

WINCHESTER NEWS

DECEMBER 2022



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

 [@winroadmeth](https://twitter.com/winroadmeth)

 [Group: Winchester Road Methodist Church](https://www.facebook.com/WinchesterRoadMethodistChurch)

Services –December /January

Sun. 4th Dec. 10.30 (Advent 2) – Led by Cynthia Bonds

3pm 'Hurt to Hope' 30-minute service led by Revd Stephanie Njeru
This will be instead of our usual Bereavement Service and will be for all those who find Christmas a difficult time for whatever reason. The church will be open for private prayer from 2.30.

Sun. 11th Dec. 10.30-Communion(Advent 3) Led by Revd Fummey

4pm Carol Service Led by Peter Dawe (followed by refreshments in the Memorial Hall.)

Sun. 18th Dec. 10.30 – (Advent 4) Led by Gillian Farnfield

Sun. 25th Dec. 10.30 – (Christmas Day) Led by Samuel Ebden

Sun. 1st Jan. 10.30 – Communion Led by Revd. Tony Malcolm

Sun. 8th Jan. 10.30 -Led by Millicent Acquah

Sun. 15th Jan. 10.30 -Led by Kath Leckey

Sun. 22nd Jan. 10.30 – Covenant Service & communion

Led by Revd. Norman Grigg

Church Flowers:

Sun. 4th Dec In memory of Mr and Mrs Brooks (Sylvia's parents)

Sun.11th Dec, In memory of Pat and Bruce Yelland

Sun. 18th Dec. In memory of Margaret Watson

Sun. 25th Dec. In memory of John Dick and Laurie & Irene Dick.



Letter from our Minister

Dear Friends,

It is Advent already! Time seems, once again, to have flown by this year.

I'm sure most of us have had new challenges, and hopefully new joys also this year.

Advent is the Christian season of preparation before the coming light. The Light of the World, Jesus Christ is the anticipation of hope, joy and love begotten from God, born in human form so that we are guided more easily into a lifestyle of giving life and love ourselves.

There are many children practising Christmas carols ready to perform to parents and grandparents at school or nursery. Their enthusiasm to retell the story of our Saviour's birth to anybody who will listen is unrivalled, engaging, and infusive. It is hard to stand by and not smile.

It is the smile, the enthusiasm, the energy that I am wishing for you this year. The smile in the certain knowledge that Christ is coming, and coming to save us, so that we may enjoy the eternal feast. The enthusiasm to share this with others. Advent in itself is a gift from God, people in their full and vulnerable humanity need the reassurance that Christmas brings, and, with all the eyes upon the day of celebration, Christians have a ready-made path into conversation about faith.

I pray for energy for the youth leaders, teachers, parents and grandparents and other leaders needing to bring a presence of calm to ever increasingly excited young people!

With all the best wishes of the coming Light of the World, enjoy the journey of preparation

and the celebration of Emmanuel, God with us.

Rev Stephanie

Weekly Zoom Prayer Meeting - Mondays 12:30pm
Weekly Zoom Bible Study - Wednesdays 7:30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8345484534?pwd=UTBwdWFBaG1qK0k3Yys2a0xjUEY1QT09>

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

Landline: 0203 051 2874 United Kingdom

Can you help?

There is now only one Circuit Steward. This makes the Circuit unviable. We need at least six, so the Circuit Leadership team are asking for one Circuit Steward from each church. To enable this to happen, the local church will relieve them of local church duties. The link for the job description is: <https://forestcircuit.vpweb.co.uk/volunteer-job-descriptions>. The church also urgently needs people to help with a range of essential jobs, including; Church Stewards, Christian Aid (May), World Day of Prayer (Oct/March), Property Maintenance, Door Stewards, Flower Arranging.

Please speak to one of the stewards if you feel you can help.



Christmas Cards

The post box is in church. If you want to send cards to other people in the church, please make sure you put the full name on the envelope.

These will be distributed after the carol service on 11th December. Donations in lieu of postage will be given to 'Action for Children. If you prefer to write a large card to all, these can be put on the board that will be in the Hub.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas, with my hope that 2023 will bring you good health, good friends and many pleasant memories
With love Margaret Ruddock

What's On?

