

Contact

Newsletter from the WRU Churches

CHRISTMAS IS COMING



When I was a child Christmas was such an exciting time, the anticipation and the preparation. Nothing elaborate, making paper chains, collecting cones to paint, cutting holly and digging the tree up from the garden and bringing it into the house.

The smells of food being prepared, the tree aroma, all contributed to the excitement.

Then Christmas Eve, going to bed, trying to get to sleep. I

had two sisters and we would all crowd into one room to try to sleep together, not easy.

Waking Christmas morning to stockings at the end of the bed, presents around the tree.

Again, small gifts, homemade jigsaws, and always an annual.

Then the highlights of the day, Church, followed by a lovely special lunch, opening presents and then time spent together, playing games. As I grew up on a farm it was special to have Dad spend time with us instead of being out with the animals.

How times have changed, pillowcases full of goodies, electric gadgets but certainly not happier children.

Unfortunately, in so many ways we have lost the meaning of Christmas.

Many schools now have alternative performances rather than the traditional nativity place. **Christ has been taken out of Christmas.**

As we approach Christmas this year let us as Christians strive to bring Christ back into Christmas. Let us pray wholeheartedly that we can witness and share the true meaning of Christmas. We were given a gift, far greater than any earthly present we could ever be given, God sent Jesus as a free gift to us, a Saviour for the world!

So many of our children and adults don't know the true meaning of Christmas. Our commission is to go out and share the good news. Let us seek His presence rather than the presents around the tree.

Let us encourage families and our churches to join together in celebrating Jesus, rather than the annual stress of planning an extravagant celebration which often leads to financial hardship.

Let us celebrate Jesus and His coming and bring Christ back into Christmas.

*By Valerie Whitmee
Fritwell Church*

FUN TIMES AT SYRESHAM CHURCH

Dedication Celebration

It has been a really good time here recently. On Sunday 24th August we had a dedication service for three young people, aged 11 and 14, where they, or their parents wanted the young people to be drawn closer to God. We also took the opportunity formally to thank a

slightly older teen who is a faithful helper at our family breakfast church meetings.

It was a joyous service full of energy (and noise) and it was so good to see the church full of people. Needless to say, we also had a pre service celebration tea.



Shining Together

Here at Syresham we were fortunate to be involved in the local CofE benefice "Let's shine together" week. Our local churches hosted junior discos, concerts, talks and shows, as well as a flower festival in each church.

Members from our chapel, as well as being guests at various of the events were able to participate in the cricket match against the local Afghan refugees. Looking at our strengths - the actual cricket was predominantly male and VERY competitive-

we decided to help with the non-cricket bit. We hosted a craft station mainly for the younger children and their mothers. We made crowns, decorated heart mobiles, vases, mirrors and bowls to name but a few. We all had great fun; to be honest the mothers were probably the most enthusiastic but it was a lovely time to share and we will try to maintain an involvement with the refugee community with different crafting activities going forward.



Wedding Bells

We were thrilled when some of the leaders from our Sunday morning family breakfast church were invited to a wedding. The family, mother and two children, had been a huge part of our breakfast church family, always there and always enthusiastic (albeit one of them hated chocolate which made egg hunts a bit challenging!) We had met the new partner, now husband, and his three children as he too joined us at breakfast church.

The wedding, in a small church near Cambridge, was beautiful - we had never been to such a God-focussed wedding before. The service was lovely, the bride and attendants beautiful, the weather was sunny and God was in evidence all day. Truly a blessed time

Sorry for the Lone Ranger masks but had to block some faces.

Catherine Corns



ARTICLES FOR “Contact”

We welcome inspirational stories, devotional and encouraging articles, news and events from the churches all enabling us to be inspired and to keep in touch with each other.

