
MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—DECEMBER 2023—JANUARY 2024



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for December/January from Jenny Saunders

As our thoughts turn towards Christmas I thought about this piece by Peter Thurston. I certainly will be reflecting on it during Advent as much of it reflects how I know I will be feeling at times.

An anxious note to baby Jesus

Dear Lord, I feel tired before it's even started. The cards (should I bother?)

The presents (who to buy for?) The decorations (real or artificial?)

The family ... (enough said)

The crowds, the hassle, the weather- Wake me up when it's all over.

I know I shouldn't feel this way but, if I'm honest,

Advent-

It makes me weary just thinking about it.

Which makes me wonder, how was it for you?

Were you weary too? Just thinking about it?

The call, the life-long challenge, to hear God, listen to God, follow God?

For those with ears to hear and eyes to see, to be God?

All begun in makeshift circumstances.

(Sorry Lord, we were not better prepared- some things don't change)

A sign of things to come, of an uphill struggle to make your voice heard.

Uphill towards Jerusalem. Uphill to the Mount of Olives.

Uphill to the hill of execution.

Hoping we would follow Hoping we would understand you,

respond to you, welcome you then, welcome you now.

Lord were you tired before it even started?

Or was your love your inner energy, the love you received, your support,

the love you gave, a light in the darkness,

the love you give, the strength I need?

Will you help me through Advent dear Lord, little one?

Give me the grace to greet you without suppressed sighs or weariness.

Give me the generosity to invite you home without thought to the inconvenience.

Give me the will to rise to your demands, to share your love and to receive it.

It's not too much to ask, I know, when you have faced it all-

the Advent task, the Christmas hope- two thousand times before.



So MRBC let's lean on God who shines the light of hope into our world and welcome Him with open arms remembering to share that love with all we meet.

CHURCH DIARY for DECEMBER/JANUARY

Sunday Service each week at 10.30am with groups for the children and young people.

There is a **Prayer Meeting** at 10.15am in the Boulevard Room every week before the Sunday Service All welcome.

Carol Service—17th December & Youth Service



Christmas Day Service—Monday 25th at 10.30 am

Shalom Fellowship—Sunday 17th December Carol Service 2.30pm, Sunday 24th December 2.30pm. Dates in January TBC.

Toddler Group—10.00 to 11.45am - 4th, 11th, 18th December & 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th January

Renew Wellbeing Café— Thursdays—1.30 to 4.00pm

Note includes carol singing & mincepies on 14th December

Deacons' Meeting—17th January at 7.00pm

PRAYER POINTS

- 1) Prayer for the new year and new plans for our church.
- 2) Prayer for families struggling with the cost of living crisis, extra pressure on families at this time of year.
- 3) Prayer for peace and love in the world, shining the light of Jesus to all, resonating the Christian message.
- 4) Prayer for the national and international crisis.
- 5) Prayer for Israel/Palestine peace.



Building Communities



The church's second vision day took place on 14th October. The meeting concentrated on answering two key questions.

- 1) What are the key skills/abilities we need to look for in a new minister to enable us to make progress in the areas we have identified as priorities.
- 2) What might be needed from the church community?

These questions were discussed in groups and from these some key areas were identified. It was agreed that the areas selected would form the basis of a questionnaire completed by the congregation during a Sunday morning service.

The Regional Minister outlined the way that churches work to find a new minister. Initially after consulting the church community the deacons prepare a church profile. This profile describes the church community, its buildings and how decisions are taken. Most importantly the profile describes the church community's vision for the future and what sort of minister we believe will enable us to fulfil that vision. Once the profile has been written prospective ministers are able to view it and can contact the church. The deacons then undertake a discernment process before the church meeting issues a call for the minister.

The questionnaire was completed in the Sunday service on 29th October, and the results were discussed by the deacons on 15th November. It was clear that the church community felt that we were a very welcoming church attended by a wide range of people and had a thriving young people's group. Sunday services and funeral ministry were also seen as a strength. Areas of the church that needed some more energy were bible study and developing and encouraging fellowship. In terms of what skills and abilities we were looking for in a minister we wanted a minister who was a good communicator, approachable, humble, a good listener and prayerful. We needed to show love and care for others, use our gifts, listen to, and encourage each other and also be prayerful. To summarise we need to build our community inside so that it impacts the community outside.

All the information will now be used to update the church profile and it will be finalised in the deacons meeting on 17th January. After this date the profile will be submitted so that prospective ministers can view it. I will continue to provide updates on how the process is proceeding.

Dave Mangan

Thank you Tony!

A few weeks ago our organist, Tony Peace, told the church of his decision to stand down from that role. Tony had been playing for us for many years, as well as helping the musicians and singers practise the hymns and songs. I've been trying to remember exactly how long, but the best I can do is suggest that his time at MRBC's organ total at least twenty five years. I'm sure Tony can put me right!

Tony has received a gift voucher on behalf of the church as a token of our appreciation. He responded with thanks, and said how strange it was to be unable to come to services, and that it would take a while to get used to this. As many of you will know, Tony's wife Anne is ill, and very often the pressures of taking care of her prevent him from leaving home.

Thank you Tony, and we look forward to seeing more of your amazing photos in the magazine when you are able to get some respite. May God bless you, Anne and the rest of the family at this difficult time.

