an inheritance of the Kingdom of God. (Mark 10)

It is the prayer of the Editor and staff of MESSENGER that we may catch a glimpse of 'the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth' this holiday season.

◆ PASTOR TERRY RETIRES



Pastor Terry has retired from the ministry after 36 years of service. Many remember his one-year internship at SPC, 1989-90, so finishing his ministry here has been a fitting end to his career. Within weeks of his arrival in 2020 the church went into Covid lockdown. Later, during the summer months, he was interviewed by Messenger Editor, Pastor David Neal, who was his contemporary at Newbold College – they were in the same graduation group. Below is an abridged version of the interview which was published in the Messenger. (Vol. 125 no. 15 dated 16 July 2020)

In the photo below from the college’s yearbook Pr. Terry is fifth from right on the back row. (Many thanks to the ladies in the Newbold College Library for providing these photos and to Pr. Neal for identifying him!)

How he became an Adventist: “I became an Adventist in my youth because of searching Scripture for myself. I believed much of the Bible, and was content with life, when someone shared with me the truth about following God whole heartedly, including keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. At first I didn’t like this idea. My life was good. I would enjoy shopping with my sister on a Saturday. I would watch West Ham, my beloved football team, on a Saturday afternoon. I did not want to have to change my lifestyle because of some instruction from the Bible. But something stirred in me which began to appreciate that life works best when it is in harmony not only with the teachings of the Bible, but with its Author, Jesus Christ. Now, when I share the teachings of the Bible with others, I love to see the ‘light go on’ as they too realise what it means to follow Christ.”



On his return to SPC: “I have been made so welcome by all, reconnecting with friends and members from my first years in ministry, and getting to know members I’ve not met before. One of the thrills for me now is to see their children and even grandchildren taking leadership roles in the church. I don’t think you can be in ministry for as long as I have been without discovering what your spiritual gifts are. In my case, there are three: first, the gift of pastoral care/visitation; second, the gift of Bible study; and third, the gift of preaching. I think I see preaching as an extension of my love for sharing Scripture. As I enjoy sharing one-to-one, I also enjoy sharing in a community. If I can also help the members I serve to have a love for the Bible and its relevance for our lives today, particularly in the times we live, then I feel that is my calling.”

“What lockdown has taught me is how quickly things in life and society can change. That is why we need the Word of God to keep us anchored when things around us get unstable.”

His favourite text is: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)



Left to right, front row: Mr. Howson, Dean Papaioannou, Terry Messenger, Jen Vehkavuori, Marcel Fernandez, Wilma Gramkow, Dawn Ray, Samuel Ouadjo, Linda Peden, Steve Greaves, Keith Hugh, David Neal, Adjei Kwei, Stacy McDowell, John Siliinovic, Zdravko Plantak, Dr. S. Thompson. Second row: Harold Soriton, Angeline Ng, Sheila Wilson, Maureen Smith, Angela Ackah, Ruth Fox, David Savalani, Meity Bodensstaff, Heli Vehkavuori, Ann Sedgwick, Lauri Procell, Diana Atamian, Drene Somasundram, Marian Jensen, Adele Siedman, John Lim. Third row: Kenneth Jorgensen, Allan Jensen, Juha Hakkila, Michael Anim, Lincoln Haynes, Mike Robertson, Samuel Koranteng, Hamzik Keshishzadeh, Victor Hulbert, Peter Nilsson, Billy Leonard, Bert Nab, Rafaat Kamal, Vladimir Pujic, Sakari Vehkavuori, Paul Tompkins. Back row: Zeljko Gregor, Branislav Mirilov, Kjetil Woie, James Standish, Vlado Slavujevic, Steve Rivers, Des Rafferty, Emmanuel Osei, Patrick Johnson, Jurrrien den Hollander, Radivoj Suvacarov, Jyrki Vehkavuori, Ingvald Jensen, Helmut Fuhrmann, Juneroy Nugent. Six students graduated in absentia.

The Graduation Class 1988.

Photo: Bill Lulman

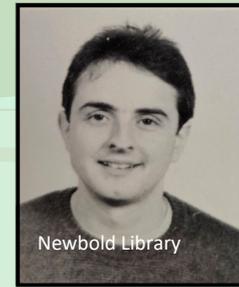
Pr. Terry was part of Newbold’s largest Graduation Class, left. He is third from left on the front row.