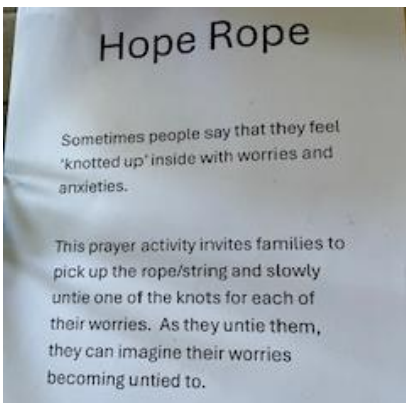
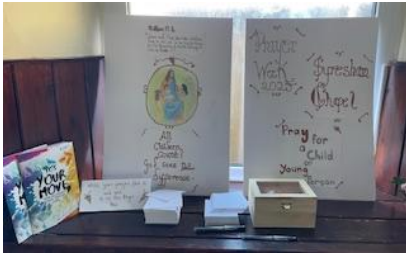
Some rules to remember:

- Articles must arrive on or just before the deadline
- If possible, a picture or a photograph should accompany the article
- Make sure that pictures/articles you send have no copyrights, or you have permission to use them
- Word count per article should not exceed 750.

Deadlines:

- **1st** Dec – for **Jan-Feb** issue (because of Christmas break)
- 15th Feb – for **Mar-Apr** issue
- 15th Apr – for **May-Jun** issue
- 15th Jun – for **Jul-Aug** issue
- 15th Aug – for **Sep-Oct** issue
- 15th Oct – for **Nov-Dec** issue

Global Prayer Week



We, the chapel and the parish church, really wanted to join in with the Global Prayer Week but in a small village community we could see that maintaining 24-7 prayer for a full week was not really possible.

Instead we set up prayer stations in the chapel and the church and put banners up outside, we also told the village via the local Facebook group.

We did also try to add in extra communal prayer times - by zoom and in person as well as joining the formal evening prayers at the church.

The timing of the week was perfect in terms of being able to lay the concerns over new schools and new classes before God and receive assurance of His care and presence. We had a number of people who came in and left notes and messages, all anonymous, in the prayer stations

It was a lovely week and we feel really privileged to have been able to be a small part of the movement.

Catherine Corns





OUR SUMMER VISIT TO HOPE FOR CHILDREN IN LATVIA

At the beginning of August myself and Mike and my Mum and Dad (Ian & Jean Sykes) had the opportunity to visit Latvia as Jenson, our son, a professional cyclist was racing over there. As the race was close to Riga, where the Hope for Children Family Centre is located, we took the opportunity to visit Helen Vipass and her team. We stayed just along the coast from Riga near a small place called Tukums.

Hope for Children own a summer house that was just a few miles from our accommodation. It's a place where they take children for a much needed break in the summer. The week we were there just happened to coincide with Helen taking a group of children to the summer house, so we arranged to meet them there. The summer house is in two parts, each side has a dormitory upstairs that sleeps six, one for the girls and one for the boys. Downstairs there is space for the staff to sleep, and also a kitchen and a lounge area.

While we were there, Helen asked if we knew any electricians as they had no light fittings in the house. The boys dormitory only had wires coming from the ceiling and most of the

other rooms just had dangling bulbs. (They have had the house for seven years, with no light in some rooms!) We had some spare time the following day so we arranged to go back and fit them five new light fittings. Some of the older children who were there helping to look after the younger ones, remembered us from previous visits many years ago. Jenson and his team mate also stopped by and they spoke to the kids about their bikes and what they were doing in Latvia.

We also visited the family centre in Riga. This is where Helen is based and where the money being raised from the Overseas Missions Union Project is going, to help with the renovations. Seeing the building first hand, you can see why it needs renovating, in fact I'm not sure I would know where to start. But the renovations are underway, they have two apartments in the building, and they are working on one side at a time so that the vital work they do can continue. They have replaced the floors that were unsafe, fixed the leaks, done some plumbing work and while we were there the decorators were in. There is much more to do (the list is endless) but they are working away one project at a time.

We sat for a time and drank coffee with Helen in her office, and the place where she meets with the families, and it was apparent from all that we had heard and saw that Hope for Children is, and does, exactly what it 'says on the tin'. It is a place where children are given 'Hope', Hope for today, Hope for

the future, Hope when many areas of their lives seem hopeless. A light in their dark world. Helen with her strong, constant faith in the God of Hope and in His Son Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is the driving force and passion behind this hope. Her focus is not on the buildings or material things or the administration, (all important in their own way) her focus is firmly on the children and their families. Her love for them overflows from her heart and she makes it clear that this love comes from God. She loves because He first loved and she shares that love abundantly. Because of Helen and her unswerving passion, Hope for Children, which began in 1991 to see street children loved and cared for, has literally given hope and transformed countless lives through the love of Jesus and they continue to do so. The children at Hope for Children grow up and move on, but they never forget and Helen has a huge "family" all over the world.

