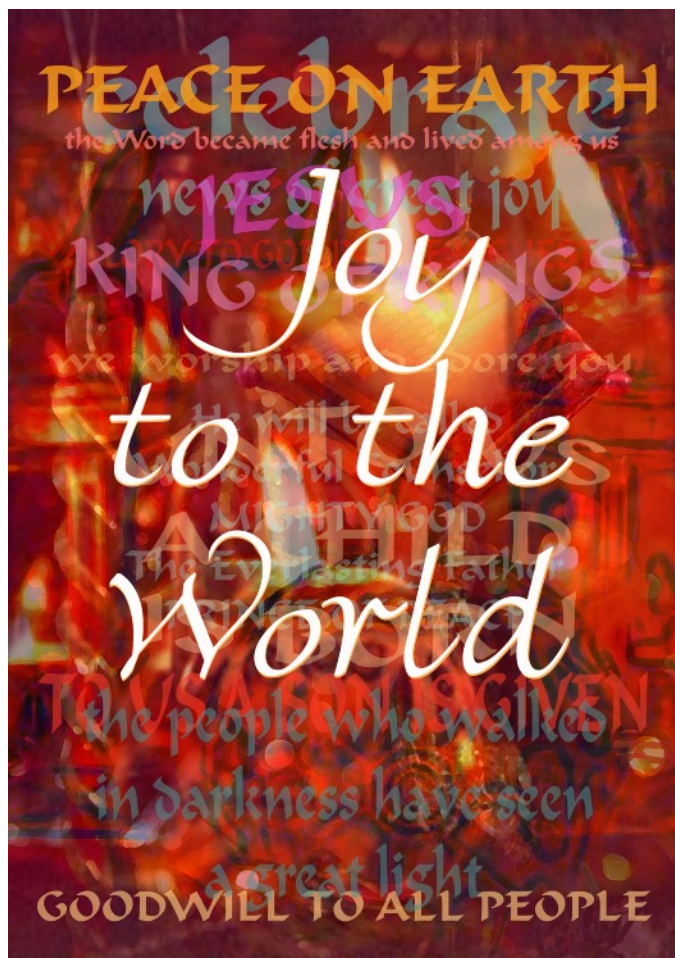




# KINGSDOWN MESSENGER



*December 2021 - January 2022*



# Kingsdown Methodist Church



## December

- 5 Dec 10.30 Mr Phil Male, Morning Service
- 12 Dec 10.30 Rev Susan Male, Family & Nativity Service
- 19 Dec NO MORNING SERVICE
- 04.00 pm Rev Susan Male, Carol Service
- 24 Dec 06.00 pm CHRISTMAS EVE Rev Susan Male,  
Holy Communion
- 25 Dec 09.45 CHRISTMAS DAY Rev Susan Male
- 26 Dec BOXING DAY, CIRCUIT SERVICE - Video link tba



## January

- 2 Jan 10.30 Local Arrangement
- 9 Jan 10.30 Rev Sue Male, CIRCUIT SERVICE  
Holy Communion
- 16 Jan 10.30 Mr Alex Anteyi, Morning Service
- 23 Jan 10.30 Mrs Rekha Cheriyan, Morning Service
- 30 Jan 10.30 Rev Sue Male, Morning Service



## February

- 6 Feb 10.30 Local Arrangement
- 13 Feb 10.30 Rev Susan Male, Holy Communion
- 20 Feb 10.30 Rev Susan Male, Family/Parade Service
- 27 Feb 10.30 Mr David Street, Morning Service



### The KINGSDOWN MESSENGER

Copy deadline for the Feb - Mar 2022 issue is Friday 22 Jan 2022

Editors - Pam and Alan Smith  
E-mail: [Messenger@questa.co.uk](mailto:Messenger@questa.co.uk)





Dear Friends,

Those of you who I talk often with will know that I am sometimes puzzled and delighted by the way that the Bible readings are organised in the daily lectionary. They often seem to pop up as readings at a time which seems unseasonable. This can at first be perplexing, but soon becomes fascinating - as it helps to shed new light on the Gospel message. A reading which came into this category this November was the story of the cleansing of the temple. This is usually a Lent reading which urges us to reflect on Jesus' righteous anger at the temple being used to commercialise the outward signs of religion whilst the internal prayers and commitments are forgotten.

The point when Jesus turned the tables and declared that his Father's house, which should be a house of prayer, was being misused; is traditionally seen as the point in the Christian narrative where the religious authorities turned against Jesus and the journey towards crucifixion began.

Here, however, the lectionary suggests a different reading. We are now moving into Advent and into preparation for Christmas - we are preparing to welcome the Christ child. It is good that the temples - our churches - should be put in order for Christmas- perhaps particularly after a pandemic.

So, are the usual symbols and furniture in their rightful place? Have you considered recently the meaning of our symbols -

- The empty cross
- The Bible
- The font
- The bread and wine
- The Nativity figures
- The advent wreath
- The Christmas tree?

How do objects in the church help you to come before God? What other non-visual things which take place in your church help with this?

As we prepare our churches for the coming of the Christ Child. We cleanse our temples and look at them anew.