Source: Messenger Vol. 93 no. 15 8th July, 1988

◆ PASTOR TERRY SAYS GOODBYE



When I attended Newbold from 1982 to 1988 I didn't think then that I would ever reach retirement - I thought the Lord would have come by now! I guess many have thought the same way - yet we are still here! So as I move into retirement I'm a little unnerved that it has happened so quickly!



I have enjoyed my work in the ministry over the years - starting off as an intern in Lewisham and then **Stanborough** Park which is where I end up retiring as the Senior Minister! I have served as Pastor in various districts such as Guildford, Basingstoke, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Greenwich, Bedford and Milton Keynes as well as the above mentioned before. I also served as the Personal Ministries Director and Executive Secretary for the SEC from 2007 to 2015.

I have had my lovely wife Lynette with me all this time and she has been a great support to me throughout the years. She will be retiring herself shortly and we are looking forward to spending more time together also with our two daughters and granddaughter. I hope to spend some of my time volunteering for Parkinson's UK as well as continuing with my chaplaincy work in a local hospital.

I will miss ministering to you all - it has been a privilege and a pleasure over the past 5 years. My only regret is that I became sick over the past 4 months and wasn't able to complete my tenure with you right up until the end of the year.

Time has gone so quickly and I have met so many wonderful people. My greatest thrill has always been to see changes in people's lives and witnessing them turning to Jesus as their Saviour.

May God bless you all during this special time of the year when we commemorate the fact that God Himself stepped into this world as a baby, lived a sinless life, died and rose again so that we could be saved from sin's clutches!



◆ **TRIBUTE FROM PASTOR DAVID NEAL— a fellow graduate**

In 1982, Terry and I began training for ministry at Newbold. By 1988, the South England Conference (SEC) considered us ready for employment, and we were both taken on as intern pastors in London —Terry to Lewisham, me to The New Gallery. As young pastors, it was both a thrilling and challenging time to begin ministry. The thrill was the call to serve and share the gospel in London. Entering ministry in the afterglow of the 1986 Harvest London campaign led by Mark Finley and other evangelists, the London church was alive, dynamic and growing. The SEC leadership at the time only knew three words: evangelism, evangelism, and evangelism. Tent meetings ran in Tottenham, crusades (as they were then called) in Brixton, and Daniel and Revelation seminars hosted in even the smallest of congregations.

At the same time, we were immediately confronted with two big conversations. The first was an arcane, irrelevant issue relating to an old Christian heresy seeking to define 'the very nature of Christ'. As cancer can spread in the body if left unchecked, it spread in the body of Christ and absorbed the energy of church pastors and leaders for almost a decade. It broke some congregations never to be healed. The second concerned the growing need for racial diversity and harmony in the South England Conference. At times, it was a highly charged, politicised conversation. While some of our contemporaries would quickly engage in what became a significant power struggle - not Terry. He was happy serving His Lord through preaching, home visitation, connecting with the community, sharing scripture with new believers, and supporting his local congregation in their specific needs.

There is a misguided belief that to be recognised as a 'good pastor,' you will be called to serve as a leader in the conference. At the 1996 SEC Session, I reported to the constituency as the incumbent Youth director. When the nominating committee considered who best to serve as Youth Director for the following triennium, I was graciously informed that Terry's name was to be put forward as the nomination. Terry was approached and encouraged to accept. Terry could readily have accepted in the heat, powerplay, and recognition given at the Session. But he did not, which to me is a lasting sign of Terry's servant leadership mindset - a humble spirit that seeks to serve rather than be served. I can't however sometimes wonder which direction our lives would have taken had Terry accepted the nomination!

In more recent times, Terry served as SEC Executive Secretary. Without question, there is no more exacting role within the SEC. The incumbent is expected to be immersed in detail and yet an accessible sounding board for up to 150 diverse and often strong-willed employees seeking his attention over one matter or another. During his term of office, Terry is recognised to have served with dignity and integrity, often the calming voice in stress-filled situations.

In one sense, I'm not sure whether Terry or I, in our early years of ministry, ever expected to reach or get close to retirement age. The Adventist mood music of our generation was still alive with an expectation that Christ would return in our lifetime - and our work was to help Him return sooner than expected. But as for so many of our colleagues and members, retirement arrived.