Sharon Jodrell

The path through anger must lead us to peace

In today's society where the trend seems to be intolerance, there is absolutely no patience or calmness, which leads to all sorts of quarrels, arguments, selfishness and hatred. Peace and tolerance should be important in our daily lives. Many times we get tangled up in our circumstances so much we lose our peace and become angry, frustrated and full of worry. Forgiveness and peace leads to patience and calmness which also leads to being tolerant.

In the Bible, Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) Jesus Christ in every troubled situation always remained at peace and was calm. Let his perfect peace calm you in every circumstance to give you courage and strength for every challenge.

When we look at nations over the world, when they are at war, in the final stages to end the war they sign a 'peace treaty' which enables the two countries to remain at peace. We need to rise above the circumstances, remain in peace to be able to make wise decisions. This is what Jesus taught us not to rebel or be ruled by anger but ruled by peace. We need to follow the example of Jesus—be in peace and calmness.

Sarbjit Gill (published in a recent edition of the Evening Post)

Louise Garvey shares her personal story

I came to England in 1957 aged 16 years to live with my mother who had settled in Preston. I trained as a nurse, got married and had 4 children, but lost my eldest daughter aged 16 years old in 1978.



I arrived in Nottingham in 1979 on a journey of rebuilding my life. At the time I had lost faith in God and thought God had forsaken me.

I had 3 young children to care for on my own so I had to get on with finding work and somewhere to live away from the county I lived in before.

Life was a challenge, but with supportive, kind and generous people I found my faith in God again and was re-confirmed at Mansfield Road Baptist Church. I had been raised by grandparents who were devoted Baptist worshippers and I had been baptised as a teenager. MRBC became my spiritual home and I feel blessed to be a member of my church.

This year the country is celebrating 75 years of Caribbean people coming to this country in large numbers after the war, working and settling in towns and cities all around the country. Mansfield Road has been a spiritual home for 3 generations of African Caribbean worshippers. (The church was the venue for a 75th Windrush Anniversary Celebration Service on 17th June this year.)

I married my late husband Hartsel (Marcus) at MRBC and he also became a member of the church. Marcus was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Over the years his condition deteriorated. He was cared for at home, but eventually went into a nursing home for the last 8 months of his life. Marcus was a loving, kind and caring man and I miss him greatly.

Throughout my period of being a carer and unable to attend church, members of the church were extremely supportive, keeping in touch with me and letting me know what was taking place and sending me the church news circulars. I really enjoyed the updates the church sent out during Covid lock down.

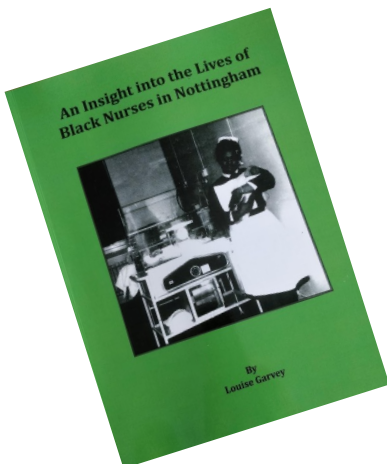
We live in a changing world. Mansfield Road is seeing its share of changes but is still in the business of spiritually caring for people. Over the years, corner stone spiritual leaders and members have passed on, but they leave behind cherished memories and examples of serving God in spirit and deeds.

I am now aging, but I am at peace with myself. I still get challenged on my journey, but I know God is always with me and before me. I am mindful of the words in this prayer I wrote:

I am Stumbling

Lord I am stumbling
Uphold me—strengthen me—guide me
As I walk along life’s rocky road
Let me always know your name.
Fill my heart with humility and gladness
Dear God, I need your presence to guide me,
Your words to give me strength,
Your open arms to shelter me and keep me from danger
Give me eyes to see the wonder of your world,
Ears to hear your quiet voice and always to heed your words
When I am tired and fearful,
Help me to be at peace and walk in your light.
Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your many blessings,
Thank you for loving me.

As well as being a poet, Louise has published 2 books—the first was put together by Louise as a Millennium project, cataloguing the experiences of some of the black nurses in Nottingham. It’s a most interesting piece of Nottingham history and several members or passed members of MRBC are featured. The second book, published just last year, is a collection of poems and short stories of Louise’s experiences of village life in Jamaica. Do ask her if you would like to see or buy a copy of either.



About our Church

If you are new to the church or just visiting, you may find this page helpful.

You can expect a warm welcome and a friendly group of people of all backgrounds and ages gathering to learn more about God.

We meet every Sunday at 10:30am for our Sunday Service. During school term time groups for children and young people from 3 - 18 are held downstairs, with a crèche available for under threes. Stewards in the Welcome Hall will be happy to show you where to take your children.

The Shalom Fellowship meets on the first Sunday every month at 2.30pm for worship and teaching in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

Toddler Group meets Mondays during term time from 10.00am to 11.45am. Parents, grandparents and carers are warmly invited to bring along the children in their care to enjoy play and activities.

Renew Wellbeing Café meets Thursdays from 1.30pm to 4.00pm. Join us for activities, chat and refreshments.

For specific dates of the above activities please see the Diary section of the magazine. If you would like to get in touch with someone at the church office please use the contact details below.

Room Hire Different rooms are available for hire. Please contact the church office for details.

Phone: 0115 9604304 during office hours—Mon-Fri 9.00am-2.30pm

Email: admin@mrbc.org.uk

Church Address:

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A big “thank you” to all contributors this month. Please continue to furnish us with YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please give to Susan Bye or Sharon Joddrell at church or post or send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, to arrive by 15th January for the February edition

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