

WINCHESTER NEWS

JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2026



All ready for Christmas Day

Winchester Road Methodist Church

Winchester Road, Highams Park London, E4 9JP

Minister: Rev Stephanie Njeru

Email: Stephanie.njeru@methodist.org.uk

Tel: Church 020 8531 8663

Mobile: 07458 050833 / Landline: 020 8279 2380

www.winchesterroadchurch.org.uk



Group: Winchester Road Methodist Church

Letter from our Minister

Happy New Year!

I hope you were able to celebrate well. I wonder whether you stayed up especially to welcome in the new year, or whether you preferred to try and get some sleep amongst all the fireworks and revelry. Our family went outside to greet others in the street and, as soon as we opened the door, were greeted with what seemed like a wall of smoke from the fireworks outside on the road.

Sometimes the new year, the new start, is a reflective and subconscious step further away from a loved one which has passed. Other people may wholeheartedly bounce into the mantra 'A new year, a new me', you may be one.

Whatever our thoughts and feelings, there are many companies and organisations trying to cash-in on resolutions and new mindsets. There are discounts on gym memberships and adverts for diets and weight loss theories. Furniture is still on sale, and gadgets for a healthy lifestyle. But all the Christmas leftover chocolate stocks are also on sale, as are the Easter eggs now!

Life can seem full of opposites and dilemmas, spiritual, emotional and financial. Sometimes it is easy to see what needs to happen, whilst at other times it is not so clear. Sometimes commitment may seem too burdensome or soul destroying if you know you are a person who gets despondent quickly and gives up easily.

It doesn't matter who you are, or who you think you are, though because God accepts and loves you. If you try something and then give it up, if you don't wish to start, or if you try and keep going at it, it doesn't matter.

At this time in the year, many people in Methodist churches renew a personal Covenant with God. We say that we understand God knows us and loves us and has the best in mind for us. We say that we want to strive to

become more caring and Christlike in our ways and words, and that we will try our best to follow God's path for our lives whether that path is easy or hard for us. By saying all this we are saying we want to be able to flourish as the person God created us to be.

So, whether you make resolutions, sleep through the fireworks, or are more reflective about new starts, I encourage you to think about your spiritual journey and what you need to do so that you can flourish within the love of God. Blessings for the new year. *Stephanie*

Rev Stephanie Njeru has pastoral oversight of Leyton Trinity, Lighthouse and Winchester Road Methodist Churches Forest Circuit (35/33)

Normal rest day Friday

Weekly Zoom Prayer Meeting - Mondays 12:30pm

Weekly Zoom Bible Study - Wednesdays 7:30pm

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8345484534?pwd=UTBwdWFBaG1qK0k3Yys2a0xiUEY1QT09>)

Both on: **Meeting ID: 834 548 4534 Passcode: 158039**

Services

Sun. 18th Jan.: 10.30 Led by Carole Merriman and Peter Richardson

Sun. 25th Jan. 10.30 Led by Adele and Mathew Bird

Sun. 1st Feb. 10.30 Led by Kath Leckey

Sun. 8th Feb. 10.30 Led by Cynthia Bonds

Sun. 15th Feb. 10.30 Local Arrangement

Sun. 22nd. Feb. 10.30 Communion Led by Rev. Stephanie Njeru

Covenant Prayer:

I am no longer my own but yours.

Your will, not mine, be done in all things, wherever you may place me, in all that I do and in all that I may endure; when there is work for me and when there is none; when I am troubled and when I am at peace.

Your will be done when I am valued and when I am disregarded; when I find fulfilment and when it is lacking; when I have all things, and when I have nothing.

I willingly offer all I have and aim to serve you, as and where you choose.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. May it be so for ever.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.

(See P.10 – for the Children’s Covenant Prayer)

Church Flowers:

Jan. 11th - in loving memory of Ann & Gerald Steiner

Jan. 18th - in loving memory of Lottie (Jan Dent’s Mum)

Feb. 1st - in loving memory of Joan & Jack Pegg (Barbara's parents)

Feb. 8th - in loving memory of Jean & Roy Viggers

Feb. 15th - in loving memory of Dorothy Barr



Christmas Inn was very successful with 80 guests on Christmas Day and 50 volunteers over the 3 days. (See front cover)

Our Church Family



Joan Taylor: We are sorry to announce the death of Joan Taylor on 16th December. Joan and Ron were active members of Winchester for many years, running the book stall and Joan as a steward and Pastoral Leader. Joan was in a care home but until recently enjoyed coming to services when she could. She also enjoyed visits from younger members of our church. Our thoughts are with Sharon, Gary, David and Beth and Micha. A Thanksgiving service was held at church on 9th January.