A job well done and a ministry of faithfulness? In Terry's case, absolutely, and with Lynette's loving and sacrificial support. While Terry will graciously accept our good wishes and perhaps even identify with our recognition of his ministry, the words of Paul will be of far more significance to him.

"I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day—and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear." (2 Timothy 4:7-8) Good News Bible

THE MINISTER'S LAMENT - discovered in a very old edition of the Messenger

I've been a minister for umpteen years.
I have come to the realization I am the man who can never be right.
My sermons are either too long or too short.
If I engage in long hours of study preparing them, they are over the heads of the people.
If I keep them simple and straight to the point, there is nothing in them.
If I introduce humour, I am too frivolous. If I am serious, I have no sense of humour.
If I speak too low, the congregation falls asleep. If I speak loudly, I am shouting.
If I wave an arm in gesticulation, change my expression, or modulate my voice for effect, I'm acting
If I stand like a wooden post in the pulpit, I'm boring.
If I stay in my study I ought to be out visiting. If I do a lot of visiting then obviously I have nothing else to do – or I ought to be in my study.
If I am not in when someone telephones, no one can ever get hold of me. If I am at home, I should be out. If they telephone me in the evening and are successful, I ought not to be in. If I telephone them when I return home, they are in bed.
If I am a 'hail-fellow-well-met' type, I have no dignity. If I keep my place, I stand on my dignity.
If I speak with a pleasing accent I am too upper class. If I drop my tone I am uneducated.
If I try to see both sides, I'm sitting on the fence. If I see one side or the other, I'm taking sides.
If I have no friends in the congregation I'm snobbish. If I choose some friends, I am showing favouritism.
If I dress to befit my calling, I'm old-fashioned. If I adopt a 'new look' I get quizzical glances.
I'm either too young or too old.
The young complain that I'm for the elderly. The elderly say that I'm only for the young.
The first few years I was a promising young man. The next few I was more mature. The next few I was mediocre. Soon I'll be past it.
As they say- 'you cannot please all the people all of the time'.

Pastor Denys Baildam — An adaptation, with apologies to the Scottish Sunday Post

◆ CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE!

It will be 5 years next spring since this newsletter's conception which amazes the editor as it was never intended to be anything more than a temporary thing to keep the members informed during the various lockdowns. It started as a few pages on the internet and moved to being mailed electronically or otherwise to the whole membership after a suggestion from the elders. Like most things it gradually grew in size and expanded in content but the editor is never sure if many enough people actually read it to justify spending so many hours poring over a hot PC!

During that time it has become a team effort and the editor would like to thank Alison who became chief proof reader and a source of advice who doesn't bear grudges when it's disregarded! She never complains when another issue lands in her mail box. Also Sheila (Stickland), pictured right as she embarks on another proof read! Sheila has had to resign **AND ANOTHER VOLUNTEER PROOF READER IS DESPERATELY NEEDED. Any offers gratefully accepted!**

Thanks also to Amy Browne who somehow managed to get herself involved in producing the PDF which is used for emailing and copying (and additional proof reader at the final stage); Pete Walton who photocopies the printed version, always helpful with producing better quality prints when needed, and a frequent source of advice — he similarly doesn't bear grudges when it's ignored; Pat who mails the printed copies and Jef Nascimento who sends them by email to those on the list. Also, Audrey, who suggested producing a version for the whole membership to the editor and has been a constant source of encouragement since, and to all those who have submitted articles for publication over the past year, especially Volker Herkner, Pastor Neal and Charito Lilley, a professional illustrator who readily agreed to provide a colouring picture last summer and the ever-helpful staff at Newbold College Library.

Wishing all readers a joyful Christmas tide and best wishes for 2025,

June, newsletter editor (s.parklifeneeds@gmail.com)



◆ **GOD'S CHRISTMAS GIFT TO MANKIND**

A picture to colour; kindly provided by illustrator Mrs. Charito Lilley in response to a request from the editor.

