

“By The Way...”

Radcliffe, Stand & Farnworth
United Reformed Churches



**December 2018
& January 2019**



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*Deadline date for the
February/March Issue:
Sunday 20 January*

Please give any items for the next publication to Elaine Robinson
The communications team will then decide whether the items will
go online, in print or on the notice board.

Read 'By The Way...' on line:

<http://radcliffeurc.org.uk>

Nigel's Letter

As I reflect on this year and look towards the future, I give thanks to God for His faithfulness, his love and his strength and for the privilege that remains mine to serve you in the three churches of Radcliffe, Stand and Farnworth. I thank God to for our shared journey together. It continues to be a time of ongoing change.

Change is both challenging and energising, particularly when prayerfully discerned as part of shaping God's Kingdom.

The fellowship at Farnworth is on the brink of a new partnership with the wider community, a time of change that we pray will bring strength and new challenge to the church as it shapes its mission to bring the light of Christ to the community around Albert Road.

The fellowship at Stand are experiencing pain and sadness at the possible sale of the building; a church loved and cherished through many generations and served loyally by many who now "sing around the throne of grace in heaven" – those who have run the race and finished the course. But it is also a time of hope and possible new beginnings.

Supporting the Stand fellowship, Radcliffe are encouraging and helping to build "missional outreach" in Chapelfield while looking to the demands of reordering their approach to the use of the Radcliffe church building to offer a wider welcome to community groups linked to Bury Council's "Integrated Wellness" programme. This offers an opportunity to reach out to the lonely, the socially isolated, and those who want to learn new skills and to be affirmed as loved and valued human beings.

The changes we experience remind us this Christmastime that God came in Jesus Christ, a vulnerable baby, to dwell among us. He "moved

into our street." He taught us that compassion, love and truth are values to be treasured, nurtured and encouraged in each one of us.

The changes we grapple with are real, but hopefully through prayer and conversation, they will bring us to a place that enables us to continue to proclaim a gospel message of love and hope in a world that often appears to prefer darkness to light.

We know that Jesus was born into a dark world. Many did not recognise him, but through moulding and shaping a vision for the future, we find ourselves able to respond to those who are looking for spiritual direction, hope and meaning in their lives.

So let us begin where we are, start with what we believe, watch and listen for the glimpses of God's Kingdom breaking through into this world and bringing light and joy and hope to each other, as we continue to journey together with those we encounter "on the road."

This Advent and Christmas time is a true blessing to all who recognise the love of God, made real to us in the birth of Jesus Christ. May we welcome Him anew in our hearts and prepare for His return.

As the year turns and we welcome 2019, may we do so in the knowledge that Jesus still walks with us and holds us in His love. Let us hold the Christ light for each other and know His peace in our hearts now and always.

Liz joins me in wishing you all a blessed Christmas and peaceful New Year

In Christ

Nigel



Diary Dates:

December

- 1 Coffee, Cake and Raffle at the Manse. 10am-12noon
Donations to meet the cost of sending the shoe boxes
- 6 Informal Meeting regarding the Role of Elders.
Radcliffe URC 7pm.
- 11 Radcliffe URC Elders Meeting 7:00pm.
- 11 Chapelfield School at Radcliffe URC. Theme: Christmas
- 12 Ladies Friendship Club Christmas Party 12noon for 12:30pm.
(use church entrance not church hall entrance)
- 14 Farnworth Coffee Morning 10am-12pm.
- 20 Chapelfield Community Lunch at Stand URC 12:30pm.

January

- 8 Radcliffe URC Elders Meeting 7:00pm.
- 9 Ladies Friendship Club Radcliffe URC at 2:00pm.
Speaker: Jack Heathcote – Travel.
- 11 Farnworth Coffee Morning 10am-12pm.
- 12 Holiday at Home. Radcliffe URC 10:30am -3:00pm.
- 23 Ladies Friendship Club Radcliffe URC at 2:00pm.
Speaker: Revd Nigel Adkinson.

ADVENT GROUP at Stand URC:

6 & 13 December at 10.30am – 11.30am including light refreshments.

The group theme is called **“God’s Advent People” Contemplating God in a busy life** – *Meet Alec, Lynn and Steve living real and hectic lives in the pre-Christmas season. We may want to offer them advice as we hear their stories, we may, however, simply observe them and contemplate what they teach us about the Advent God.*

Radcliffe URC

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

There is a greetings tree on the table in the foyer. Christmas tags are available to write your greeting or bring along your own tag to put on the tree. This is in lieu of Christmas cards and all proceeds will go to church funds.



