



Training the choir at Tamworth

Christmas News from Helen

Thanks for all your love and support in 2019.

Work at CMM has continued to be very busy and fruitful. This year has seen the team here undertake a huge creative project re-imagining Roger's 1980 work 'Torn Curtain'. I organised the launch of the Communion Setting section of Torn Curtain back in February, and then the musical premiere with a massed choir and orchestra in October. In between these two dates there was a great deal of creativity—I contributed to one of the backing tracks, directed the backing vocals group, sang a couple of solos and played trumpet and flute. It was wonderful to be able to train the massed choir at the premiere; standing in front of a choir that huge is always a real thrill. Then just over a

week later I took the musical to the Methodist Women in Britain Lincolnshire district day with just two wonderful soloists and a backing track. The musical gives so much opportunity for teaching about worship and intimacy with God, and I'm so excited about how God is going to use it in future.

My other CMM events have included a Wildfire music week at Scargill, where it was wonderful to have mum and dad on hand to look after Michael. They did a brilliant job looking after him while I trained the choir. I led worship again at the World Day of Prayer



Mum, dad and Michael at Scargill

young women's conference, YPray. This has become a real highlight of my year, and I'm looking forward to next year's weekend in Northampton. I also took part in a Spirit Works weekend in Hexham, which was challenging—it reminded me that I haven't been involved in a Spirit Works day since we launched the book before I had Michael! I also had my first ever magazine article published. This was in Preach Magazine's Autumn edition, so do check it out if you can.



With Jane, Andy and Serena!

The big change in my CMM work has been taking over from Sylvia Whalley as conductor of the West Birmingham CMM Choir. Sylvia has been a wonderful choir trainer over many years, and it is lovely having her



sing with us still. I have enjoyed teaching the choir the musical 'Simeon', and they are now part-way through a run of 7 performances alongside the East Birmingham section of the choir under Annie's baton.

Other highlights this year have included a trip to the netball world cup in Liverpool in the summer, where Nicky, Amy and I saw England beat Trinidad and Tobago. We're looking forward to watching England play again this spring here in Birmingham. I also had my first ever trip to

A trip to the netball world Cup

Wimbledon with my friend Jane, where I saw the sad demise of 'Murena' (or was it 'Serandy'?) but had a brilliant day all round, even catching a ball at one point!



This year I took part in the ReSound Worship 12 Song Challenge. Each month I was set a different songwriting challenge, and amazingly managed to keep up with it all, finishing with 13 songs. Many of them are just part of the learning process and will never be heard by anyone ever, but it was an honour to write some lyrics for the dedication service of my god-daughter Leah, daughter of close friends Amy and Chris. I am looking forward to the challenge starting all over again in January!

It has been a joy watching Michael grow into a lively 2¾ year old. He is now running and jumping, as well as talking all the time. In fact, the only way to stop him talking is for James to 'Carry on with your story, daddy.' He can be very tiring but is an absolute delight. In June we took him on a family holiday in Suffolk (including new nephew Boaz!) followed by a trip on the ferry from

Harwich for a week in Holland. We had a great time cycling around exploring, and even a day on the beach. We also love attending Jazz Community Church on Sunday afternoons, where there are several children Michael's age which can be lots of fun!



Grace and peace to you this Christmas

Helen