Congratulations:- Annmarie and Nick Moseley are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter, Sophie, to Mr. Archie Henry. Archie proposed whilst they were on holiday in Scotland in October last year. Sophie and Archie met when they were both students at York university. They studied the same politics course together but did not really speak until the covid pandemic struck and university life drastically changed. Separated in different houses, Archie sometimes brought shopping to Sophie and her friends and later, they began to go out walking together.

They are now living in Ruislip, West London. They plan to move closer to Sophie's sister, Jess and her fiancé Jack, whose flat is in Twickenham. Wedding plans may then follow in 2027!

Phil & Penny Borkett, former members at Winchester, sent Good Wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Their letter is available to read in the church.

HILLS OF THE NORTH REJOICE

Many of my readers, like me, can quote the opening words of the preface to the old Methodist Hymn Book declaring that *‘Methodism was born in song’* but I have to admit that I miss having a hymnbook to hold and sing from. I have become used to singing from the words on the TV screens. With familiar hymns I need neither book nor screen, as the words are safely stored in my memory, though I must cope with the changes made by the editors of the new ‘Singing the Faith’ hymns. Minor changes made for changes in meaning, or old-fashioned words, do not bother me e.g. such as the first line of Charles Wesley’s widely popular hymn / carol **Hark the Herald Angels sing** which was originally Hark **how the welkin rings**. Welkin was an old word which described the **heavens**.

At two advent services we joined in singing the hymn **Hills of the North Rejoice** and I found myself singing the last two lines of verse one from memory: -

‘Though absent long your Lord is nigh He judgement brings and victory’
(MHB 815)

While the rest of the congregation were singing the words on the screen *‘Christ comes in righteousness and love, He brings salvation from above.’*
(StF 172)

This led me to look up the origins of this hymn, which was written by Charles Oakley, an Anglican priest who was born in 1832. After studying at Oxford University, he served as an Anglican Parish Priest in Gloucestershire and as an army chaplain during the Crimean War. Sadly, he died at the young age of 33, after three short years as Vicar of St Paul’s Church Covent Garden, London. You can find this hymn at MHB 815 or Singing the Faith 172. Each verse of his hymn begins with a description of each of the four compass points of the world to whom Christ was revealed.



*Hills of the **North** rejoice river and mountain
spring valley and lowland sing.*



*Isles of the **Southern** Seas, deep in your coral caves pent be each warring breeze, lulled be your restless waves. After the opening line the new version is changed to 'sing to the listening earth carry on every breeze hope of a world's new birth'.*

*'Lands of the **East** awake, soon shall your sons be free', which the new version makes more positive with an exclamation mark 'Lands of the east arise!'*

Telling us that, *'He your brightest morn'*; In the original version this verse also includes some dodgy geography describing the east as having *'far hills long cold and grey'*.

Reaching our corner of the planet, Oakley identifies the area as, *'Shores of the utmost **West**, Ye that have waited long, unvisited unblest.'* A view which I don't recognise. The verse breaks into swelling song with *'high raise the note that Jesus died yet lives and reigns the –Crucified!'*

This led the Editors of the 1932 Methodist Hymn Book to print the hymn in the Missions at home and abroad section whereas the new Singing the Faith places it in the Advent section. Both versions include the line, 'Hark to the Advent voice' the first verse, reminding us of Jesus Christ's Promised Return.