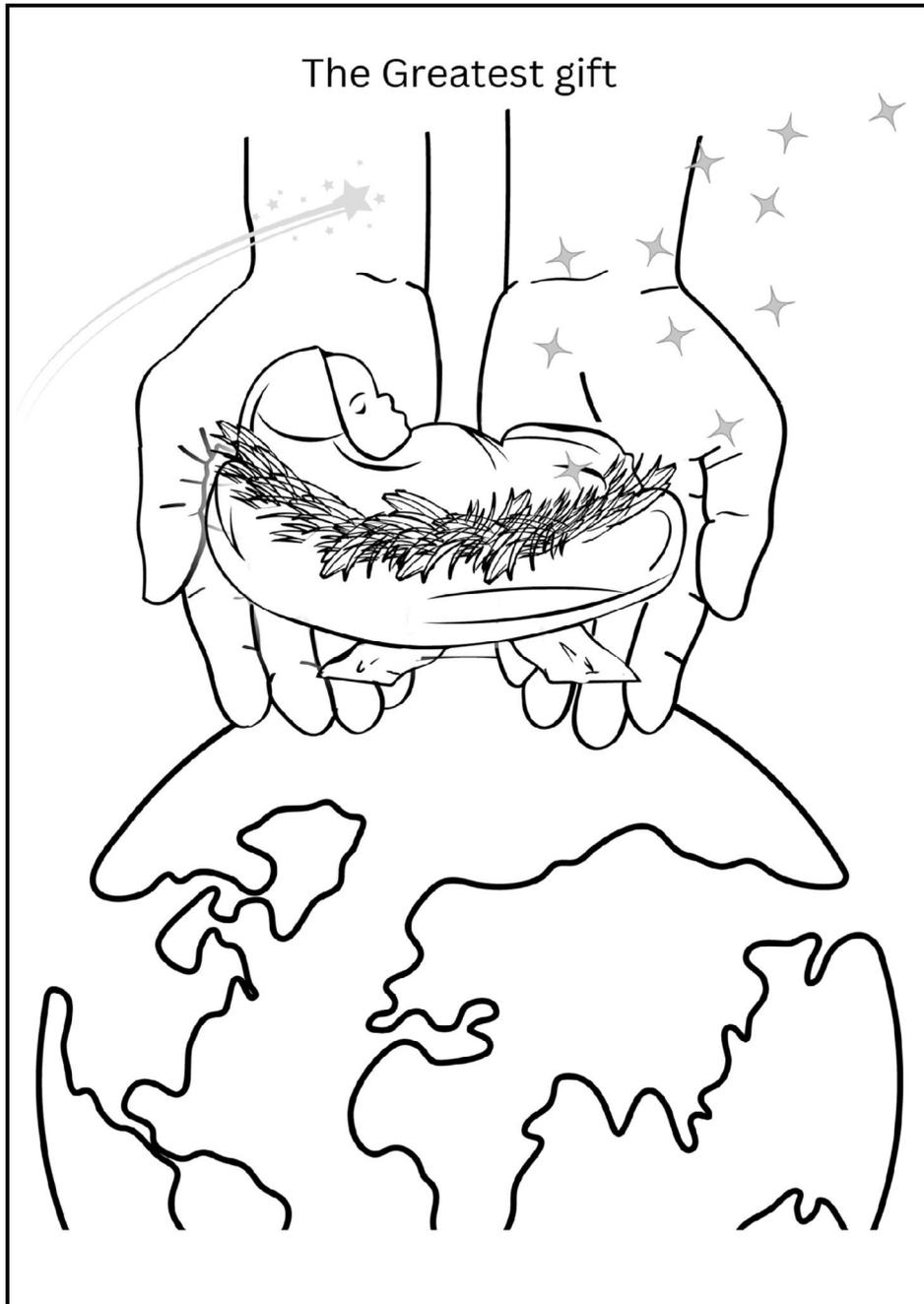
During this Christmas season, when the world seems to be in turmoil, wars are breaking out in different places, crime is rampant, and many things are happening that are great sins in the sight of God. But in that crib is the person who grew up to save us. And He did."
Billy Graham

The very purpose of Christ's coming into the world was that He might offer up His life as a sacrifice for the sins of men. He came to die. This is the heart of Christmas.

Billy Graham

Rejoice, that the immortal God is born, so that mortal men may live in eternity.

Jan Hus



Christmas: the Son of God expressing the love of God to save us from the wrath of God so we could enjoy the presence of God.

John Piper

Christmas is telling you that you could never get to heaven on your own. God had to come to you.

Timothy Keller

Jesus came from heaven down to earth. He left all grandeur behind Him, He passed by palaces and thrones-to be born in a manger! He was born lowly, that He might raise men up to God. The poor have a friend in Jesus. If no one else loves them, He loves them. He came to give them liberty, to proclaim to them the gospel of God's grace."

