

Dear Friends,

IF on Christmas Eve this year your children suddenly ask you to move the Christmas tree into the middle of the living room and then invite you to take each other by the hand and gently walk round the tree as you sing those wonderful carols – blame me!

But if after three quarters of an hour of doing this you begin to feel dizzy, blame yourselves!

What you ought to have done is walk in one direction for so long, then stop briefly, get your breath back, and proceed in the other direction.

In many services and at many public events coming up to Christmas I will have shared with people this ancient and still very much alive Danish tradition of walking round the Christmas Tree on Christmas Eve, holding hands and singing the carols.

And doing so, we meditate on the wonderful words of hope and joy in the carols and feel our hearts warmed, remembering the joy and expectation of those shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem.

Words as meaningful for us today as they were when they were first written.

As we walk round the tree, we look at one another through the candles [no electric lights] on the branches at the person opposite, and we see their faces (faces we thought we knew so well) shining in the reflection of the candles in a new way.

We see eyes expressing the wonder of Christmas and we feel the squeeze of our neighbour's hand which says, "Today, despite everything, all is well with the world, because it is Christmas time and we are together, here in the darkness, sharing the Light that never goes out."

Here's wishing all the readers of the *Free Press* a wonderful Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Yes, things are difficult, life is a struggle, but the Light of Christmas, Christ Himself, is forever, and for all.

Thought for the weak



with the Rev Preben Andersen

Caldicot Methodist Church

ON a rainy, blustery evening, a good crowd gathered in Caldicot Methodist Church for an organ concert by Simon Andersen, the older son of Rev. Preben Andersen, minister of the Church.

A varied programme of popular classical pieces of music such as the *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* and *Pan's Angelicus*, interspersed with modern, well-known music like *The Dambusters March* and *The Phantom of the Opera*

were very efficiently played. It also contained music with a Christmas flavour and carols everyone could join in to sing together.

These were all very confidently played by Simon and were much appreciated by the audience. It gave a very good start to the real meaning of Christmas. Thanks were offered to Simon for a great evening.

Refreshments were served during the interval which gave opportunity for everyone to join together.

The concert was given in aid of St David's Foundation Hospice at Home Scheme, which has given much comfort to many who have and are suffering from terminal diseases. St David's held their Light a Life service at the church on Tuesday, December 13.