“Cuppa with a Copper” -Catch up on crime prevention advice & voice your concerns. Every Wednesday - 11am at Humphry's on the Park.

Sat. 3rd Dec. -Festive Market – Humphry's on the park - from 11am.
Hosting local businesses

Quiz - Sat. 3rd Dec.-St Edmunds in aid of Parkinson's. 7.00 for 7.30.
Tickets £8 including Ploughman's supper.

Sat. 3rd Dec. Felicitas Concert - Carols of the World

7.30 – The Abbey Church Waltham Abbey EN9 1DT

Featuring music from four continents and spanning six centuries, this will be a unique experience which you will not want to miss.

Tickets: £15 (£12 in advance) from:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/www.felicitas.org.uk

Sun. 11th Dec. Highams Park Christmas Fayre – 11.00 -5.00
Railway carpark and Signal Walk

17th December Saturday Coffee/ lunches.

Money raised will be donated to the Bible Society who provide bibles and other resources to groups, including the Ukrainian community who meet at our church. If you can help, please speak to Janice.

Cavendish Baptist Church - 18th Dec. Carol Service 4pm
-24th Dec. 11.30 pm. Communion Service

The World Day of Prayer - Friday 3rd March

All Saints Church – more information next month

This Christmas may we remember that Jesus came for all the world.



*When we celebrate, may we know that people all over the world are celebrating too. As we hear the nativity story, we pray for peace on earth and goodwill to all. **Amen***

"This was the baby that was born"

In the Bible only the Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell us in detail about the birth of Jesus and neither account tells us when during the year it occurred. Some scholars link it to the Solstice, which occurs on December 21 or 22nd, which was celebrated by the Romans as the 'rebirth of the sun and the lengthening of the day.' Suggesting that there is a link between the sun (which governs our lives) and the son (of God). This supposed pagan link was one reason why the Puritans tried to ban the celebration of Christmas as a festival in the 17th century. Most historians today favour the view that December 25th was identified in 221 as the date of Jesus' birth through complex reasoning by a supposed Libyan Traveller and Chronographer named Sextus Julius Africanus. The date was not widely recognised until the seventh century.

In the pre-reformation era people had to rely on their parish priest, monks or friars to tell them the good news about birth, life death and resurrection of Jesus. The Bible was a rare and precious document handwritten in Latin, the language of the church, which they did not understand, hence it was a closed book to them. The slow development of schools and the printing of books and pamphlets encouraged people to acquire the skill of reading. The King James Bible of 1611 written in English was at the forefront of this revolution in literacy. The great Medieval cathedrals and prosperous churches had Biblical stories which people could follow depicted in stained glass windows. Many parish churches had Biblical scenes painted on their walls to educate the worshippers, though sadly many were painted over by the zealous Puritans.

Another way in which the story of the life of Jesus reached people was through art and drama. This can be traced back to Italy in 1223 when St Francis of Assisi was inspired to recreate the scene of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem in a cave with animals, a manger for a crib and townspeople dressed to represent the key figures in the story. Francis then urged his fellow friars and the townspeople to view the scene and hear the story told to them. This is claimed to be the origin of the **Christmas Nativity Play** which is still an event in many churches and in primary schools which have Church of England origins. We have a memory of driving to rural Oxfordshire to hear one of our granddaughters dressed as an angel pointing to the crib and speaking the closing line of the school Nativity Play "***This is the baby that was born !***"

In England during the Middle Ages religious drama came out of the church into the community with the appearance of a cycle of what are called Mystery or /Miracle Plays. These were performed, probably on wagons, in the streets of such towns as York, Wakefield and Coventry usually by the Trade Guilds. Liberties were taken with the Bible story and comedy was introduced. The Shepherds Play included in the Wakefield Cycle begins with the Shepherds rescuing one of their sheep which was stolen and hidden in a manger by a drunken evil sheep stealing couple. Then the shepherds are told of the birth of Jesus and set off for Bethlehem to worship the child. I wonder if this inspired our Anglican Friends to parade the Christmas Story around the local streets accompanied by ponies, pausing to recreate verses from the Bible at different places.