Dwight L. Moody

From azquotes.

◆ A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

TO EARTH WITH LOVE by David Sheppard (former Bishop of Liverpool)

From Messenger VOLUME 86 NUMBER 25/26 4 DECEMBER 1981



He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of the woman. He put on humanity that He might redeem mankind.

He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God.

He came from heaven where the rivers never freeze,

winds never blow, frosts never chill the air, flowers never fade, and no one is ever sick.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, reared in obscurity. Only once crossed the boundary of the land, in childhood.

He had no wealth or influence, and had neither training nor education. His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential.

In infancy He startled a king, in boyhood He puzzled the doctors, in manhood ruled the course of nature.

He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet not all the libraries of the country could hold all the books that have been written about Him.

He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme of more songs than all song writers combined.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practised medicine, and yet He healed more broken hearts than the doctors broken bodies.

He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun, yet no leader ever made more volunteers, who have, under His orders made rebels stack arms or surrender without a shot being fired.

He is the Star of Astronomy. The Rock of Geology. The Lion and Lamb of Zoology. The Harmonizer of all discords, and the Healer of all diseases.

Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him. Satan could not seduce Him. Death could not destroy Him. The grave could not hold Him.

He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor. How poor?

Ask Mary, ask the Wise Men.

He slept in another's manger. He cruised the lake in another's boat.

He rode on another man's ass. He was buried in another man's tomb.

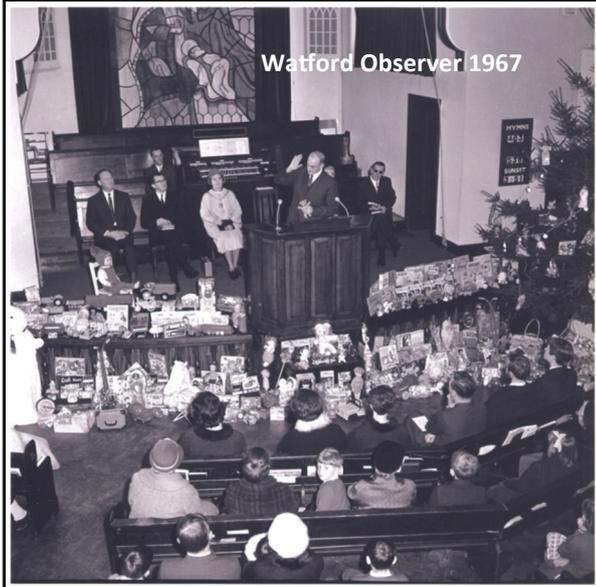
All failed, but He never.

The ever perfect One. He is the Chief among ten thousand. He is altogether lovely, and

This is OUR Saviour.



◆ **FROM THE ARCHIVES:
PAST TOY SERVICES**



Left: Alf Kelly is on the far right of the platform party.
Right: the 1989 Toy Service with Alf back, right.
(Photo: . G. Coombs)



The photo above shows Alf at the rear and Emily Dya-son, Christian Guenin and Rebecca Tunwell feature. Taken in the early days of the newsletter editor's time in the Communications Department and responsible for handling the PR she can be seen bottom right in the days when she could crouch down and get up again unaided! Son David, now 34, is in receipt of a toy which, sadly, he had to return!



Left: The conductor has been identified as Jean Hinks. Look carefully along the front row and you can spot Christian Guenin at the left end and Naomi Burgess at the right end, on triangle. Both these photos were taken by the late Frank Blewitt.



The photos left and on the next page show the church before the redevelopment project, a moment of nostalgia for long-term members and a revelation for those who have joined us more recently.



More memories of past Toy Services. Left taken in 2012, below shows social workers and charity representatives selecting toys for their clients after the service. Three photos far left include Sheila Stickland's grandchildren, two with the town's then MP, taken in 2011 at the 50th anniversary (middle) and 2007 (bottom).



This article was published in the Toy Service's Diamond Jubilee supplement. Whilst most members will be familiar with the background this is intended for those who joined us more recently.

◆ WHERE DID THE TOY SERVICE IDEA COME FROM?

One question that is often asked is where did the idea of the Toy Service originate? Alf Kelly established the long-running tradition at Stanborough Park Church, a legacy which has been continued by his daughter Pat Walton. So much so that many no longer are aware of the event's origins although Pat always makes sure that she makes the congregation aware of her father's contribution in this area. Unlike her father Pat isn't a natural public speaker, preferring to work behind the scenes and always finds speaking of this a very emotional time.