We are also reminded however that there are two kinds of temples - the building, and also our bodies (which are temples of the Holy Spirit). We need to prepare for the Christ Child, for his indwelling Spirit by cleansing our own beings too. Advent has that same call that Lent has for self reflection and renewal - we are called to check that all of the religious furniture within ourselves is ready for Christmas -

- Am I finding regular time to be with God in prayer?
- Am I attending worship each week?
- Am I reading the Bible regularly and allowing it to speak new things to me?
- Are there things which are troubling me spiritually which I need to confess in prayer or talk to someone else about?
- Am I trying to be the best version of me I can be?
- Am I asking God for more of his Holy Spirit in order to make that possible?

Advent is a time to look at ourselves and our lives with God. We have all been through a very stressful and difficult time. If you have drifted from God, drifted from church, drifted from regular prayer and study, then Advent is a time to recommit.

Challenge yourself . What are you going to do?



Christ will come this Christmas into hearts that are ready and waiting for him - temples - will you be ready?

Sue



## In-Touch

The circuit magazine is now back in print edition and copies of the December-February issue are ready for collection in the Church Foyer.

As far as we are aware, services will continue to be streamed from Ealing Green Church at 11.00 am each Sunday morning for those still unable to get to Kingsdown for the time being. The Youtube link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivxvKEQE3KgK9UIVdZfyPw>

You can also find video links for other services on:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmB8aHAfPSyKnAvXI0zRBYg>

## ***Family News***

Following her hospitalisation and ensuing recovery period, it's great to see Violet Cordon back in church with the Kingsdown family - you gave everyone much cause for concern.

Many will be aware of the death of Stanley Nicholls, on 5<sup>th</sup> November after a spell in hospital, He and his wife Beryl had been attending Kingsdown for some years and had made a number of friends in that time. The funeral took place at 2 pm on Tuesday 23 November at Mortlake Crematorium attended by family and friends. Sincere condolences to all those who mourn Stan's passing.

For those of you who may not have been at the Remembrance Service, and may have some past happy memories of garden parties in Elm Avenue (off Ealing Common), Tony Plews was sad to announce the death of Joy Lane on 13 November. Joy and Brian went to live in Selsey soon after her husband's retirement. Many of you will know and appreciate the assistance given to Tony and the Boys Brigade over many years by their son David Lane. Two further sons, Chris and Andrew, may also be known to some. We send sincere condolences to family and friends.

A funeral service will be held on Friday 3 December at 2pm at Chichester Crematorium, Westhampnett Road, Chichester PO19 7UH. All are welcome. Please email David Lane if you are planning to attend: [d.lane100@live.com](mailto:d.lane100@live.com)

The service will also be streamed on

<https://watch.obitus.com>

Username: wisa2568

Password: 13731

I knew Gwen Duncan when I joined Kingsdown and we were both in the Choir – at that point the Choir comprised some 20 members and over the years we sang an Anthem once a month and often an introit before Sunday services.

We joined the Malcolm Sargent Choir, along with other members of the Kingsdown Choir, and for many years performed the Messiah at the Albert Hall, amongst other concerts.

Gwen, her husband Bill and family lived locally in Hanwell and at least two members of her family were involved with the Boys Brigade. She worked as a Phlebotomist in a local hospital and when she retired moved to Kempsey in Worcestershire where she and Bill lived for many years.

After Bill's death, Gwen moved to be near her two daughters and grandchildren, who lived in East Hunsbury, Northamptonshire. She settled down very quickly and loved the area, joining a local Methodist Church and various clubs. She gave up driving a car and resorted to a mobility scooter as her health gradually failed.

I had a lot to do with Gwen. Four of us went on holidays together every year, (would you believe camping!!) all over the country. I enjoyed a Round Britain cruise and visited her on several occasions. Although during the past two years we didn't meet in person we enjoyed long conversations reminiscing on past activities.

**GOD BLESS, GWEN**

**Janet Smith**



Rita Brewster would like to send Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Hoping for a better 2022 for everyone.  
God Bless Rita



**Your Editors would like to wish you  
All a Very Happy Christmas  
and a less challenging New Year**

Lorna Howarth (*letter received from her son Ian*)



We are sorry to have to tell you that Lorna passed away peacefully on Tuesday morning (23<sup>rd</sup> Nov) The death certificate will say that she died of old age, and at 96 we rejoice in a long life, well-lived!

At the beginning of the lockdown in April last year she fell in her bathroom, and it was clear she couldn't live independently any more. She came to live with us in Birmingham and we had a happy year living together as an extended family.

In May this year she transferred to a care home just round the corner from us where she lived happily and was well looked after. Around six weeks ago, she began to fail, became unable to walk and gradually stopped eating. She was always comfortable and never complained. She never lost her gracious character and was much loved by the staff of the home.

We will miss her enormously but are so grateful to have been part of her family. Ian, Barbara, David, Rosie and Mark.

Lorna's Funeral has been arranged for Friday 17th December  
The committal will be at

The Vale Crematorium at 11.00. a.m., A44, Pershore, WR10 2QR

All are welcome

A service of thanksgiving will be at Evesham Methodist Church at 2.00 p.m. (Bridge St, Evesham WR11 4SF) after which there will be refreshments at the church. We hope you can join us for what we pray will be a fitting goodbye to Lorna and a celebration of her life.