A Nativity play, in some form, was included in the Christmas celebration at Churches, including Winchester Road, until the decline in the numbers attending young church and the effect of the Covid pandemic struck. **A Pop Up Nativity**, a less formal version of the Christmas story was introduced recently involving craft activities and the telling of the Christmas story concluding with the singing of verses from well-known carols. Some churches offered costumes so that the youngsters could choose to be participants in the Christmas story as it was told and so create a Christmas tableau. Many churches, and some shopping centres, still set up a **Christmas Crib** with figures depicting a Christmas Tableau. (See front cover)

Most churches, and some schools, hold a service or assembly with readings from the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and extracts from the gospel account of Jesus' birth sandwiched with the carols they inspired. Carols became popular during the nineteenth century, new ones were written, old ones were discovered, and polished and foreign or Latin ones translated. In 1880 Bishop Benson of Truro held a service of **Nine Lessons and Carols** which was taken up by Kings College Cambridge and is televised from there each Christmas.

Writing this article led me to the poem by John Betjeman entitled Christmas
*And is it true ? And is it true, This most tremendous tale of all
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue, A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea, Become a Child on earth for me?*

Allen Steel - December 2022



The Methodist Church launched its Christmas 2022 advert on 19 November across social media. As part of the wider *There is Room* Advent and Christmas campaign, Methodist churches and communities are able to take part by utilising the range of resources found online. The short advert follows five stories of people finding that there is room for them, amidst the struggles of life. It's aimed at those outside of the church and links to a campaign website thereisroom.co.uk, where people can choose the way they want to continue interacting. We're encouraging Methodist communities to share the advert with their friends and families and make use of the resources in their services and events throughout Advent and into Epiphany. Make sure you're following the Methodist Church on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) to help promote the campaign and share what your Methodist communities are up to by tagging us in your social media posts and by using #ThereIsRoom.

*Thank
You*

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Friday 30th Sept. - Coffee Morning at church and
Sat 1st Oct - cake sale in Holly Cres. We raised £450.
Thanks to all who made cakes and supported the
events. Pat Ovenden

Shoe boxes and JMA

We enjoyed a very interactive service on 6th November, in which the Shoe Boxes were dedicated, and certificates awarded to JMA (Junior Mission for All) collectors.

JMA total for the year was: £2,147.81

A total Of 181 shoeboxes were donated by
the church (129) and uniformed organisations (52)

Young Church

The Biscuit Club (11+) normally meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 10.30 and on the 4th Sunday from 5.30 – 7.00
Their next meeting will be 11th December at 10.30.

Cookie Club (3-11) start in church every Sunday and then go out to room 2 for a session. The service starts at 10.30.

Creche (under 3) There are toys and books, in the church, near the Hub for families to sit and let the children play. This means that parents can stay and enjoy the service, although the Well Room is available for use with additional toys.



As we go on our
Christmas journey,
may Jesus be with us.
Take us to new places to
hear about
how people celebrate
your birth.
Amen



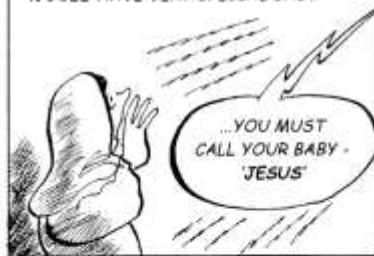
The First Christmas



JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE VERY SPECIAL BABY



MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE BY THE CENSUS.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL... THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE.



...WHICH IS WHERE THE BABY JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY. AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAS BEEN BORN.



*Lord Jesus Christ,
may we never cease
to wonder at your birth,
when heaven touched the earth
and you came
to be among us;
our Saviour and our God.*





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: Carole Merriman

Stewards: Carol & Dumisani Moyo, Pat Ovenden, Janet Dawe, Samuel Ebden

OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM: - led by Jean Norton

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER
by Tuesday 19th December jdent7@gmail.com

This newsletter is available to download as a PDF from our website.