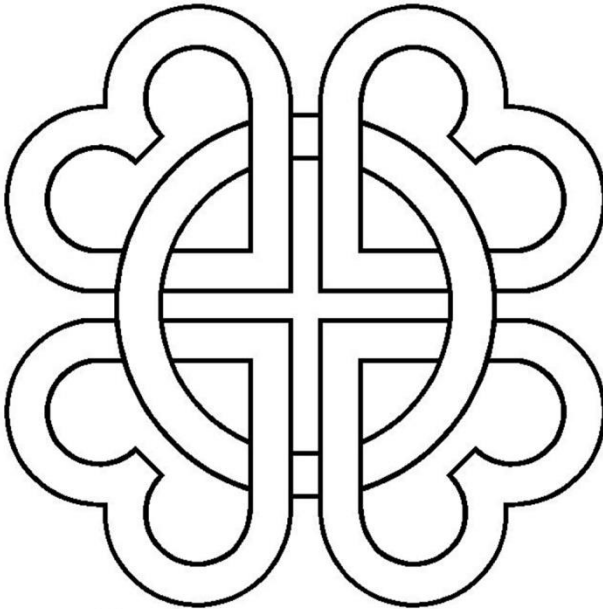


January 2018

The Bridge No. 34

**Newsletter of
Ponte Sant'Angelo
Methodist Church Rome**



**“One in the
Bond of Love”**

Minister`s Letter

“A cold coming we had of it, just the worst time of the year, for a journey, such a long journey.”

So opens the famous poem by T S Eliot, “*The Journey of the Magi*”. You have probably been to a few Christmas services where it has been quoted.

Of course we remember at this time of year the journeys of the nativity narratives in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, as well as our own personal journeys as we recall the past year 2018. We recall the difficult journey undertaken by Mary and Joseph, in a challenging situation of an unexpected pregnancy, responding to the census call which takes them from Nazareth to distant Bethlehem. We think of the short journey down from the hills that the shepherds, from the margins of society, made in response to the message of the angels.

And we rehearse the even longer and more hazardous journey, the flight into Egypt by the holy family, with Jesus now born, fleeing from the hostile reaction of Herod to the birth of one foretold as a King. The slaughter of the innocents was the result of cruel actions taken by Herod. He heard the news the three wise men, who had followed as star as a portent of some extraordinary event, had brought. But they went back to their homeland another way, leaving the King guessing and speculating as to where the child had been born. He decided he`d better kill the lot to make sure.

What thoughts do all these events trigger in your minds? Perhaps we think of those in our world who have made long and difficult journeys this past twelve months, as refugees and migrants move across dangerous desert places and through choppy waters at the hands of human traffickers. And for those who have made it to these shores there are the dangers and perils following the passing of the Salvini Law.

Perhaps we give thought to the thousands of tourists and pilgrims who make the journey to our city each year. This March we will host 29 Methodist Women from Britain led by former Vice President of the British Methodist Conference Jill Baker who came with her husband Andrew to spy out the land and plan for the week they come here. What welcome can we give to those who travel in expectation of discovering the truths and beauties they can find here?

And then we think of those who have been moving on, having spent some time here with us in Rome, now returning to new jobs in their homelands. We think of the memories they will have of us and we of them and what has been the significance of our time together for us in our life journey. Soon that will be the experience that Angela and I must go through. Pray for them and for us.

And what of our fellow pilgrims on the ecumenical journey together, what Pope Francis calls : Walking, praying and working together"? We pray for other churches in Rome as we prepare for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (see later), especially our Anglican friends as they prepare to welcome a new Chaplain to All Saints and say farewell to Canon John Kilgore.

So, let us listen to the angel voices who summon us to leave the familiar places and follow the star to where it leads, to new opportunities for ministry and mission.

Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year, and never stand still till the Master appear.
(Charles Wesley)

God bless you all in this New Year! **Pastor Tim**

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT NEW MINISTER

Following confirmation that the present minister of PSA, the Rev Dr Tim Macquiban, will return home to the UK at the end of his five year

service in Rome in the summer of 2019, the Director of Global Relationships of the British Methodist Church, Rev Dr Stephen Skuce, has announced that the following will be stationed as a mission partner to the congregation in Rome.

