Wonford Methodist Church



Contact Newsletter December 2023 / January 2024

(No: 525)

Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)

www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk

A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends

Quite a stir has been caused by this year's Christmas ad from Marks and Spencers. Normally such commercials are intended to give you a warm fuzzy feeling and encourage you to see whatever product it is an essential element of a good Christmas. This M&S advert, on the other hand is, to my mind, quite mad. If you haven't seen it, you probably will at some point, but it basically consists of a group of people eschewing traditional festive activities in favour of their own individual preferences. Many viewers of the ad have indicated that they will take this message to heart by forgoing the purchase of M&S Christmas products in favour of something cheaper, so it may have been a bit of an advertising own goal....

Funny though isn't it, how Christmas is becoming whatever we want it to be? I'm the midst of all this, we need to offer the world something more than a vague message about peace and goodwill. We need to remind ourselves, and others, that what we call the Christmas story is not a story at all but a fact. God did take upon himself human flesh, was born of a virgin, and around thirty three years later, was executed. Then rose from the dead and appeared to His followers and is still around today. Because it is in these facts that we find an invitation. An invitation to believe, to awaken our faith to God's presence and action to be brought into a real living relationship with this same God. This means the opposite of what Marks and Spencers are telling us. Salvation lies in giving up living for ourselves and offering our lives to the God we meet in Christ. This changes our lives in the present and gives us a certain hope of a glorious future when God untangles the knots of history and puts everything the right way up. This is the true joy of which Christmas is just the beginning and if we don't communicate the whole lot, we're short changing people. Before that though, we need to fully believe it ourselves, staking our lives upon it, and giving thanks for it all every day of our lives. The gospel is for life, not just for Christmas!

Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2024

God Bless Rev Ben Haslam

Coffee Rota

December 2023

3rd	Alison H & Jenny S
10th	Terry & Alf
17th	Linda & Mervyn
24th	No Coffee
25th	No Coffee

31st David P

January 2024

7th	Alison H & Jenny S
14th	Linda & Mervyn
21st	Margaret D
28th	Melanie

Thank you for all those who have helped with teas & coffees in 2023. If you are interested in becoming a regular on the rota or just helping out occasionally see Melanie Westcott.

Roundabout Café

The Roundabout Café will meet on:

Tuesday December 12th

Christmas Morning



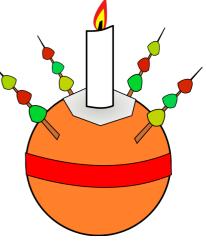
Tuesday January 16th

Talk 'North of the Arctic Circle' with John Tucker

We meet from 10.00am until noon with coffee, cake and good company. Everyone is welcome.

Christingle Service

There will be a Christingle workshop and short service at Wonford Methodist Church on Sunday December 3rd 2023 at 4pm. Come and join in the activity of creating your own Christingle and then celebrate the coming of Jesus into this world during a short service. Light refreshments available. Everyone is welcome!



Monika

Wonford Welcome Drop-in - Saturday Mornings.

There have been some changes made to Wonford Welcome for the winter months (November to March) but the warm welcome remains the same! It is now open longer, finishing at 12.30pm, and hot food is served at 12pm.

On the second Saturday of each month this will be a free two-course community meal.

Free hot drinks and biscuits are available and the following activities will be taking place:

December 2nd : Making Christmas cards

December 9th: Two course meal

December 16th: Christmas party

December 23rd: Closed

December 30th: Monthly Games morning

January 6th: Quiz about firsts/new beginnings

January 13th: Two-course community meal

January 20th: Monthly Games morning

January 27th: Resuscitation/Defibrillator use training with Jays Aim

Please come along and bring your friends, neighbours and family!

Sue, Rose, Paul, Monika, Mandy, Liz. Lisa, Helen and Alison



CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND

Wonford Welcome

Saturday Drop-in with free tea, coffee and biscuits

Chat over a cuppa or join in with board games, quizzes, art/craft etc

Every Saturday 10.30am to 12.30pm Wonford Methodist Church (opposite Lidl)

Hot Food served at 12pm

Everyone welcome!

Please note that children must be accompanied by an adult

Wonford Welcome will be closed on December 23rd

LAMPS presents bread & starlight at Wonford Methodist Church

The **Methodist** Church The story of Elizabeth... a grown-up pause for breath before Christmas

SUN 10TH DEC 5^{PM} TICKETS £8 ADV/£10 DOOR/£5 CHILD

www.facebook.com/WonfordMethodistChurch www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk

Here Is The News

In the 1940's, the rampaging German army advanced with devastating speed into France; reports back to England suggested an invasion was very close. When Churchill rose to deliver his speech to a crowded Commons, he spoke 6 words very slowly and deliberately, "The news from France is bad!"

Likewise the news from Israel is frightening, with the dreadful possibility of escalation. As I write, over a million Palestinians are penned together in Southern Gaza, with no food, water, electricity or even a roof over their heads. Israelis too in Northern Israel have been evacuated from their villages. Meanwhile, Putin relentlessly pursues his offensive against the people of Ukraine with war crimes galore.

What can we say as Christians? It's hard to sing "Joy to the world" if there's no peace! How should we react to this tragic world news as Christmas approaches? In the film "Batman Returns", a rich, respected citizen makes a speech to the people of Gotham City at Christmas: "I wish I could offer unconditional love tied up with a bow this Christmas, but I can't."