I could fill many pages talking about the renovation works, but I am sure you will understand, that is not what this project is about, that's not what is at the heart of it. The renovations on the family centre are just a small and very necessary part of facilitating the real work that's going on. The real work is bringing children and families to a place where they can meet with Jesus who can transform their lives, who can bring them hope – 'Hope for children', and that's exactly what it does!

Debbie Young (Jump Church)



ALDERMAN'S GREEN CHURCH

Picnic

Although last year's church picnic had to be cancelled because of the weather, thankfully this did not prevent our brother, Mandla, from organising another one this year. The event took place on mid-summer day, Saturday 21 June at Coombe Abbey, Coventry.

There was a good turnout but, unlike last year, the day was intensely warm and the heat unfortunately, did deter a few from attending. After a woodland walk, we all tucked in to the food, followed by an interesting game chasing

each other around in gales of hysterical laughter, with antics by a few of the more senior members involving liberal use of water pistols (yeah, I know!) but as we're told in Proverbs 17:22 "being cheerful is good medicine...

and keeps you healthy"

The picnic started in prayer and ended in thanksgiving for a fantastic day and time of fellowship.

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Birthday and Baptism

In fact, this year has been a busy one for Mandla – earlier this year, Sunday 9th February, was the occasion of his 50th birthday but, more importantly, also the day of his baptism at Durbar Avenue Evangelical Church. The service was attended by family and friends from our own church as well as those from other churches. The service was led by Rev Martyn Owens. Afterwards, Mandla gave a very moving word of testimony in which he also acknowledged the

years of faithful prayer and the love and encouragement of others that eventually led him to accept Christ as his Saviour. The day concluded with a superb buffet meal, provided by the family. We are blessed to have Mandla, his wife Danai, and Nathan as part of our family at Alderman's Green.

Avril McIntyre



GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS AT SHEFFIELD FAYRE



On August Bank Holiday Monday, our Sheffield churches joined together to run a gospel stand at the Sheffield Fayre in Norfolk Park. It was a bright, busy day, with hundreds of families visiting the stalls, activities, and attractions. Our team were encouraged by the number of conversations we had and the interest shown in Christian things.

At the heart of our stand was a simple question poll: four coloured jars with a big question on each one. Visitors were invited to drop a counter into the jar that best expressed the question on their heart:

- What if I never feel good enough? (6 votes)
- Is there more to life than this? (9 votes)
- Does anyone really see me, or care? (9 votes)
- Why does life feel so unfair? (14 votes)

In total, 38 people voted — but many more stopped to read, think, and talk.

We also gave away around 100 copies of “Explore: Luke’s Gospel”, a simple resource that invites people to read the Bible for themselves. Alongside that, the team had dozens of conversations, some short and light-hearted, others deeper and more searching.

As a follow-up, both Richmond and Mayfield churches preached on the “winning question” — Why does life feel so unfair?

- At **Richmond**, Martin Ludbrook opened up God’s Word on this theme. (Watch it back at www.richmondchurch.co.uk/20250921)
- At **Mayfield**, Jonathan Youdan preached on the same question.

Although no one has yet visited our Sunday services as a direct result of the Fayre, the team felt encouraged and energised by the openness of people in Sheffield to talk about life, hope and faith. We believe that every gospel conversation plants a seed that God can grow in His time.

Please keep praying that the gospels given out will be read, that questions will grow into faith, and that God will use these conversations to draw people to Jesus.

Sheffield Circuit Churches



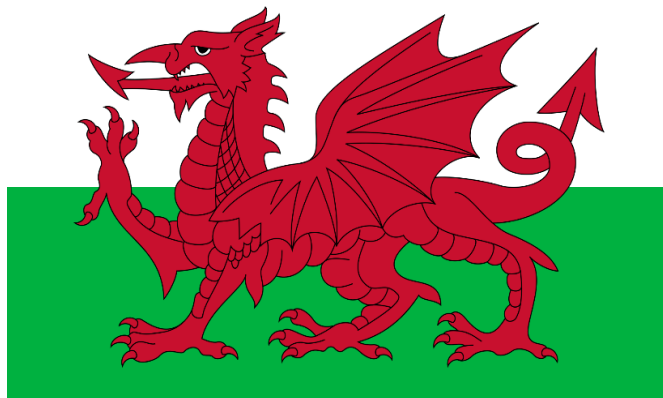
November - December 2025

WELSH EVENING. NOSON GYMREIG

Pembrokeshire has been described as “Little England beyond Wales”. Following our Welsh Evening, one of the visitors described Mayfield Chapel as “A bit of Wales beyond England.”