URC DAILY DEVOTIONS

In December we conclude the series on Saul/David/Solomon and in the run up to Christmas we start the next series which will be looking at St Luke’s Gospel, this will take us right through until after Easter. Copies of each booklet will be left on the table in the vestibule for you to take.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

On behalf of the Christmas Fair Committee, may I thank everyone for all their efforts to help make the Fair a big success. Every contribution counts and there are so many ways people have contributed from giving donations for the stalls, to cooking and serving in the café, to making cakes and preserves to sell, to manning a stall, to moving furniture and tables, to plying people on stalls with tea and coffee, to covering for people on stalls having breaks, to setting up and clearing up, to buying from the stalls, to inviting friends, family and members of

the community to join us and to the Committee for all their creative and enthusiastic support throughout the year.

It was great to see new faces coming in to the Fair.

Thanks to Morrison's plc and Silletts for their generous donations.

We made a fantastic total of £2,920.

Thanks to all for all your support.

Radcliffe URC continued

ELDERSHIP

The Church meeting agreed to continue with 10 Elders at present.

There are 4 vacancies this year. The Elders nomination forms are available from Sunday 9 December. Nomination forms should be returned to the Church Secretary no later than Sunday 20 January.

Remember to get permission of the person you are nominating.

More details in the notices.

Please give this prayerful consideration.

THE GREATEST SHOW

Thanks to everyone who attended and supported the show.

It was a superb night with great songs and a pasty and peas supper.

Special thanks to our singers, Amanda, Mark, Sarah, Gavin and Lexy, who were all members of our Players Society and former members of our youth group. Also a special mention to Rob on the sound.

What a brilliant evening and such talent! £500 was raised for church funds. Well done everybody!

Stand URC

THANK YOU...

The 10th Radcliffe Guides and Brownies of Stand United Reformed Church would like to say thank you for all the support over the last 40 years at Stand.

We are closing because of a number of reasons, but we feel that now is the right time.

Our last church parade will be at the Christmas Tree Service on Sunday 16 December. We do hope you can join us and wish everyone good luck with their future endeavours.

Thank you from the Guiders Team: Jan, Suzanne, Rachel and Renata.

Farnworth URC

December 2nd Holy Communion Service followed by Annual Church Meeting in the School next door. Tea and Coffee will be served.

Please bring lunch along if you are attending the meeting.

December 9th Toy Service with donations of new/nearly new toys, gratefully received for a local charity.

December 16th Christingle/Carol Service at the later time of 2:30pm. This will be followed by light seasonal refreshments in the school next door. There will not be any Morning Service that Sunday.

December 23rd "9 Lessons & Carols" by members of the congregation.

December 30th Service details to be confirmed.

Thursday Group are taking a break for Winter and will re-commence in Spring 2019 with an 'Easter Egg Bingo'. Date to be confirmed.

Monthly Coffee Morning, held in the School next door to Church - Friday 14th December 10am – 12pm.

Parent & Toddler Group, meet each Wednesday from 9 - 11.30am.

Wednesday 5th December, Parent & Toddler Group, 9 - 11.30am, Christmas Party with a special visit from Santa!

Wednesday 12th December, Parent & Toddler Group, 9-11.30am. Last meeting before Christmas. Start date for January 2019 to be confirmed.

Holiday At Home China

The Holiday at Home team are visiting CHINA on SATURDAY 12 JANUARY 10:30am-3:00pm at RADCLIFFE URC. We hope you can join us for friendship, fun, Chinese traditions and delicious food. Designed for over 50's but all welcome. Donation on the day to cover cost of food etc....



Radcliffe, Stand & Farnworth Church Weekend 2019

This will take place at the THORNLEIGH CHRISTIAN HOTEL Grange over Sands on the weekend of 5-7 July 2019. The cost of the weekend is £145. This includes full board from Friday tea to Sunday Lunch.

Please put your name on the list if you wish to attend or see your church secretary.

There is a savings club for the weekend, any payments should be given to Vera or your church secretary. If you would like to attend but have difficulty in paying the cost, please speak (in confidence) to Nigel.

A prayer for Advent

Loving God,
We thank you for this glad time of year,
This Advent season which reminds us of so much,
And which reveals so wonderfully the extent of your love.
For your coming and coming again in Christ,
We thank you.

A prayer for Christmas

Loving God,
Help us to keep sight of the heart of Christmas,
What it all really means –
To celebrate the birth of the infant Christ,
To worship him as joyfully and reverently
As shepherds and wise men long ago,
To welcome and follow him as faithfully
As those who left everything to be His disciples.
You have given us so much:
Receive our praise.

A prayer for the New Year

Everlasting God,
We remember all you have done for us
Over these past twelve months –
The ways you have guided and taught us,
The times you have offered us strength and support,
The occasions you have specially surrounded us

With your love and compassion.
For all you have given us.
Receive our prayer.