Ian and Barbara Howarth, 36 Amesbury Road, Birmingham, B13 8LE  
0121 4490131 [ibchowarth@me.com](mailto:ibchowarth@me.com)

Donations in lieu of flowers, (either at the church or on-line,) shared between Katherine's Mercy Home Trust: (*a Charity supporting Dalit girls in South India which Lorna supported*)

CAF Bank Sort code: 40-52-40 a/c no. 00018566 a/c:KMH(UK)

Action for Children (*Lorna was a former board member, when it was NCH*)  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation-now/>

# Boy's Brigade Newsletter



To stand at the front of our church and lead the Remembrance Sunday Church Service in November was a rare and moving privilege for me. I had been invited to speak on the same occasion in 2020 but, for obvious reasons, that did not happen, and we really had no idea how many of our Boys would be able to attend this year, as we hadn't paraded for exactly two years (Remembrance 2019, to be precise).

As always, however, our lads did not disappoint, and they filled the choir pews (to maintain social distancing) as their parents also took their seats in the regular pews.

The Marching Band was still a little rusty after a dormant season but the members played their hearts out before and after worship, determined to let Northfields know that the Brigade is still very much alive and kicking. The most special part of the parade was when a huge builder's lorry reversed out of the Avenue, allowing the Band to pass, while the workmen stood quietly and respectfully as the Boys marched by. It was a beautiful reminder of how special the day is, even to those who are unable to attend a church service.



The Bugle Team delivered a pin-drop performance of The Last Post at the designated hour, and the silence was perfectly observed by all in attendance. The Colour Party had also had very little time to practice, but completed their duty with appropriate dignity. It's a big thing in the



life of a 15-year old Boy to take part in such a prestigious ceremony, but they kept their nerves at bay and I have no doubt mums and dads were glowing with justified pride.



The theme for the service itself was our common search for a sense of personal peace, and I shared stories of friends and Kingsdown members past and present who had inspired me in my own quest, and whose memory I still cherish. I also observed that it was the first Kingsdown Remembrance Service without the attendance of a BB Bandmaster, in that Messrs Pike and Lane were both absent and much missed. In tribute to those gentlemen, their respective caps were placed on the piano at the front of the church during the service.

Each person present on that morning will have their own memories of the service and of God's presence, and I would like to offer my thanks to the many Kingsdown people who advised and participated on such a special day. All BB members extend their grateful thanks for the invitation to be present, and for the on-going prayerful support of the church family.

Sure and Steadfast.

Tony Plews

Captain

**The best vitamin for a Christian is B1**

**ALL WE CAN**  
Every person's potential fulfilled



1. **Choose how to send your gift:**  
As a bespoke greeting card (size A5) or as a gift card insert (size A6)
2. **Choose your life-changing Extraordinary gift**
3. **Customise your greeting card with a message to be printed, or leave blank so you can do this later yourself**
4. **Send the card to you for personalisation, or send directly to your recipient by Royal Mail**
5. **Pay for your Extraordinary Gift through our secure checkout**



### Gift Options

- Busy Bees - £14.00 - Build a Bog £36.00 - Plentiful Plates £30.00
- Girls Power £19.00 - Standing Together £34.00 - Super Stoves £12.00
- Wheels for Change £222.00 - Precious Water £10.00
- Let it Sew £31.00 - Goat for It £52.00 - Chirpy Chicks £15.00
- Book worm £24.00 - Change Begins with a Bicycle £66.00

An option of an A5 Greetings Card OR an A6 Insert Card  
Go to

<https://gifts.allwecan.org.uk/>

Select from the options and help All We Can serve the world's most marginalised communities.



# GLOBAL HUNGER APPEAL



We urgently need your support to help the 41 million people around the world who are facing extreme hunger.

More than 41 million people in 43 countries are teetering on the brink of famine. Without immediate action, women, men and children will lose their lives.

This is a global hunger emergency. The Covid-19 pandemic, violent conflict and the climate crisis have all increased global hunger. Now, people in countries including South Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Burkina Faso are facing the very real threat of famine.

Families desperately need food and clean water to survive. If we act now, we can prevent unnecessary deaths. Your support is needed now so our local partners can help communities prevent famine and build resilience. Together we can distribute life-saving food and support.

**Go to : <https://donate.christianaid.org.uk>**

## New Year Prayer 2022

Lord of all creation,  
Lord of all the years,

Thank you for steering us through the fragmented landscape of two pandemic-riddled years. Here we stand at the beginning of a new year, not knowing what lies ahead. Our only security lies in you, Lord.

Please take our hands and guide us, day by day, into January and beyond. We will not be afraid, Lord because you have promised never to leave us, never to forsake us. And you keep your promises. We are safe.

2022, here we come... expectantly, In Jesus' name,

Amen

by Daphne Kitching



The unseasonable snow really disorientated the shepherds and they couldn't find the Bethlehem road.

## What a Christmas!

The Bethlehem manger, shepherds, wise men, Jesus, Mary and Joseph – it's all so familiar to older people, who are shocked to hear that younger generations may be hazy or ignorant of them. Aren't they part of everyone's education?

Yet the first Christmas was restricted to just a few. What 21st Century Christians proclaim as the most significant event in history began in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, without the pomp and publicity we associate with kingship and power. What modern media have called

'The Greatest Story Ever Told', escaped everyone's attention in first century Palestine.