The idea of a Welsh evening came about after a series of variously themed evenings based around hymn writers. Once the decision was made, we contacted the local Cambrian society for ideas and suggestions. Gradually the evening evolved into a celebration of Welsh hymnody and composition, interspersed with poetry, literature and history.

Twelve hymns were chosen, some written in Welsh and some written in English and



translated into Welsh, mostly sung to Welsh tunes. One of our regular preachers volunteered to bring a Welsh poem, and the Cambrian society contributed a talk on how the Church of England saved the Welsh language by authorising the use of the bible in Welsh, followed by a talk about Dylan Thomas and his poem “Under Milk Wood”. The evening closed with the singing of the Welsh National Anthem in Welsh and English.

Half way through, refreshments of Bara Brith and Welsh cakes (both made on the premises) were served.

Several attenders asked about other events we hold at the chapel, and promised to come to some of them. The singing was glorious, and a good time was had by all. By consensus, a repetition of the event is planned for next year, details nearer the time.

Jonathan Youdan, (Pastor, Mayfield Chapel)



MY HEBRIDES EXPERIENCE

By Joanne Wong

In early August, I spent a week on the Isle of Lewis, the northern part of the Outer Hebrides. I was there as part of an outreach mission organised by Operation Mobilization. There were eleven of us in the team.

It has been a long time since I've been on an outreach, especially going door- to-door to try to engage in conversations about God. At first I was a bit apprehensive, due to my mobility problems, but I applied

nonetheless as I wanted a challenge in my personal life.

I went to India with OM in the 1970's, and wanted to see if I could be of any use in missions now that I'm in my 70's.

November - December 2025

We were attached to North Tolsta Free Church for the week. It's a small congregation of forty plus, not much bigger than Aldermans Green. But I was really moved by the hospitality of the church members.



Firstly, everybody got behind the mission and were involved in one way or another. When we were taken to our accommodation after arrival, we found that two different church members had actually moved out of their own house to stay with relatives in order to accommodate us! (I honestly don't think I could do that myself!) Four were staying at the Manse with the Minister and his pregnant wife. I was really moved by their acts of generosity.

Secondly, we were so well fed during our week there. Imagine feeding eleven people for a week, three times a day and all done cheerfully! There was fantastic team work in the kitchen with the catering and washing up team. We were so grateful for this, because normally in OM mission work, team members have to organise their own catering. We felt quite humbled because when we signed up, we were expecting to serve, not to be served.

Not having to cater for ourselves gave us more opportunities to go door to door. The team working in pairs managed to cover around 300 houses in the area!

Inevitably some of the doors we knocked on were member's homes. So it was a great opportunity to fellowship and encourage on a more personal level. Some church members joined us going door to door and they said it was their first time, so hopefully they'll continue to encourage each other.

On Sunday we joined in the church service. It was solemn, the style of singing very different from what I've known: no musical instruments, only voice, and all singing is from Psalms only. The Precentor sings the first line and everybody follows, they know the tunes by heart. The preaching was serious, no jokes, just exegesis of Bible texts. The evening service was the same, but followed by tea/refreshments in the small hall behind the church. However, what has been the most moving experience for me was the singing at the end of Ps 72 in Gaelic. It was such a spiritual experience that I felt lifted to a different plane.

We got hit by Storm Floris on Monday, but by the evening we were back in action and meeting people for discussions. One evening we had a "Grill a Christian" session with some very deep questions on faith. On another evening we explored the meaning of life.

The minister, Donald, has been there only two years and is eager to move the church forward, hence the invitation to OM for this week of missions. The congregation is made up of mainly older people who've retired back to the Hebrides and a few young families.

Not all who come to church regularly have professed

personal faith. Donald has to balance between keeping traditions and trying to move the church forward. Please pray for him and his ministry.