For a long time it was received wisdom that the idea began with Brian Davison's father who was elder at the Ealing Church. It was Mr. Davison who was Pat's boss at the Adventist travel agency in London who told her about the event he was organising, collecting new toys donated by church members to give to local needy families at Christmas - families who were unable to afford to buy toys for their children and give them the kind of Christmas they would wish to give them, just like their peers at school.

However, recent research has revealed that Ealing didn't initiate the concept of the Toy Service. That honour must go to the Wood Green SDA Church in North London. Elders often met up and exchanged ideas and Mr. Davison must have heard of the idea and decided to set up his own event at Ealing.

Wood Green Church held its first Toy Service at Christmas 1956 – recorded in The Messenger. The previous year one of the church's members had given some toys to a social worker she knew who worked for Hertfordshire County Council's Social Services Department - so we can say that the children of Hertfordshire were the first recipients!

The following year the church decided to hold a service of its own with toys donated by members to be given to needy children in their area and invited the local mayor who gratefully accepted the donations on their behalf. According to the Messenger this tradition continued for at least nine years but eventually fell by the wayside. However, the idea lives on elsewhere.

Much the same situation happened at the Ea-

ling Church. The annual event continued for some years until styles of worship changed. But the baton was passed to Watford. When Alf heard of the idea from Pat it wasn't surprising that he seized it enthusiastically as his work within the locality made him only too aware of the need. He set about organising the event at Stanborough Park Church and persuading the members to donate new toys and cash for him to buy them himself if they were unable to do so themselves. He pinned the money to the large Christmas tree which was donated annually by Garston Supply Yard opposite Stanborough Park on St. Albans Road. He used to distribute the toys himself as he knew where the hardship cases were, sometimes dressed as Father Christmas.

Current child protection laws means that Pat must hand the toys over to local social workers and charities such as the local branch of the Refugees' Association. Their representatives usually attend the service in person and can be seen afterwards selecting toys for their clients from the display which is usually arranged under the supervision of Audrey Balderstone, well-known for her artistic talents.