Allen Steel, January/February 2026



Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, grant us the desire to do only what pleases you, and the strength to do only what you command. Cleanse our souls, enlighten our minds, and inflame our hearts with your Holy Spirit, that we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

St Francis of Assisi, 1182 – 1226



BAZAAR 2025

Stall	Pre Bazaar	Bazaar	Post Bazaar	Grand Total
Admissions		£752.22		£752.22
Books	£470.43	£120.30		£590.73
Cake stall		£1,858.15		£1,858.15
Christmas Gifts - Nearly New		£616.60		£616.60
Christmas Jumpers		£205.75		£205.75
Donations		£96.48		£96.48
Jams & pickles		£1,320.41		£1,320.41
Janet Plants	£62.00			£62.00
Jewellery		£328.00		£328.00
New Toys		£341.40		£341.40
Raffle		£935.60		£935.60
Refreshments		£709.00		
Refreshments - Hub		£232.58		£941.58
Richards Woodcraft		£547.00		£547.00
Second Hand Toys		£725.46	£6.50	£731.96
Sharon - Embroidery	£250	£525.60		£775.60
Soft toys		£1,241.90		£1,241.90
Stationery		£1,631.10		£1,631.10
Vintage		£159.04		£159.04
Father Xmas - UOA		£570.00		£570.00
Sweets - UOA		£668.80	£145.00	£813.80
Tombolas /Lucky Dip - UOA		£767.94		£767.94
After Bazaar Sales - Various			£25.73	£25.73
	£782.43	£14,353.33	£177.23	£15,312.99

Thank you for making our bazaar such a success.

Next Bazaar- 28th November 2026

What's On

Circuit Groups for Youth (13-18) and Young Adults (18 – 35)
For information contact Zak Njeru – 0745802244

Youth Event- 31st January. (See back cover & p.10)

Friday Coffee Mornings 10 – 12 am Tea, coffee and biscuits in the Hub. (Term time only). These coffee mornings raise money for various charities. The charity for last term was Haven House. £204.10 was raised. The Christmas Day collection was also added to this. A total of £265 will be sent to Haven House.



Saturday Lunches

The next will be on: **Saturday 31st January**
Future Lunch Dates: **Saturday 7th February**
Saturday 14th March

These raise money for the church and other groups.

Janice and Maureen would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help by making cakes or helping on the Day.

A talk on the "Mercy Ships" to be given by Dr Leo Cheng.

Wednesday 21st January at 2.30pm

The National Trust (Woodford & District Centre)

All Saints Church Hall, Inmans Row, Woodford Green, IG8 ONH

The entrance fee is £3 but this would be refunded if you joined the Centre.

Xmas Cards Post Box Collected £225.00 for Brook Special School

Our Young Church

Youth Event

Don't Do Life Alone

London Methodist District Youth Day

Join us in person for a day full of fun, faith, and friendship! This youth day is all about coming together from Methodist Churches across London to know we're not doing life alone. Lunch will be provided. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements.

There will be activities, talks, and worship.

There will be three streams: Children aged 8+ at primary school, Youth aged 11+ at senior school, Young Adults 18 - 29

A group will be attending from the District. Any young people wishing to go please contact Rev. Stephanie Njeru or speak to Jan Dent

Children's Covenant Prayer:

Dear God, I belong to you, I want to do what you want

Help me to work for you, Go through difficulties for you

Love others for you, stand aside for you, be lifted up for you

Be humble for you, let me be full, let me be empty, let me be changed

I give everything I have to you, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

You are mine and I am yours.



Our Young Church (Cookie Club 3-14) meet every Sunday during the morning service. The oldest group, (Biscuit Club), meet by arrangement. We start in church at 10.30 and there is an action video, 'song of the month', with instruments available for the children.

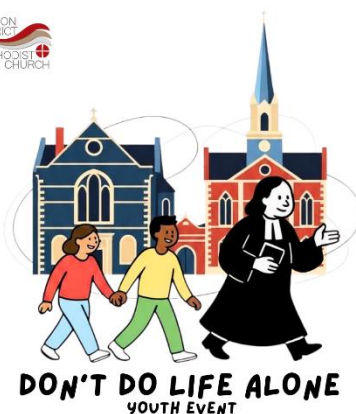
In our sessions we have biscuits, share news, and look at bible stories. We then enjoy activities including playing games, doing crafts, cooking, and singing.

Several of our Young Church families helped to introduce services during Advent with the liturgy. At our Carol Service three of our older members of Young Church provided the narration as the younger ones created a final tableau, after doing several circuits around the church!



Living God,
who knows and loves each one of us,
you have chosen us to share your promises.
Help us to practise kindness,
so that others may know Jesus' light in their lives.
Amen.





31ST OF JAN 2026
10AM - 4PM
WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC1Y 1AU
ALL 8YR-YOUNG ADULTS WELCOME!

See page 10 for more details

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 MARCH NEWSLETTER

by Tuesday 17th February - 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.