The Rev Dr Daniel J. Pratt Morris-Chapman :

Daniel has been a British Methodist presbyter since 2010, having trained at Wesley College Bristol, where he obtained his MA in Theology, followed later by a Ph.D on Scepticism, Truth and Religious Belief in the thought of John Henry Newman. He gave the Conference Lecture to the Methodist Sacramental Group in 2010 on the subject of Wesleyan Theology.

He has served in both the UK (Sheffield and Stokesley Circuit) and in Africa where he served as mission partner teaching in a Theological College in Kumba, Cameroon.



Daniel, Grace and Anna in August 2016 at the Annual Synod at Torre Pellice.

He is married to Grace, whose father was Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Ghana; he visited PSA with his wife in Holy Week 2017 to preach at our Maundy Thursday service.

They have three children: Kwame, John and Anna aged 7, 4 and 2 respectively. They attend schools in Milan where Daniel and Grace`s appointments as mission partners are presently based. Daniel currently serves as minister at nearby Novara while Grace serves as an intercultural lay worker in Milan.

INTERN NEWS

I am now back in Rome, having visited the U.K. over Christmas. I enjoyed going home and having the opportunity to catch up with friends and family. Before visiting Walsall, I had a three day residential in London.

We attended various sessions led by different people within the Connexion, which gave us the chance to meet and engage with interesting speakers, and to reflect on the first part of our internships. The first session was led by Revd Dr Claire Potter and was entitled 'The Building Blocks of Faith'. We looked at the Methodist quadrilateral of Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Reason, which ones we thought of as most important and why, and the how our faith can benefit when we incorporate and learn from all four of these aspects.

We visited Wesley's Chapel and house while we were in London, and learnt more about John Wesley's life and ministry. During the residential, Naomi Oates led a session which focused on the New Room in Bristol, the oldest Methodist building in the world, and looked at the beginnings of Methodism and also the role of women within the movement. Again we discussed the four building blocks of faith, and how tradition and a sense of history can enrich our faith.

I particularly enjoyed a session led by Dr Andy Dye called 'Living on a Larger Map' which looked at the global Methodist movement and mission. Andy had previously worked as a mission partner in Grenada, leading teacher training and youth work, and it was interesting to hear his take on how the Church can engage with mission, and how it can be most effective.

Another session which stood out was led by Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler called 'Work to Rule' which explored the history of monasticism in Europe and the influence of the Rule of St Benedict. We particularly looked at how the Rule can help us live out our faith (one's baptismal identity) in the workplace and how can we connect work with who we

are before God. We looked at eight words which summarise how the Rule can guide and encourage us: Calling; Belonging; Industry; Consideration; Hospitality; Prayer; Silence and Interiority. We discussed the idea of listening with 'the ear of the heart' and how we can be more aware of God's presence in our lives, and, with a new year beginning, this is something which I hope I can reflect more on and use within my prayer time. **Rachel**

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We have news and greetings from Sanie, in Charlotte North Carolina at present. She is caring for her great grandson Kyson Jared Bermejo who was born last October. He acted as Jesus in their Church Christmas play! Congratulations to Marcello and Margaret Marinelli who celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on 21st December.

CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

As well as looking ahead in this transitional period following the announcement of the name of the new minister, Pastor Tim advised on the following events in the next few months:

There would be the usual celebration of John Wesley's birthday on 17 June and on Saturday 22 June the New Chamber Singers will give a concert in honour of Pastor Tim and Angela.

Church Council members were asked to think about the now traditional St Peter and Paul dinner which cannot be held on 29 June due to a diary conflict with Pastor but could perhaps take place the evening before [please talk to Sandra Mi if you have suggestions on this].

The Council looked at dates for the early part of 2019. Mrs Mi advised that several ecological Sundays with traffic restrictions are planned in Rome, on 13 January, 10 February and 24 March.

On 18 January Papal Vespers will take place at St Paul's without the Walls and on Sunday 20 January Susanna Wesley's 300th birthday will be celebrated at PSA, with OPCEMI's President Mirella Manocchio preaching. That same Sunday the evening service for Christian Unity will take place at 5.30 pm in the XX Settembre church.