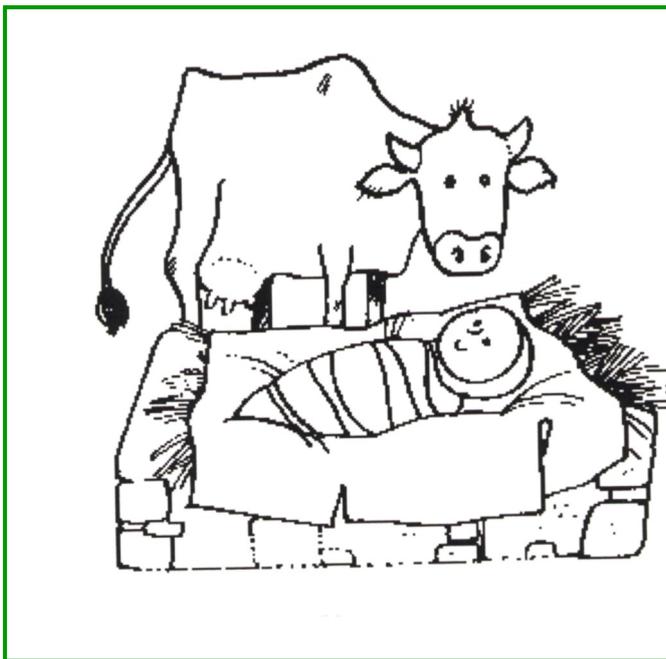
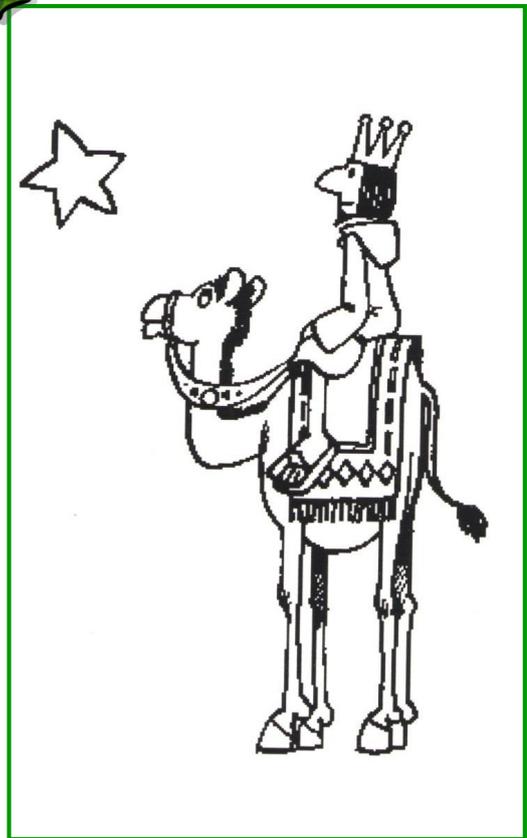
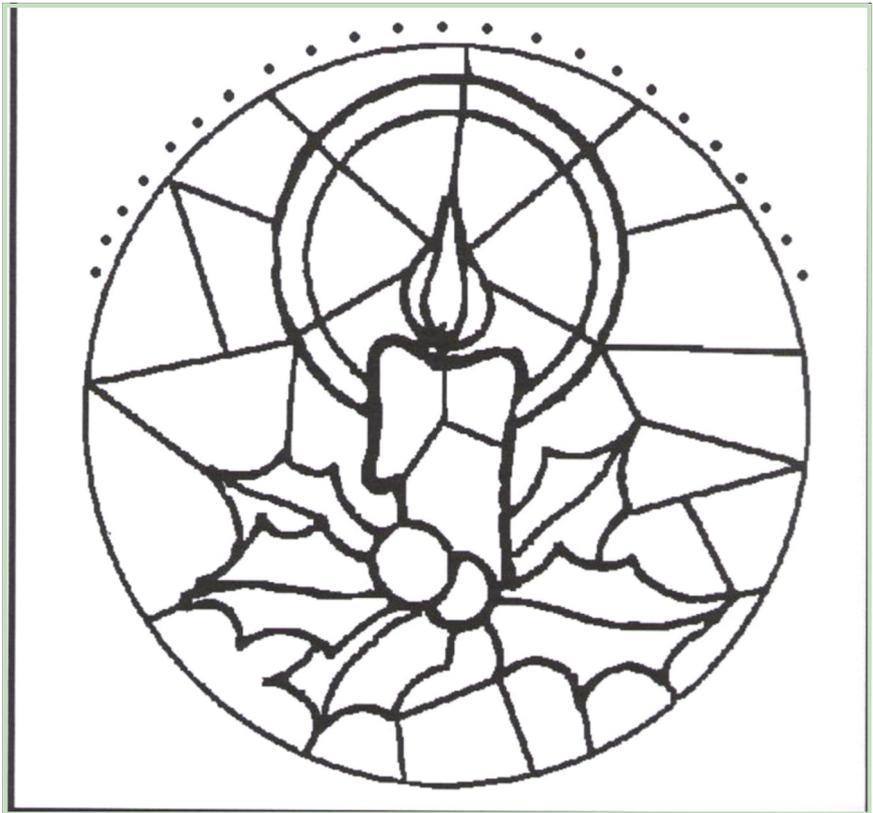
Although the Toy Service began in 1961 it isn't until 1965 that it first achieves a mention in The Messenger. It isn't possible to trawl back that far into the archives of the local paper online and requires much patience dealing with heavy bound volumes in the County Reference Library which are impossible to photocopy. However, one photo has been obtained from the Watford Observer's photo library – the newspaper used to send a photographer to each event in the early days.

In the early 1960's the idea of the Toy Service was very popular. Not only Wood Green Ealing and Stanborough Park hosted them but Watford Town held one event and donated the toys to the NSPCC and Oxford also hosted a regular one for a while. All but Stanborough Park's have fallen by the wayside with the exception of the Grantham Church whose members took the idea with them when the Stanborough Press relocated there from Watford in 1966 after the fire which ripped through its editorial block some years previously.

Pat is determined that as long as there is the need for this charitable act at Christmas in the town she will continue to organise an Annual Toy Service at the church.



♦ **CHILDREN'S PAGE:**
pictures to colour.
More resources including Christmas puzzles are available in the downloads section of the church website.



◆ NEWS IN BRIEF AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Pastor Terry & Lynette** wish to thank you for the well wishes, prayers and cards over the past few weeks. It is very much appreciated.

