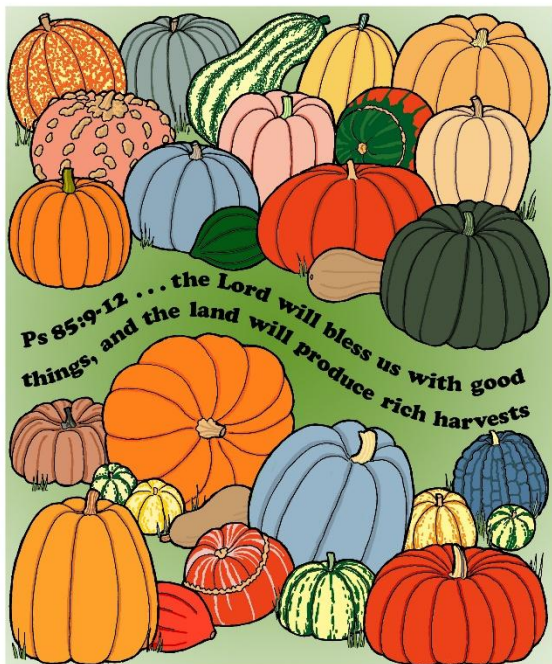


WINCHESTER NEWS

OCTOBER 2025



Winchester Road Methodist Church
Winchester Road, Highams Park London, E4 9JP

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Group: Winchester Road Methodist Church

Letter from our Minister

Dear Friends,

October sees in the autumnal weather and colours. It is a time of change and, to some, a time of slowing down. The long warm days are fading away and the colder weather is creeping in. The expectation of us needing to be outside to enjoy the sunlight and warmth is turning into more of an understanding that, like some other creatures, now is the time to start preparing for some sort of hibernation as we look towards colder temperatures and longer nights. I am already relishing the thought of warm soups, freshly baked bread and cosying up in a blanket with a hot chocolate in the evening.

The shops are already stocking up for Christmas, and yet, before that, there is Hallowe'en which has become an important date on peoples' calendars.

I grew up in Somerset, not far from Glastonbury which is well known for its culture around witchcraft, both past and present. We visited a few times and when we did, it was noticed that there was a strange 'coldness' around the town which seemed to mirror the emphasis of the local culture. At school I was quite naïve and was invited by my friends to join in with a Ouija board in the toilets. Apparently, it didn't want me there, so I left. I went away thinking that it was my friends who had decided they didn't want me. I felt lonely and dejected. When I got home from school I asked mum what a Ouija board was and was warned off as she had seen the power of evil spirits in her schooldays as some children tampered with one. A boy, just walking in the playground suddenly fell over and his leg was broken. There was nothing to trip on, and mum saw it from where she was. The next day I went back and told my friends I wanted nothing to do with it and they should stop.

When I was young, our church held what are now called 'parties of light'. A counter-cultural event which does not focus upon the evils of All Hallows Eve, but on the celebration of the faithful who have gone before us. In so doing, we celebrate the power of good over evil, and light over darkness. Some churches celebrate this today.

After having eggs thrown at my front door one Hallowe'en because I did not answer it, I have come to fear the event. So now, I try to turn my fear into hope. I package up bags with sweets in but also add a Christian leaflet about Easter or Christmas and leave them in a box on the doorstep. The children have fun choosing a coloured bag, and it adds to the mystery of what's inside.

Like the natural seasons, there are also spiritual seasons. From experience I have learnt that seemingly negative things, like Autumn, can bring its own delights. I have also learnt that being in the company of the wrong sort of people, can lead to negative and quite dangerous spiritual experiences. But being with the right friends can be uplifting and positive.

As with those children who make the decision to come up my garden path to collect a bag with unknown contents, so, we must make decisions about the way in which we turn. Are we bold enough to follow our instincts and, unbeknown to us, receive a gift from God? Or do we follow our need for acceptance by those friends who are walking a path which leads away from God, the one which brings up feelings of rejection and loss?