During my week there I read about the Hebrides revival of 1939 and 1949-52. It was a moving experience documented by Colin & Mary Peckham in "Sounds from Heaven". I hope this passage from the book will get you thinking as it has me and I'm still struck by it.

*"Many of us pray just enough to ease the conscience but not enough to win any decided victory. **We are playing at praying.** We have put very little into it and therefore have received very little from it Prayer has not been a mighty force but merely a harmless conventionality."*

I came home feeling very blessed to have participated in this mission, and felt really humbled. I felt I received more than I gave and am now on the look-out for the next mission I could get involved in. God answered my prayer in that my ankles gave no problems in spite of all the walking and I can confirm that age does not matter in missions!

"In the last month since the team left, we have seen fruit for all their labour. Some new community connections have been opened up, and one new church member said that what the team shared gave them the encouragement to take the next step in their faith."

Joanne Wong



THE TAPESTRY BANNER PROCLAIMING A MIRACLE



A baby, born in a stable over two thousand years ago, destined to be the Messiah, Saviour of the World is celebrated at this time of year in many countries around our world. His message lives on through the spreading of His Word by His many believers.

Our family has worshipped at Staincross for about thirty years and we discovered this amazing tapestry wall hanging whilst decorating, hidden away behind enormous wooden doors, high up on a wall in the Church schoolroom.

The tapestry was used many times in the past at Whitsuntide. It was carried on long poles and steadied with guide ropes for stability, around the village in a procession of Witness along with banners from other churches. The procession concluded with a joint "Sing" in a designated area, watched by many village folk. A tradition sadly discontinued many years ago but not forgotten.

I remember as a child, walking around Hoyle Mill, Barnsley, South Yorkshire with the Chapel

there, dressed in my new Whitsuntide clothes feeling very proud and looking clean and fresh. The whole congregation and Sunday School scholars followed the flat bed lorry carrying the piano. We stopped at various points around the village to sing out our songs. At that time I didn't understand the significance of the procession, I thought it was a chance for us children to show off our new clothes. Yes, I loved to sing the songs at Sunday school and join in the recitations and sing on the yearly Anniversary. I heard the stories of Jesus but I don't recall realising or being told that Jesus died to save my sins and I didn't become a Christian until much later in life.

Staincross's tapestry never returned into its wooden box. We've left it proudly on display for all to see, it's too beautiful to hide away and it's become a talking point for us to share with visitors, friends and people who hire our hall. It's become one of our chances to "witness" to others and share the Good News of what a baby who came to earth over two thousand years ago did for each one of us.

On our tapestry we can see the first witnesses to Jesus's birth, the Kings in the foreground and the shepherds behind them, rich and poor together but all equally important. The shepherds were the first on the scene and the first to spread the message that the promised Messiah had been born in Bethlehem.

This Christmas time is just as important as the first Christmas time. We should have the excitement of the shepherds celebrating the birth of the Messiah. We should proclaim this amazing news to people who may be hearing it for the very first time. A baby who would grow into a man, willingly sacrificing His life to give everyone a chance of salvation. It's our opportunity to be witnesses, spreading the good news of the Saviour's birth.

*Marie Nichols
(Staincross Christian Fellowship)*

WELLINGBOROUGH CIRCUIT NEWS

The Value of Relationships

The seven churches that are part of the Wellingborough Circuit enjoy and value their relationship and meet together several times through the year for prayer and fellowship. We were blessed with a visit from Cliff and Judith Derby in early September, which culminated in a circuit United service held at TLC Bozeat with the obligatory “chapel tea” afterwards.

Recently, Isham chapel hosted a morning of prayer led by Rev. Phil Hearson, where six of the seven churches were represented. We shared news and prayed for our own fellowships and communities, especially those who have been recently bereaved or are struggling in some way. Prayer for our trustees and members followed. Then we prayed for the WRU’s officers and stewards and all sixty WRU churches by name.

We then prayed for the peace process in Israel and Gaza and for lasting peace to settle around the world, for the new Arch Bishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally and the Anglican church around the world as it begins a new season.

TLC’s “Bitesize @ 10” monthly breakfast church had it’s 4th birthday on 6th September and we will celebrate Harvest Festival today

(12th October) led by Nick and Jane from Finedon, followed by tea (no surprises there!) Next Sunday morning we have our quarterly business meeting followed by lunch (we don’t need an excuse for food!) and then our usual 2.30pm service.