On 9 March the new Chaplain of All Saints, Rev. Robert Warren will be inducted at 12 noon. On 10 March PSA will host a group of 20+ women from the Methodist Church in Britain on a pilgrimage. Pot Luck Lunch will be planned with some extra resources as necessary and Jill Baker (former Vice President of the British Methodist Conference) will preach.

During the previous week the group will mark Ash Wednesday at Caravita. Easter Sunday falls on 21 April and a group from Queens College Birmingham will be visiting on Maundy Thursday.

Finally, Pastor Tim advised that the Rice Bowl project next year will support Indonesian areas affected by the tsunami and it was suggested PSA hold a Bake Sale in March or early April, dated to be fixed.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

18th January at St. Paul`s without the walls at 5.30pm. Papal Vespers to start the week. If you want a ticket, please let Pastor Tim know.

20th January at 5.30pm at the Methodist Church XX Settembre the Churches Together in Rome service. Preacher: **Pastora Mirella Manocchio**. This will be the last where Pastor Tim is Chair.

24th January at 4.30pm at the Centro Pro Unione with the Lay Centre: Lecture by Dr Paula Gooder on *Walking the Way: accompanying young people on the journey towards Christian Unity*, followed by an Ecumenical Prayer Service

25th January at 7.00pm at All Saints, Via del Babuino, evensong to mark the feast of Paul`s Conversion and to say farewell to Canon John Kilgore.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Anglican Centre on Piazza Collegio Romano will host the Methodist Covenant Service on **Tuesday 8th January**. Please come to support this.

KEVIN HIGHFIELD, our student minister here for three weeks writes: My placement with Rev. Tim and Angela Macquiban at the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome (MEOR) from 12 December to 5 January was a wonderful and enriching time for me. I was blessed to experience a loving worship community of internationally diverse people at Ponte Sant'Angelo (PSA) Methodist Church, who quickly made me one of the family. I learned from Tim about how to shepherd such a varied group of individuals, by incorporating me into the worship services, and allowing me to order, lead and preach the 30 December service for this beautiful congregation and Roma visitors. People wandered into the service each Sunday, and PSA members were quick to help them feel at home. I enjoyed meeting so many people and learning more about their life experiences before and after the services. I not only became part of the worship services, I also worked with Tim on pastoral situations as they arose, including a bible study for a motivated member. I was privileged to be part of both the Christmas Eve service with the Italian Methodists and the Christmas Holy Communion service. Participating in our different services were the Deputy chief of mission for the U.S. Embassy and the Vatican representative to the diocese in Pakistan.

Rev. Tim, as Director of the MEOR, took me around to meet many of the ecumenical partners all over the city, like the **Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity**. We also took advantage of the Advent season to meet partners at social functions like the British embassy night of Carols where I met the UK ambassador, at the Methodist Korean Choir performance of Handel's Messiah at the Italian Methodist Church, at a service put on by seminary students at the **Waldensian Faculty**, or the Advent Meditation followed by a music and skits at the **Venerable English College** by the very talented young Roman Catholic men going to seminary. There was also a lecture on St. Francesco and

the Sultan at the **Centro Pro Unione** where I met many friars (several from the U.S.) to talk about interfaith dialogue. I also met Roman Catholic Cardinal Harvey at **St. Paul's Basilica** as we went around to various offices with which MEOR works. These were all great ecumenical events, and demonstrated the value of showing up to places, programs, and functions valued by other denominations and faiths. It is not just creating relationships but maintaining them that takes work.

I found out about efforts for ecumenical activities when Tim and I went by train to Frascati and Rocca di Papa to visit with members of the **Focolare Movement**, a group that brings Christians and others together for interreligious peace. We also took time to visit the ancient Greek abbey at Grottaferrata, and to make a pastoral visit with a man who is 97 years old, but walks and talks like he is years younger. He has enjoyed a rich life, living all over the world helping people. I attended the Carol service at St. Paul's within the walls, where they are helping refugees. After attending the Anglican **All Saints Church's** lessons and carols, we joined the volunteer association, **Pozzo di Giacobbe**, to feed the homeless near the Train station. Homelessness is a worldwide issue, and I thank God for local and national organizations that practice Jesus' command to take care of them. Afterwards we had a short worship service in Italian led by Tim and myself (kind of). Learning the language is very important! We went to sing carols at **Villa Maria Pia** psychiatric clinic (in Italian, German, English, and Latin), and I wished I knew more Italian so I could talk to the patients. We also bought, wrapped, and gave out presents for the students learning Italian and English at our **Scuola Lingua** here at PSA and talked to students afterwards. I'm glad I remembered some Spanish.