- **A Thanksgiving Service** will be held in the church on 28th December 3 - 5pm, You can provide testimony in person at the service or send to familylife@stanboroughchurch.org and we can read it to the church. If you want or need prayers please send requests to the same address.

- **The Young Adults** organised a trip to Winter Wonderland on 14th December.

- **The Children's Sabbath Schools would appreciate a donation of a ukulele, banjo and a classical guitar.** Please contact Gabi on 07380 314986 if you can help.

- **ADVENT WITH ADRA** is the Christmas Appeal to help countless children worldwide who are

ADRA Christmas greetings card scheme: the following people sent their good wishes to church members:

James & **Audrey** Huzzey

Dennis Johnson

Joan Maxwell

The Papaioannou family

Joelle and George Priest

Pastor Aris, Sophia & Lydia (Vontzalidis)

Johnson Wong

David & Alison Burgess

Sheila Burgess

Sis Frances & family

Brian & Cecilia Davison

Paul and Helen Lockham

Lisa, Rui and James Dias

Margaret McReynolds

Michele Thompson

The Shepley Family

John and Lorraine Cooper

caught up in conflicts and will face harsh and uncertain conditions this Christmas. You can donate through [Audrey's Just-Giving Page](#) or at adra.org.uk/donate.

- **There were no responses** to the article on Assisted Dying.

- **Flower Arranging Classes for Beginners:** Audrey will be running a series of six weekly classes from January 7th, 2025, 7:30 – approx 9:30pm (small charge applies). If you are interested in learning the art of flower arranging come along to the Cedar/Sycamore Room. Please register at abalderststone@btconnect.com

Prayer Requests: you can place private Prayer Requests in the Prayer Box or via **STANBOROUGHPRAYS@GMAIL.COM**

LIZ BURNS

We were saddened to hear of the death of Liz Burns recently. Liz moved away last year but joined the church as a result of her work with One Vision during the pandemic when she ably ran the distribution service from a desk in the corner of the Cedar/Sycamore Room. Her first husband was a military policeman and she set up a support group for Army veterans based in the Ex-Servicemen's Club in Abbots Langley.

The Abbots Langley Liberal Democrat Newsletter distributed to homes in the parish contained the following tribute to her: *Former Lib Dem Parish Councillor Liz Burns, who Chaired the (Abbots Langley) Parish Council in 2017/8, has passed away. She will be remembered by many residents for her active involvement in Parish affairs and as Chair of the Royal British Legion (RBL) for many years. Liz worked hard to help make life better for all veterans and RBL members. She was a much-loved person in Abbots Langley.*

◆ REGULAR EVENTS

● **Discipleship/Nurturing classes** are being held every Friday 7:30pm via Zoom. Intended for those who have been baptised over the past three years these sessions will seek to build up and solidify faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are interested please speak to one of the pastoral team.

● **Let's talk about Jesus** meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2pm. Bring a friend, your Bible, your favourite text, favourite hymn or story so we can share and talk about our friend Jesus. Everyone is welcome.

● **Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting** is held in the Sanctuary with available Zoom facility Meeting ID: 721 857 1482; Passcode: pray3r or [click here](#). If anyone wants to pray for their children contact the SPC prayer leaders on 07988045461

● **Women in Prayer/Prayer Ministry:**

● every 2nd Sabbath of the month 3.00-5.00pm.

● every morning 6am-6:30am Zoom ID 8316619709 passcode 777.

● weekly on Zoom - Fridays 6pm Zoom ID: 831 0985 5836 Passcode: Fprayer

● **Men's Ministry Prayer Meeting** held every Tuesday 9pm on Zoom ID: 519 552 6863 & Passcode: Pray3r

● **Prayer for the Children** of our church on the first Sabbath of each month. If you would like to add you and your children to the prayer list contact the prayer ministry leaders Marlene and Bella, contact number: 07988045461

● **Women Ministry Outreach:** staff at Auburn Mere Residential Home have extended an invitation to Stanborough Park Church to visit with the residents every Sabbath for an hour between 14.00 and 16.00. Contact Milimo or Esther if you would like to take part.

● **Badminton Club:** Come and join our friendly badminton club on Mondays at the Stanborough Secondary School gym. Programme starts at 5:30pm, finishing around 7:30pm. All abilities welcome. Any questions contact Arto Keshishian.

◆ **The Last Word:** Christmas comes but once a year and when it comes it brings good cheer!