We can choose to walk whichever way, but only one path leads to love and hope. Only one path leads to light. God invites you to make the choice which leads to Christ. To join in celebrating the lives lived in Christian faith, and to learn from those stories which others have to offer you.

With our soups, stews and hot chocolates, let us thank God for light eternal and the exciting walk up the path to the gift that is given to us in Jesus Christ.

Blessings and prayer.

Rev Stephanie

Peter Hudson who was minister at Winchester in the 1990's has recently died. Peter was instrumental in setting up 'Care', and particularly Christmas Inn. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Services

Sun. 5th October: 10.30 Harvest Festival. Parade and All Age Worship.
Led by Rev. Mike Long (Please see p11 for details of donations.)

Sun. 12th October: 10.30 Led by Millicent Aquah

Sun. 19th Oct: - Led by Peter Dawe

Sun. 26th October: Communion led by Rev. Stephanie Njeru

Church Flowers:

Oct. 12th - in loving memory of Meg and Mr & Mrs McSweeney

Oct. 19th - in loving memory of Martin Dawe (Janet & Peter's son)

Oct. 26th - in loving memory of Ken Seaman



Our Young Church on Sunday

There are activities for the under 3's in the church, by the Hub. Those over 3 go out for sessions in Room 2 and the Hub. Currently, the older group, Biscuit Club, only meet by arrangement, but weekly provision provides for those aged 3-14 in Cookie Club.

The service starts at 10.30 and there is a children's action song before the young people go to their groups. It is a video which children and those 'young at heart' can learn and join in with during the month. So come early!



What's On !

Friday Coffee Mornings 10 – 12 am Tea, coffee and biscuits in the Hub. (Term time only). These coffee mornings raise money for various charities. Last term £226 was raised for the Children's Cancer Trust. The charity for this term is Haven House.

3 Generate 3rd – 5th October: A group of 17 young people from the circuit, including three young people from Winchester, will be attending the weekend in Birmingham this year. We keep them in our prayers and hope to hear all about the weekend later in the year.

New Circuit Groups for Youth (13-18) and Young Adults (18 – 35)

For information contact Zak Njeru – 0745802244 /
pastoralmethodist@gmail.com)

Activities at Debden Trinity – Mannock Drive IG10 2JD

11th Oct. Harvest Bonfire – 5-7pm: (Please book)

12th Oct. Brick Church Harvest(with Lego): 4-5 pm

Booking forms at: linktr.ee/trinitychurchdebden

Black History Month: There will be a wide range of activities at Chingford Mount throughout October. Pick up a programme at 228 Chingford Mount Road or visit chingfordmount.co.uk/events.

Sunday 12th October 4pm - Valentine Singers: An afternoon of classical and traditional music from around the world. St Anne's Church, 200a Larkshall Road, E4 6NP Tickets <https://highamspark.london/event/valentine-singers/>

Action for Children

If you have an 'Action for Children' collection box these need to be returned to church by the end of October. Please give them to Grace Hall or a steward.



WINCHESTER ROAD CHRISTMAS BAZAAR:
SATURDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2025

Now that it feels like Autumn, it's a good time to start preparing for this year's Christmas Bazaar which is on Saturday 22nd November. As always, I have a list of the items that we are starting to collect.

The offers of help with the preparation (and clear up) are just as important as the physical donations of items. I have included the dates and times that we would love some extra people to be able to help with, even if you can just give us an hour of your time.

If you have items to donate then I can collect them at church on Sundays, or come at see me at Brownies on Mondays (6.00 - 7.30).