One of the important visits was to the office of **Mediterranean Hope**, to meet Fiona Kendall, and its work to help refugees coming from Africa in spite of the difficult political climate. It was extremely educational, and my heart goes out to those struggling to find a place of peace and stability, wishing I had the ability to do more. One example of ecumenism in action is the ecumenical garden at **San Gregorio** which Tim and I visited, where people of different religions work together to keep it a place of peace. I was able to see many churches and museums throughout Rome as well as other sites and protest demonstration downtown that shut down traffic. I went out to Assisi to learn more about St. Francesco and St. Clare, and went to two masses at St. Peter's Basilica, led by Pope Francesco.

This placement taught me the importance of ecumenism, intentional actions of showing up and creating relationships that help us all to find solutions to common problems and work together for peace and justice. As desired by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 25:35- 36: "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." There is much work to do, and I am grateful to have been a part of some of that work for a short period of time. **Kevin**

BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

The Bible Study home group continues at Alessia and Federico's. We are going to continue the Book of Acts. In our home group we have been discovering how relevant to us is the example of the apostles for their boldness in witnessing of Salvation in Jesus with words and miracles. Luke, the author of "Acts", shows the impact of the Christian community and its new experience of God upon the Jewish community of Jerusalem and its environs. The evangelist tells us about the reaction

of the Jews and their leaders. At first there is great positive response by the Jewish people, contrasted with the animosity of the Sadducees who repeatedly take action against the Christians for their proclamation of the Resurrection. The apostles not only proclaimed the Resurrection; they were empowered by God to raise up to new life and wholeness those prevented by their brokenness from full participation in the life of God's people. In our last meeting we read Chapter 3. The episode of the healing of the lame man outside the temple is a great example of this new empowerment by God. Let us prepare to what the Lord has in store for each of us and to what He will teach us through His Word. If you are curious to see how the story unfolds, join us! We meet on Saturdays at 5.30 pm and the next meetings are 19th January and 2nd February. **Details:** Mobile 338/1675680 - Via del Casaleto 63 - Buzz Montelli – Milani (Monteverde area)

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: the bible class continues at PSA on 16th January and 30th January at 10:30am. See Sandra Mi if you hope to come.

BOOK PUBLISHED: Marianne Winter who attends PSA has a book published which you can obtain from Amazon (see poster at back).

WHITE WITNESS speaks of the historical and social experience of the Apartheid regime from a first hand living experience of the regime as a non-racist white, artist and academic. In a certain sense the book is an historical social survey, thoroughly researched and contains many facts hitherto not divulged generally. Quite naturally political facts – both known and unknown – are mentioned as have also been listed the names of those who died, suffered or were exiled and names given where possible, as a gesture of honour and respect to those who fought for reason, humanity and social and personal justice. It talks of the complex social structure, the many languages, religious and ethnic groups and the living conditions of all the population, not only the

white, together with the myriad prohibitions placed on an entire society intentionally fragmented for reasons of political dominance. However it is not a political book but a human account, containing anecdotes and observations of famous people and is consciously objective to the immense complexity of the land, its peoples and the society as a whole and that also reflect the many deep problems humanity faces in its struggle forward to understanding its own evolution – both moral and social. “God walks close to his Creation in this land.” “White Witness” could therefore be qualified as a human comment of a moment in history in a complex and vast land that stands almost, but not quite at the end of the earth.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

January 13th	Pastor Tim
January 20th	Week of Prayer for Unity Unity. Preacher Pastora Mirella Manocchio , President of OPCEMI. This will be followed by a Pot Luck lunch .
January 27th	Pastor Tim, followed by Church Council

Weekly Offerings [P =cash; E =Envelopes; BB = Birthday Basket.]

Dec Total	P576.36	E1,885	BB 66,00	TTL 2,461.36
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