The following weekend is a time for celebration, Tom and Sue Partridge-Underwood are celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 26th October with a service in the parish church and a party afterwards. TLC Bozeat is so very blessed to have this lovely couple at the heart of our fellowship.

Other news, but connected, some readers will remember Tom and Sue’s son, Will Partridge-Underwood who worked with Andy Wilcock in WRU’s Young Peoples’s Department some years ago, he and his wife Sharon have been very involved in church life in Bromham, Bedfordshire for many years. Will has just been inducted as an Assistant Pastor at Broadmead Community Church in Northampton. God is certainly blessing their family!

Ellie Minney



NUNEATON MAN'S 75 YEAR SERVICE TO LOCAL CHURCH



President George Phillips has led heartfelt tributes to former WRU president Maurice Beasley, who has died aged 91. Maurice was a well-known figure across the union and a stalwart of Heath End Wesleyan Reform Church in Nuneaton for 75 years.

Maurice first joined the church in 1950, aged sixteen and went on to become a key figure there and a dedicated servant within the WRU.

President George Phillips said: "Maurice was a friendly, caring and devoted servant of God and I was sorry to hear of his death. He served the Wesleyan Reform Union on its General Committee for 15 years and was elected President of the Union in 1989, leading with integrity through a difficult time. He was an accomplished preacher and served many churches in the union in this way, including my own church in Ruskington, Lincolnshire on a number of occasions. I also stayed with Maurice and his wife Sheila when I attended a Union conference at Heath End Church and would like

to express my sympathy to the family."

The church, in Heath End Road, will be hosting a 'Celebration of Life' service for Maurice at 10.45am on Friday October 31st which will highlight his key roles there over the years.

The service will be led by Heath End Church minister Lisa Macbeth who said: "Maurice was a true leader and faithful servant within our Church; starting the Young People's Fellowship, qualifying as a local preacher, and serving as Church President, Chairman of the Church Trustees and Superintendent of the Sunday School. Maurice also served the church in lots of other ways, doing many jobs unseen around the building, conducting the choir, and teaching in Sunday School. He was incredibly proud of the history of our Church and sought to honour the founding fathers through his own ministry and service. He is remembered as someone who wanted to make the Gospel of Jesus relevant and appealing to all, as someone who served with eagerness and never reluctance. He was motivated by his love for the Lord Jesus and the Gospel and was a much-loved, respected and appreciated pillar of Heath End Church."

Maurice is survived by wife Sheila, three children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. It was Sheila who first introduced Maurice to Heath End Church all those years ago and she praised her husband of 70 years. She said:

"We first met when we were thirteen at Coton train station while travelling to school in Coventry and began courting a couple of years later. I introduced him to Heath End Church and we were married there in November 1954 and have had a wonderful, happy life together ever since. We've been blessed with a loving family too and Maurice was certainly a great Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad. He was never happier than when the family were with us. We often said we were lucky to have two fantastic families – our own family and our church family and we have enjoyed so much love and support from both of them. Obviously there have been tears after having lost someone you have shared the last 78 years with but we have so many happy memories that there have been plenty of laughs too.

The most incredible thing of all is all the amazing messages we have received from people around the town and around the country. Everyone has said what a lovely, caring, hard-working man he was and mentioned his brilliant sense of humour and ability to connect with children and young people. It's very moving and very true. I don't think there will ever be anyone who could say anything bad about him."

The family has set up an online tribute page to Maurice on which people can share photos and memories. You can visit it at: <https://mauricetrevorbeasley.muchloved.com>

PICTURE PARABLE

A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.

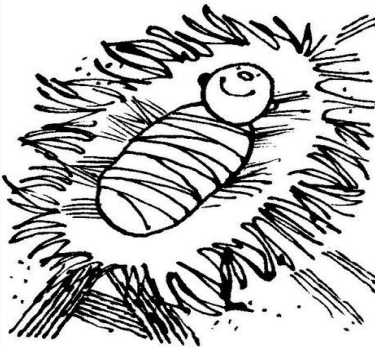


MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE FOR THE CENSUS.

BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL



...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.

WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.



BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...