This year, Christmas is going to be a busier celebration than last year, but probably not yet back to the normal fuss we usually make each December. The streets will be crowded, but shops may struggle with supplies. Parties will take place, but many people will feel reluctant to join in. Family gatherings are allowed again, but the vulnerable may hesitate. Christmas services will be held, but as singing has the potential for droplet and aerosol transmission, music will be muted this year. A Christmas without many carols!

Many will struggle to hold their 'usual' Christmas. Yet God does not neglect us. This may be the very opportunity to rekindle or deepen our faith in what really matters about Christmas. Away from the hordes, perhaps completely alone this Christmas, we may sit quietly and allow our heavenly Father to draw near to us. We may picture Mary inviting us to gaze with her at her Son, born to save us from our sins. In the silence of our imagination, we may join the chorus of angels announcing His birth to the shepherds:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."

It was that chorus which inspired an American Minister, Edmund Sears, to write the Christmas hymn, 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear'. Sears, troubled by the world's turbulent history and failure to hear the Christmas message, was himself recovering from a breakdown.

Written in 1849, his words have a timeless ring about them:

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love-song which they bring;  
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
And hear the angels sing.

from Parish Pump

## Call for action and prayer on the Polish-Belarusian border crisis

All We Can stands together with colleagues across the European Commission on Mission, and the European Methodist Council, in support of the appeal from the United Methodist Church in Poland regarding the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. The crisis, which has been unfolding since the start of November, has seen men, women and children travel from Minsk, in Belarus, to the border with Poland. Amid dangerously low temperatures and poor facilities in the forested areas where people are camping, the situation poses the potential to become a humanitarian emergency.



Methodist  
relief and  
development

Despite the worsening situation, supplies and medical aid for those facing dangerous and difficult circumstances on the border are struggling to get through. On 17 November, the United Methodist Church in Poland released a statement calling for prayer and action to help the victims of the crisis. All We Can, as a member of the European Commission on Mission – a group of Methodist mission boards and development agencies from across Europe – together with the European Methodist Council, is in full support of the statement. We urge all members of the All We Can family to continue to pray for peace, safety, and a speedy resolution to the unfolding crisis.

You can read the full statement from the United Methodist Church in Poland and the supporting statement from the European Methodist Council on The Methodist Church website in 'Our work - Global Relationships News' - 26 November 2021

## What about the gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh?

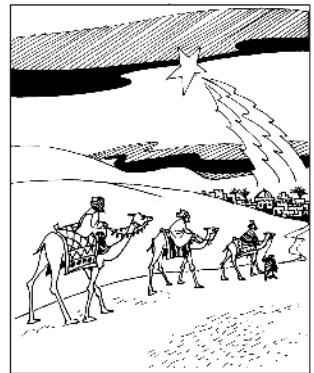
The story of the coming of the Magi grew in the telling. By the 6th century they had acquired names: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. By medieval times they were considered to be kings. Whoever they were, we do know from Matthew that they brought three gifts to Jesus.

What about their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? While we cannot know for sure what was in the minds of first century Magi, one Victorian scholar has offered a possible explanation as to the significance of their gifts. He was the Rev John Henry Hopkins, an American Episcopalian minister, who in 1857 wrote his much-loved Christmas carol, 'We Three Kings of Orient Are'.

Gold, said John Henry Hopkins, was a gift that would have been given to a king. Frankincense had traditionally been brought by priests as they worshipped God in the Temple. Myrrh was a spice that the ancients used in preparing bodies for burial.

If that is true, then you could say that the Wise Men, in choosing their gifts for this infant, honoured Jesus with gold because He was King of the Jews, with frankincense because He was to be worshipped as divine, and with myrrh, because He would also become a sacrifice and die for His people.

The Wise Men were the very first gentiles ever to worship Jesus. What faith they had! They travelled for months over difficult terrain, they never saw any evidence of Jesus' kingship, His divinity or His sacrificial death. They worshipped Him through faith in God's promises about Him. Isaiah foresaw this response to Jesus: 'Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' The Magi's eyes of faith saw clearly and far into the future.



Compare that with the High Priest and religious leaders whom the Wise Men saw in Jerusalem when they first arrived. These head priests knew all about the prophecies of their own coming Messiah, but NOT ONE Jewish religious leader travelled to look for Him in Bethlehem. And it is only six miles down the road!

## 21 December - Winter Solstice

A Midwinter festival has been a part of life since pre-Christian times. When the hours of daylight are fewest, the warmth of the sun weakest, and life itself seemingly at a standstill, our ancestors, the pagan peoples of Europe and Western Asia, kept festival by lighting bonfires and decorating their buildings with evergreens.

Perhaps they believed that the dying sun could be enheartened by fire, and the life of the buried seed assured by the presence of evergreen branches.

With the advent of Christianity, the Spring gods became identified with Christ, and the birthday of the sun with the birthday of the Light of the World.

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. "Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green...." But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance.

By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: 'Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene.'

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More than half of adults (51 per cent) who are aged under 35 pray at least once a month, while almost as many (49 per cent) make a monthly visit to some place of worship.

In contrast, of adults aged over 55, only a quarter (24 per cent) pray, and only one fifth (16 per cent) attend a place of worship.

