



## CROSSGATES METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2018

**Minister :** Reverend Susan Greenhart

Dear Friends

“This is the first time I’ve felt safe in a long time.”

“It is good to share food together.”

“I live this day. No past. No future. All is gone. The future? Only God knows. “Now is all I have.”

“I am happy for this place. It is good. But family. I need family.”

“My heart is warm when I meet good people. A week passes. I have to say goodbye, and my heart hurts.”

These words were spoken by some of our guests during the course of their stay with us as we opened Cross Gates Methodist church as a night shelter in conjunction with WYDAN. The week of Christian Unity fell during our week of hosting, and what a week of unity it was! It was wonderful to be working together, with Christians from our own circuit, Colton and Christchurch, as well as St. Theresa’s and sister churches; St. James Manston, and Christchurch Manston. I think many of us were rather nervous before we began, but with help from GarforthMC, and good heart and flexibility on the part of all our volunteers, this was an experience of Christ walking and being among us. Our guests were both Christian and Muslim, and of many different nationalities, so there was lots of room for misunderstanding, and yet what I witnessed most was servanthood, and love expressed in action. On Wednesday it seemed that no-one, neither guests nor volunteers, wanted the evening to end – it was like a party.

On Saturday, one of the guests cooked a fabulous meal for us, and seeing the joy on his face at being able to give something back was so humbling. On Sunday morning when I popped back in after worship, there was a happy huddle round the inevitable tuna breakfast dish as people tucked in to the meal – not guest and volunteers, just people sharing “communion” together. On a sleety Sunday night we enjoyed a games night at Christchurch, Manston. To hear the laughter was balm to the soul. Because the situation that destitute asylum-seekers find themselves in is wrong. It is wrong that people fall through the cracks, and have to prove that they exist at all. The government handbook on seeking asylum, ostensibly written to help them, makes an impossibility of the task they have before them. When they have been trafficked, or enslaved, as some of our guests had been the act of survival itself is a miracle. So thank you again to all who have cooked, laundered, furniture-moved, befriended, socialised, overnighted, and prayed with us, those who have shown the love of Christ: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me..” I pray that you gained as much as you gave. As winter continues let us remember, “There but for the grace of God....”

**Blessings. Susan**