Donations Needed	
New and Nearly New Items	We will be running a 'Christmas Gifts' stall again this year. Please bring any items to the church.
Second Hand Toys, including soft toys	Please bring items to the church
Cakes	Please see Sarah Hayward with details of anything you are prepared to make or donate for the cake stalls.
Books	Please bring these to church at any point, and leave with the bookstall. Especially good quality paper backs.
Christmas Jumpers	We are collecting Christmas jumpers & PJs (any Christmas clothing) for our pre-loved stall this year. Please bring these along to the church by Sunday 16 th November.
Jewellery	Please give to Sarah Hayward, or Alex Fletcher

Volunteers for help	
Sunday 26 th October (after church)	People to help with sorting the items that have been donated and start putting up the decorations (lunch will be provided)
Friday 21 st Nov 9am till 11am	We need 2-3 able-bodied people to help move all of the items downstairs to the stalls.
Saturday 22 nd Nov 9.30am to 3.30pm	Volunteers to help serve on the stalls where needed. We have a few stalls that are in need of some additional support – even 1 hour is helpful.
Saturday 22 nd Nov at 3.15pm	Help to take down tables, take down the grotto, move items upstairs and generally clear up for approximately 2 hours (the more people that help, the faster we are!)

Sarah Hayward - winchesterchristmasbazaar@gmail.com



Christmas is coming.....so it's pudding time! I shall be making Christmas puddings again this year with proceeds to the Church. They are suitable for vegetarians and I have also found a nice gluten and

dairy free recipe. They can be microwaved or steamed to reheat. I can make a variety of sizes. Should you be interested then please place your order with me either personally; by text or phone. 07590574801 or by email on maureenduncan@mac.com.



Wear out

Three little boys were bragging about how tough they were. "I'm so tough," said the first boy, "that I can wear out a pair of shoes in a week."

"Well," said the second little boy, "I'm so tough, I can wear out a pair of jeans in a day."

"That's nothing," said the third boy. "When my parents take me to see my grandma and grandpa, I can wear them out in just one hour."

Harvest Thoughts

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless,
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss’d cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core.”

These are the familiar opening lines of John Keats poem ‘**To Autumn**’ written in September 1819, a year before his death at the age of 25, following a walk along the banks of the River Itchen near Winchester. In the first stanza Keats celebrates the harvest and the ripeness and plumpness of fruit. In Britain the harvest is celebrated in late summer or early autumn in Methodist Churches, though its character and relationship with agriculture and our food supply has changed over the years.



In 1844 Rev. Henry Alford, the Anglican Rector of a parish in rural Buckinghamshire, wrote a joyful hymn which called on people to give thanks to God for the harvest which meets all our needs. Many churches will include this popular hymn in their Harvest Thanksgiving Service.

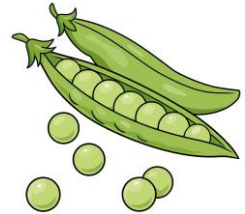
*“Come, ye thankful people, come, Raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in, Ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied;
Come to God’s own temple, come; Raise the song of harvest home!”*

Henry Alford devotes the last two verses of his hymn to the Parable of the Tares (weeds) God’s Day of Judgement in Mathew’s Gospel

“Gather all your people in, free from sorrow free from sin.” (Matthew 13 v 24-30 and v36-43. This chapter also includes the familiar Parable of the Sower v 1-9,18-23)

A Harvest hymn which is lodged in my memory translated from a lengthy hymn by the German Poet Matthias Claudius reminds us of God's active role in the harvest. *"We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand,* and its chorus: *All good gifts around us, are sent from heaven above ; then thank the Lord, O thank the lord, for all his love."* (StF130)

The War of 1939-45 interrupted the importation of food from abroad. As two thirds of our food was imported, rationing was introduced, and British farmers were urged to increase production. The Government introduced a 'Dig for Victory Campaign' which encouraged householders to grow food in their gardens to help make up for the shortage. My father dug up the lawn and flower bed which occupied the bottom third of our garden and grew fruit bushes, salad crops peas, runner beans and potatoes. Our neighbours who were more enterprising kept chickens. During the war years allotments devoted to vegetable growing became popular.



It became the custom for churches to be decorated with flowers and the fruits of harvest from home and abroad, crops more meaningful in rural churches. As children we hoped to see the apples lodged between the organ pipes fall on the organist as he played. A loaf of bread was included in the display to represent a basic food in our diet. Sometimes a special loaf, shaped like a sheaf of wheat, was ordered from the baker or a lump of coal to praise the harvest that's quarried and mined (see hymn StF 126). Some churches also held a Harvest Supper, a social gathering for a simple meal often with musical entertainment.