The survey was done by Savanta ComRes, and included Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims. It was commissioned by the organisers of the Eternal Wall of Prayer, which is being built near Birmingham. The monument's creator, Richard Gamble, is a former chaplain of Leicester City FC, who says: "Many are now discovering that prayer is not a response of the last resort."

## From the Recent Church Meetings

Our Annual General Church Meeting (AGCM) took place on 24<sup>th</sup> October, our first since May 2019 - we missed last year's meeting because of the pandemic followed by an online meeting of the Church Council on 16<sup>th</sup> November.

The main outcome of the AGCM was that we agreed to change the leadership structure of our church. Up to now, we have had a group of church stewards who have to be formal church members and sit on the Church Council supported by a second group, the 'vestry stewards' who assist on Sundays and don't have to be formal church members so do not sit on the Church Council.

Between Church Council meetings, the church stewards would be the 'leadership group' of the church. As Sue Male said to the meeting, getting a strong enough team of church stewards together has been problematic, so she proposed a modified structure in order to make Vestry Stewards: Sure our church can continue functioning.

We agreed that we should have a single 'Lead Steward Contact' and that we would put together as broad a team as possible of 'vestry

stewards'. Ideally as many of us as are able could be involved in this group in order to spread Sunday duties as widely as possible. Whereas, the 'Lead Steward Contact' would need to be a formal church member and would sit on the Church Council, both members and adherents could be 'vestry stewards'.

Having agreed this changed structure, the following people were nominated and appointed:

### Members of the Church Council

#### Lead Steward Contact

Sybil Corbin

Treasurer: Derek Matthews

Property Manager: Janet Smith

Pastoral Secretary:

Hazel Pennells

Mission & Outreach:

Olwen Britton

Secretary: Gerald Barton

Congregational Reps:

Juliet Edwards, Blossom

Jackson, Kath Jarrett, Jill

Richardson, Lita Stoll

Rev Sue Male acts as chair of the Church Council.

Others

Sue Garland, Faith Hodge, Leroy Hodge,

Jill Richardson, Blossom Jackson,

Annegret Matthews,

Derek Matthews, Rita Safta,

Janet Smith



## Communion Stewards

Violet Cordon, Kath Jarrett,  
Jill Richardson, Janet Smith,  
Eileen Tobias

## Finance

- The pandemic with its lockdowns has had a negative impact on many churches' financial positions. Kingsdown, however has fared relatively well. In brief during 2020/21:
- Offertories held up well.
- Lettings income reduced as groups stopped meeting for a time but most had now returned and some new lettings had started. Nonetheless, some pre-pandemic lettings had not returned or were yet to re-start.
- The overall result for the year was a small surplus of about £5,000.
- 

A cautious view has been taken for the budget for 2021/22 particularly on lettings income. The Church Council had agreed to a request from Conference for a one-off donation to support the Methodist Pension Reserve Fund and we would be contributing £5,000. After making this donation the budget for 2021/22 envisages a deficit of about £5,000 for the year.

## Church Council

The Council confirmed the various appointments made at the AGCM when it met on 16<sup>th</sup> November. In addition, some points of wider interest were discussed.

## Festival of Nativities

We will set up our 'Festival of Nativities' again this year – it will be good to have the church decorated to celebrate Christmas after last year's lockdown. The programme will be as follows:

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec BB will bring down nativities and put them at the back of the church

4<sup>th</sup> Dec Set up from 10.00am

8<sup>th</sup> Dec Corner House Nursery 09.45 – 13.15

15<sup>th</sup> Dec Fieldings School 09.00 – 11.00 & 13.00 – 15.30

16<sup>th</sup> Dec P i t s h a n g e r Brownies 17.00 – 18.00 (Sue Male will accompany)

If you would like to help with the setting up or can assist with stewarding when the schools visit, please speak to Sue Male.

For the record, our Christmas services this year will be:

12<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30am F a m i l y service with Nativity

19<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30am no morning service

19<sup>th</sup> Dec 4.00pm Carol Service

24<sup>th</sup> Dec 6.00pm Holy  
Communion for Christmas Eve

25<sup>th</sup> Dec 9.45am Worship for  
Christmas Morning

26<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.30am no service –  
an online Circuit video service will  
be available

Rev Sue Male will also be offering  
an online service at midnight on  
Christmas Eve.

### Solemnization of Same-Sex Marriages

The annual Methodist Conference  
in July decided that Methodist  
churches should be able to register,  
if they wish, for the solemnization  
of same-sex marriages. Note that  
it is up to the individual church  
council at each local church to  
decide whether they do wish to  
register – the Conference decision  
in no way requires churches to  
register. You might like to note,  
incidentally, that Methodist  
churches are equally not required

to register for marriages in general  
if they prefer not to.

The Church Council discussed  
whether Kingsdown should  
register for same-sex marriages,  
but felt that before making a  
decision, our members and  
adherents should be consulted  
more widely first. On this issue, it  
is important that people have an  
opportunity to express their views  
so that the Council has a better  
sense of the feeling of our church  
about this. We will most likely hold  
a consultation meeting in  
conjunction with a Sunday service,  
probably in the New Year. Rev Sue  
Male will be considering how best  
to carry this out.

The next meeting of the Church  
Council will be held in person at  
the church on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup>  
March 2022 at 9.30am.