Nick Fawcett

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations

Beginning January 22nd from 2.00pm – 4.00pm
for five sessions at Radcliffe URC

Focusing on:

- *Radical Hospitality*
- *Passionate Worship*
- *Intentional Faith Development*
- *Risk Taking mission and service*
- *Extravagant Generosity*

As part of our developing community work, this is an opportunity to explore how we “connect” church and other community groups, what we can offer and how we can share together to grow disciples for Jesus Christ. The course will be led by Rev Darren Holland (Mission Mentor for Central Area of NW Synod)

Radical Hospitality – Out of love for Christ and others we take the initiative to invite, welcome, include and support newcomers and help them grow in faith.

Passionate Worship – connects people to God and one another. People gather to encounter Christ through singing, praying, exploring scripture and sharing in communion.

Intentional Faith Development – we will be sharing the story of the Samaritan Woman at the well – experiencing “living water.” How is our faith developed and encouraged by this story.

Risk Taking mission and service – how do we respond to the needs of others? How do we connect?

Extravagant Generosity – how do we practice this for the benefit of others and to honour Christ?

Come and explore these areas of discipleship, so we learn together what it means to embark on getting to know others and helping them on the road to knowing Jesus Christ as friend and Saviour.

Recognising Jesus

This is about the old shoe cobbler who dreamed one Christmas Eve that Jesus would come to visit him the next day. The dream was so real that he was convinced it would come true.

So the next morning he got up and went out and cut green boughs and decorated his little cobbler shop and got all ready for Jesus to come and visit. He was so sure that Jesus was going to come that he just sat down and waited for Him.

The hours passed and Jesus didn't come. But an old man came. He came inside for a moment to get warm out of the winter cold. As the cobbler talked with him he noticed the holes in the old man's shoes, so he reached up on the shelf and got him a new pair of shoes. He made sure they fit and that his socks were dry and sent him on his way.

Still he waited. But Jesus didn't come. An old woman came. A woman who hadn't had a decent meal in two days. They sat and visited for a while, and then he prepared some food for her to eat. He gave her a nourishing meal and sent her on her way.

Then he sat down again to wait for Jesus. But Jesus still didn't come. Then he heard a little boy crying out in front of his shop. He went out and talked with the boy, and discovered that the boy had been separated from his parents and didn't know how to get home. So he put on his coat, took the boy by the hand and led him home.

When he came back to his little shoe shop it was almost dark and the streets were emptied of people. And then in a moment of despair he lifted his voice to heaven and said, “Oh Lord Jesus, why didn't you come?”

And then in a moment of silence he seemed to hear a voice saying, "Oh shoe cobbler, lift up your heart. I kept my word. Three times I knocked at your friendly door. Three times my shadow fell across your floor. I was the man with the bruised feet. I was the woman you gave to eat. I was the boy on the homeless street." Jesus had come. The cobbler just didn't realize it.

December Services 2018

DATE	RADCLIFFE URC 11:00am	STAND URC 9:30am	FARNWORTH URC 10:45am
December 2	Giles Robinson		Rev N Adkinson 12noon Church AGM
December 9	Rev N Adkinson Communion	Mark Bates Toy Service – toys going to Fort Alice (Women's Refuge)	
December 9	Rev N Adkinson Celebration of Life Radcliffe URC at 3pm		
December 16	Rev N Adkinson Nativity/Christmas Tree/Parade Joint Radcliffe & Stand Service at Stand URC at 10.30am	Rev N Adkinson Christingle/Carol Service Farnworth URC at 2.30pm	
December 23	Rev N Adkinson Radcliffe URC at 11am		
December 24	Rev N Adkinson Christmas Eve at Stand URC at 11.30pm		

December 25	Rev N Adkinson Pastorate Service at Radcliffe URC at 10.30am	
Dec 30	NO SERVICE	

January Services 2019

DATE	RADCLIFFE URC 11:00am	STAND URC 9:30am	FARNWORTH URC 10:45am
January 6	Rev N Adkinson Pastorate Communion Service at Farnworth URC at 10.45am		
January 13	Rev N Adkinson Communion Service	Mr Aaron Shaw	
January 20	Leo Roberts		Rev N Adkinson
January 27	Rev N Adkinson	Rev N Adkinson Breakfast Service 9.30am at Stand	Mr Aaron Shaw
February 3	Alan Nuttall		Rev N Adkinson

Until further notice, Stand URC and Radcliffe URC will have Joint Services at Radcliffe URC at 11am unless otherwise stated.

Also 'Thursday' and URC'
An informal time of devotion and prayer
10.30am for half an hour followed by light refreshments