A Collect to be read at the Harvest Service is printed in the Methodist Worship Book (page 562) to be read at the service:

"Bountiful God, you entrust your creation to our care.
Grant us grace to order our common life
That we may use your gifts to your glory, for the relief of those in need
and for our own well-being through Jesus Christ our Lord."



During the war the importation of bananas was stopped to allow refrigerated ships to be used for the import of essential foods and 'mock banana' recipes using parsnips and sugar were published. There were great celebrations when the wartime restrictions were lifted after the war.

After the second World War, population growth and the demand for a more varied diet led to pressure on farmers to produce more, encouraging the use of fertilisers and chemicals to eradicate weeds and pests and hence the character of farming changed. With commercialisation of farming in mind the poet Laureate, John Betjeman parodied the ploughing hymn.

*"We spray the fields and scatter, the poison on the ground
So that no wicked wildflowers, upon our farm be found.
We like whatever helps us, to line our purse with pence
The twenty-four-hour broiler house, and neat electric fence."*

Quite a different message can be found in the modern hymns which in addition to thanking God for his creation there is an emphasis on meeting the needs of others. For example, StF 124 For the fruits of all creation by Fred Pratt Green.

*"In our worldwide task of caring, for the hungry and despairing
In the harvests we are sharing God's will is done."*

Allen Steel October 2025

Harvest Donations

At our Harvest service on October 5th, we will be collecting donations for Whitechapel Mission. They serve breakfast daily and need dry and tinned items such as cereal, ketchup & brown sauce, baked beans, tinned tomatoes, coffee, honey, peanut butter, chocolate spread, sugar, salt & pepper.

Christmas Inn Event and Transport Co-Ordinator E4 9JP

Winchester Road Methodist Church is hiring an Events Co-ordinator for the annual Christmas Inn lunch on held on Christmas Day.

Churches in Highams Park run a Christmas Day event for anyone living in Waltham Forest who would otherwise be on their own on Christmas day. The event is held at **Winchester Road Methodist Church** and includes 2 sittings of a Christmas Lunch and one sitting of an afternoon Tea, with entertainment in between. It is run by a large group of volunteers, but this year, we are seeking to recruit a temporary, paid Co-Ordinator who, would hopefully, be available to fulfil the roles in future years as well.

As the Event Co-Ordinator you will:

- co-ordinate the entire preparation for the event, including sending out invitations to guests, and letters to volunteers,
- co-ordinate responses from the invitees and volunteers,
- preparing and co-ordinate the transport arrangements for guests.
- You are required to be present to co-ordinate volunteers on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

This is a temporary, part-time role:

Immediate start of 5 hours per week till end of November.

Minimum 5 hours per week in early December and 15 hours during the week prior to Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve 5 hours. Christmas Day 9 hours.

Salary: £15.50 per hour (increasing to £23.25ph on Christmas Eve and £31.00ph on Christmas Day).

Closing date for applications: 5pm on Wednesday 8th October

Interviews: Monday 13th October

For Further information and an application pack, contact Pat Ovenden:

patricia.ovenden@gmail.com



OUR MISSION

We are a church at the heart of Highams Park which seeks to discern and follow God's direction. Our aim is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour through the life of the church and outreach to the community. We promote worship and fellowship enabling us to grow towards God. We are an inclusive church where all are welcome.

OUR STEWARDS: Senior Steward: Janet Dawe

Stewards: Pat Ovenden and Hazel Mathews Carol & Dumisami Moyo

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM: - led by Jean Norton

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

by Monday 20th October - jdent7@gmail.com or **07751603883**

Printed copies of the newsletter, in black and white, are available in church. Should you wish to make a donation towards the printing costs please put your donation, in an envelope, in one of the boxes at the doors of the church.

This newsletter is available to download as a PDF from our website. It can also be emailed to you in full colour. Contact Jan Dent, as above.