Gerald Barton,  
Secretary to Church Council



*Father, we come before you so thankful for your  
many gifts, and recognising how fortunate we  
are to have healthcare, education, and social  
support in a world where so many lack so much.*

*from CBM Prayers*

## Loving, Almighty God,

Thank you that You came into the darkness of this broken world on that first Christmas night, pouring in your Light, in the person of your Son, Jesus.

Lord, so much of our world seems dark, still. So many dreadful things we can't make sense of: the on-going pandemic, acts of violence and injustice against good people – innocent people, child poverty, employment problems, broken relationships ... so many difficulties. It's easy to feel overwhelmed.

Lord, help us to focus on you this Christmas. Open our eyes to see your bigger, eternal picture. Help us to hear afresh the Good News that nothing and no-one can ever extinguish your Light.

Jesus overcame the troubles of the world by His death and resurrection. Father may we re-connect with you, through Jesus, this Christmas and know the Love, the Joy and the Peace, which are your Christmas gifts to us, as we trust Him.

We pray in Jesus' wonderful name, Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*



## Where did the name Jesus come from?

The name Jesus is a transliteration of a name that occurs in several languages. It is of Hebrew origin, 'Yehosua', or Joshua. There is also the Hebrew-Aramaic form, 'Yesua'. In Greek, it became 'Ἰησοῦς' (*lēsōûs*), and in Latin it became 'Iesus'.

The meaning of the name is 'Yahweh delivers' or 'Yahweh rescues', or 'Yahweh is salvation'. No wonder the angel Gabriel in Luke (1:26-33) told Mary to name her baby Jesus: "because He will save His people from their sins."



## The Universe

*You show your majesty  
In every star that shines,  
And every time we breathe.  
Your glory, God revealed  
From distant galaxies  
To here beneath our skin.*



These words from the song *Magnificent* by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin speak volumes to me as a scientist. Redman is an astronomy geek who has ‘an appreciation for the universe that surrounds us, particularly its unique ability to lift our hearts to see how massive and mysterious God truly is’.\*

The microscopic level on the other hand – what goes on ‘beneath our skin’ – is less available to ordinary people. I have had the privilege of exploring this world to my heart’s content, and what I’ve seen has given me such a sense of awe that I want to share with others.

Every time you breathe, a series of air pockets with a combined surface area the size of a tennis court is bathed with oxygen. These minute air pockets are covered with blood vessels. The boundary between air and blood is so thin that oxygen and carbon dioxide can diffuse freely from one to the other.

When your heart beats at a normal rate, a single red blood cell takes about three quarters of a second to travel through the small blood vessels in your lungs. But in just one third of that time, a quarter of a second, that cell has already received all the oxygen it needs from the air. So, when you exercise, causing your heart rate to increase and the blood to flow faster, you’re still getting plenty of oxygen – as long as you keep breathing!

Redman and Myrin wrote in their song, “You are higher than we ever could imagine, And closer than our eyes could ever see.” The universe demonstrates God’s awesome power. This is a place made by a being whose imagination is not limited by time and space.

Biology, on the other hand, helps to remind me of God’s creativity and closeness. I am a product of a long and painstaking process of continued

development over aeons of time. Beneath my skin are incredibly detailed, beautifully regulated processes that give me life. Jesus said that 'even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' The knowledge that God intentionally made me and knows every detail of my physiology is both amazing and humbling.

*\*Indescribable: Encountering the Glory of God in the Beauty of the Universe,*

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## Circuit Advent Service

The representatives from most of the churches in the Circuit gathered together at Kings Hall (Hamborough School) on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November to join in a service to celebrate Advent. The children were busy during the service creating a picture for the occasion. The service was conducted in a mixture of four languages by Rev'ds Rachel Bending, Ajay Singh and Deacon Theresa Simons-Sam which made an interesting approach to the proceedings. Afterwards the congregation enjoyed a feast of goodies provided by Kings Hall.



## Garden Wildlife in Danger

Be kind to the wildlife in your garden – what little of it remains. The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, and it may not even have enough biodiversity – variety of plant and animal life – to prevent an ecological meltdown.



That is the finding of new data by the Natural History Museum. It says that the UK has an average of only 53 per cent of its natural biodiversity left, well below the global average of 75 per cent.

Worldwide, scientists warn that the variety of plant and animal life of earth is dwindling fast. It will have a serious impact on human life: "those systems have lost enough to mean that we have to be careful about relying on them functioning in the way that we need them to."

from Parish Pump

OP26 was the most significant climate summit since Paris in 2015. The measures outlined in the COP26 Glasgow Climate Pact are critical if we are to set a course to keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees.

Members of churches, in the UK and further afield, have been campaigning in advance of COP26 to ensure that topics such as paying for the loss and damage cause by climate disasters were on the agenda for the Glasgow summit. So what ultimately was achieved?

- New language was agreed by all on coal, oil and gas to signal that fossil fuels have had their day.
- There was a luke-warm commitment from nations to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.
- The total pledges made so far, if met, sets the world on course to a disastrous warming of 2.4 degrees.[1]
- The long-promised \$100bn/year of climate finance is in sight (expected by 2023), but the cold reality is that much more than this will be required.

There was agreement that governments will work together on the implementation of a loss and damage mechanism. But there was pushback from some major donors (for example, the US) on providing additional funding for this area.

The completion of the 'Paris Rulebook' gives greater confidence that governments might be prevented from using creative accounting when reporting their actual carbon emissions against their pledges.

When you look at the cumulative picture, actual tangible progress is far too slow. Worryingly, it is difficult to see where the landing zone might be for negotiations over quantities of finance for mitigation and the stronger targets necessary on the part of large emitters in Asia, Africa or Central/Southern America (as well as the US).

However, a sense of urgency was evident at COP26 and this was reflected in some of the outcomes. Consequently, it will be more difficult to park issues for years into the future, or to claim (as some governments

are tempted to do) that there is no need for a further review of a nation's targets for five years. Instead, all governments have been urged to review their contributions by 2022 in the light of the overall deficit. There are now a number of new initiatives on the agenda for COP27 in Egypt next year, including the funding of compensation for loss and damage.

In summary, COP26 has put in place a whole new architecture for taking forward the Paris agreement and pledges. But, like investments, the value of negotiated agreements can go down as well as up. Willingness to collaborate is key. COP27 next year is now even more critical and there is more on the agenda than was the case just a few weeks ago.

For fuller coverage go to : <https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>

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## **Conversion of St Paul**

January is a month of the beginning of great things! As well as the naming of the Son of God, we celebrate the conversion of the greatest ever apostle of the Christian faith. Many books have been written on Paul, and here is the briefest of introductions.

He was a Jew, born as 'Saul' at Tarsus, and brought up by the rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee. A devout, fanatical Jew, Saul persecuted the Christians, and watched with satisfaction the first Christian martyrdom, the stoning of Stephen. Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Christ that stopped him in his tracks. He realised that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was in fact the Messiah for whom he had longed.

Saul changed overnight. He was given a new name, Paul, and became an evangelist for the cause of Christ. He became a leader in the early Church, and his special calling was as an apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote epistles to the young churches that he founded – and thus, inadvertently, wrote a great part of the New Testament.

Life as the greatest apostle was hardly full of perks: Paul was stoned, beaten, mobbed, homeless, hated, imprisoned, and finally martyred. Tradition has it that he was beheaded in Rome during the persecution of Nero in 64AD, and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands. His mighty faith in Christ has kindled similar belief in many hundreds of millions of people down the centuries.

# How Father Christmas got where he is today

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. These days he seems to frequent shopping malls and garden centres. If he looks tired, just remember that he has been around a long time and gone through a lot of transformations.



Father Christmas wasn't always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Nicholas was a serious theologian: he was a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. He even, reportedly, slapped another bishop in a squabble over the exact nature of the Trinity.

Nicholas died in Myra about AD343, but the stories of his generosity and kindness were just beginning. One enduring tale tells of the three girls whom he rescued from certain prostitution by giving them gold for their dowries. When the father confronted him to thank him, Nicholas said he should thank God alone.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character. Meanwhile, Dutch and German settlers had taken him to America with them as Sinter Klaas and Sankt Nicklas.

It was in America that Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom. The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, turned from his life-work of writing a Hebrew/English lexicon, to write a fun poem for his children one Christmas. His 'The Visit of St Nicholas' is now universally known by its first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'.

From Clement Moore we discovered that St Nicholas is round and pink-cheeked and white-bearded, and that he travels at night with sleigh, reindeer and a sack of toys on his back. It was Clement Moore who



also revealed that St Nicholas enters houses down chimneys and fills children's stockings with toys and sweets.

So how did we find out that Father Christmas wears red? That was the US Coca-Cola advertising campaign of 1931, who finally released the latest, up-to-date pictures of Father Christmas: wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt.

These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol. In order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound. For all those of us who are already exhausted just rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.

from Parish Pump

### *The New Year*

*If we put our hand in God's hand  
As we enter this New Year  
Not knowing what the future holds  
But that our Friend is near*

*We shall not fear what lies ahead  
If He is by our side,  
Nor wander from the pathway  
If He will be our guide.*

*The Sinless One from heaven came  
To dwell with us on earth,  
He sought and bought us with His blood  
And offered us new birth.*

*Now as we travel through this year  
He knows the things He's planned,  
So let us trust and know just this –  
Our times are in His hands.*

*by Megan Carter*

# The Ealing Charity Christmas Card Shop

The title is set against a background of red Christmas ornaments. One ornament on the right contains the text 'CHRISTMAS STAMPS ON SALE', and another on the left contains '100% OF CARD PRICE GOES TO CHARITY'.

CHRISTMAS  
STAMPS  
ON SALE

100% OF  
CARD PRICE GOES  
TO CHARITY

CHURCH OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR  
EALING BROADWAY, W5 2XA (OPPOSITE M&S)  
OPEN 9TH NOVEMBER UNTIL 18TH DECEMBER  
MONDAY TO SATURDAY 10.00 - 4.00

**Coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous  
(Albert Einstein)**

16 Dec - 31 Dec 21



## **The Questors Theatre Snow White**

by Ben Crocker

**Ealing's Annual Pantomime Returns!**

When Snow White's angelic beauty is deemed the fairest in the land, her menacing stepmother, the Evil Queen, is overcome with jealousy. On escaping death's clutches, Snow is offered shelter in the woods by some friendly faces. But will the machinations of her Evil Stepmother stop there? Oh no they won't...

Come along for a good boo, hiss and cheer at Ealing's Annual Christmas Pantomime, back at The Questors Theatre for the first time in 24 months! The Dame is dusting off her best frock, for a celebration like never before.

COVID Measures: our Playhouse is working at a reduced capacity - rows 39-56 will be socially distanced, in bubbles of 4, 3, 2 & 1. If you would prefer a socially distanced seat, we strongly recommend booking longer in advance. Distanced seats can be selected when you book your ticket. We ask that you please wear a mask when entering our building and when watching a play. Thank you.

Running time: 2hrs 15min (including interval)  
£20 for adults; £10 for children (up to 16); £48 for 2 adults & 2 children OR 1 adult & 3 children.

# Nottingham Knockers

Please warn your neighbours, particularly elderly or vulnerable neighbours, not to open the door to strangers to buy on the doorstep. Some doorstep callers may offer poor quality goods at inflated prices and if a caller is not genuine, they may be gathering information for future crime. Please keep in mind that if cold callers don't get any sales in your area, they are less likely to return.



## How they work

The sellers may say that they are on a “rehabilitation course” arranged by probation services or other organisations trying to find people work. This is not the case and often they are known criminals. Probation services do not run such schemes.

They may show a card which claims to be a “Pedlars Licence” or work permit. This is not valid and they are breaking the law if they are using anything like this.

They may also hand over a card saying they are deaf or dumb.

According to the police, the bag of household products is supplied by someone who employs them (originally a man from Nottingham – hence the name), but now they are recruited from anywhere. The lads are supplied with a full bag of household products (including the typical tea-towels!) and charged a minimal sum for the contents– it used to be £35. They can keep whatever they make, above this amount.

Usually they are deposited in an area from a transit van and given a list of streets to work. An hour or so later they are picked up and dropped off in another location. They often work from 9am to 9pm.

They will knock on a door, offering cleaning items which they know are cheap and of very poor quality; the householder also knows they are rubbish but that is part of the scam. Many people will purchase items and pay them something, just to get rid of them. There have been cases of elderly residents handing over large sums as these lads can be very persistent and confrontational.

The price for whatever has been purchased usually comes to a note – usually £10. The householder disappears to get this – this is when the scam begins, according to the police. When the note is handed over, the lad examines the condition and how long it took the person to get it. If it is crumpled, they accept it and move on. If it is crisp flat and new – they are much more interested and may engage the person in more conversation, to obtain details about them. As they leave they will smell the note. If it is slightly musty – this is an indication that there is more in the property. Those addresses are noted. The addresses of elderly/vulnerable/gullible people are all noted.

These are handed to the employer and there is a small amount of cash handed over for each one. These addresses are then sold on. If there is a later break-in, the employer expects a further cut of the proceeds. These lists are purchased by all sorts of people including – tarmacers, tree workers, roofers, dodgy builders etc., and can be shared quite easily. Once on a list, your address could be sold on and on. Hence the repeat nature of these persistent callers.

If they are in your area, please call the police immediately on 101 with a description of them and any associated vehicle they may be using.

from Thame Hub



The current edition of In Touch (December-February) Page 8 has a very good article, written by Kathleen Loveridge, about All We Can's work in Eastern Uganda concerning 'Change begins with a Bike'.





## Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill

The next concert in the Iris Axon Concert Series at Acton Hill is on Sunday 5th December at 4.00pm. Poppy Beddoe (clarinet) will be accompanied by Roelof Temmingh (piano) in works by Brahms, Schubert, Fauré and Bach. "We feel that the clarinet lends itself beautifully to imitating the voice.

We have chosen some of our favourite lieder to accompany the transcription of the Bach Chaconne. We want to display the various imitative qualities of the instrument."

Programmes at the door

£5.00 concessions, £6.00 adults, £2.00 children.



## What? No Toilet? It's not a joke – or is it!



Did you know that about one in every three people do not have a clean, safe toilet? The United Nations say that 4.2 billion people do not have a clean toilet and that 673 million people practise open defecation. It might sound like a trivial fact, but it is a very serious problem. That's why on 19 November, WaterAid and UN-Water are promoting the campaign to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to a clean, safe and private toilet by 2030. On World Toilet Day they are hoping to boost their campaign through using 'toilet' humour and comedy to break down the awkwardness of the subject and to get the movement flowing!

School students in the UK are being encouraged to tweet - using hashtags #WorldToiletDay and #ItsNoJoke - riddles, puns, and jokes to make a splash about World Toilet Day. They are also asking teachers to give a number one lesson on taps and toilets!

The serious aim is to reduce human waste by giving everyone access to clean toilets that will lead to making the world a safer place for everyone.

**- I know God loves everybody, but I don't think he's met my sister. (From a six-year old)**



## Dear volunteer

We really need some new drivers to join our team - can you help or maybe you know someone who can?

### The roles

Picking up donations from Ealing supermarkets on a Wednesday morning and delivering to our warehouse in Hanwell

Picking up from our warehouse in Hanwell mid morning and delivering to our centres - Monday (Greenford), Tuesday (Northolt), Wednesday (Perivale)

Volunteers need to use their own large capacity car or small van and be able to lift crates of food.

Please ask anyone interested to contact me to discuss or they can go to our website and register their interest in the 'Give Help' section.

Ealing Foodbank  
07802 560469

Many thanks  
Hilary Padmore