But that is precisely what Jesus DOES offer! So here is the news! The news from Bethlehem is good! "Unto us a Child is born!" Christ the Redeemer is here, the Prince of Peace. HE is the way, the truth and the life. Try reading John 3 v16, slowly, as if for the first time. This Messiah God sent into our world has the power to make all people ONE. Love, not hate, is the supreme weapon, as demonstrated by Jesus Himself. "Love came down at Christmas."

"Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be."

St Paul put it another way. "If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing." The Beatles' contribution sounded the same theme with "All you need is love, love is all you need!" We long for the Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland to fully grasp that message, and for the Israelis to bring down their walls of separation and check points, end apartheid and live in peace with their Palestinian neighbour. "Let there be love shared among us." Our world will not work any other way. Loving our neighbour is the only solution. (Even loving our enemy! See Matthew 5 vv43/4)

The good news, the best Christmas present, is Christ's unconditional love for ALL. "O come, let us adore Him!"

Rev Malcolm Carter

Prayer Focus for December 2023

Week Commencing Sunday 3rd December

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! *Isaiah 64:1*

Please pray for all our different services and activities over this Advent time.

Week Commencing Sunday 10th December

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." *Isaiah 40:5*

Pray for peace in our world. May the peace of God come to every place of conflict.

Week Commencing Sunday 17th December

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. *Isaiah 61:10*

Christmas is such a busy season! Lord, fill our celebrations with your joy. May we find moments to reflect, to ponder, to take in what your coming to earth can mean for us today. We remember all those for whom Christmas is tough and full of sadness. May the knowledge of your love be a comfort to them.

Week Commencing Sunday 24th December

...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

THANK YOU GOD, FOR SENDING JESUS!

Week Commencing Sunday 31st December

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss[a] your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

We give thanks for all you have done in 2023. May we reflect on how you

have blessed us and challenged us in the past year, both individually and as a church. Help us to look to you for strength, courage, guidance and hope as we look forward to 2024.

Prayer Focus for January 2024

Week Commencing Sunday 7th January

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. *Isaiah 40:30-31*

Pray for hope for the hopeless and strength for the weary. We continue to pray for those struggling in the cost of living crisis.

Week Commencing Sunday 14th January

Covenant Service

Once again, I thought it might be helpful to have the opportunity to reflect on the words of the Methodist Covenant in advance of our service on 14th January. We may share it in this or a similar form on the day.

I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you, exalted for you, or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing: I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

The Methodist Covenant Prayer

Week Commencing Sunday 21st January

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. *Isaiah 43:19*

Please pray for revival to flood our churches and our nation.

Week commencing Sunday 28th January

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *1 Peter 1:3*

Pray for friends and family who do not yet know Jesus, that they may put their trust in Christ Jesus.

Our Prayer Phone Link

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Lisa Thomas (01392 273220). Your request will then be passed to members of the Prayer Link who will pray for your need. If the first contact is unavailable, please contact Rose Smith (01404 510853).

After Service Prayer Support

This is available in the Quiet Room on Sunday mornings. Two members of the Prayer Team will be available to pray with you.

CPR & Defibrillator Training

I hope you have all seen that the church now has a shiny new defibrillator installed in the church hall. It has instructions next to it on the wall and is fully Automatic, which means if it is needed, it will tell you what to do in an emergency. But everything works better with training and on Saturday January 27th we will be hosting 3 sessions of training run by Jay's Aim. This is a local charity who provide training for the use of defibrillators like ours and I would encourage you to book in. Each sessions lasts 1 hour and will include use of the defibrillator as well as invaluable life saving skills. There are 30 spaces per hour and our trainer Jim is brining all the equipment needed.

Please email or call Lisa at <u>lisa.thomas66@icloud.com</u> or 07929740659 to book your place.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

at Temple Methodist Church

Budleigh Salterton

Friday 8th December to Tuesday 12th December 2023

Festival opening times:

Friday	4.30pm	to	8pm
Saturday	10am	to	4pm
Sunday	12 noon	to	4pm
Monday	10am	to	4pm
Tuesday	10am	to	4pm

Refreshments, teas and coffees available in Wesleys 9.30am to 4pm (except Sundays)

Tips for a Greener Christmas

How can we be better at caring for creation and each other through healthy, eco-friendly and sustainable choices at Christmas? Here are some ideas. Take time to pray, reflect and consider acting on one or two, or however many you like.

- 1. Support overseas farmers by ensuring that your advent calendar and any Christmas chocolates are Fairtrade. You will be helping those farmers to make a decent living and encouraging them to farm in a more ecologically sustainable way with every bite.
- 2. In the UK between 6-8 million real Christmas trees go to landfill every year. But there are other options. It is possible to rent a tree which will then be replanted after or you can buy a tree with roots and plant in your garden. Alternatively, dress up a living tree or shrub in your garden with outside lights and decorations.
- 3. Make your own natural wreath using foliage picked up on walks i.e. holly sprigs, ivy trails, pinecones, rose hips etc. Take a bag with you on a walk and collect from what is already dropped on the ground, make sure you have land-owner's permission before you start snipping! There are plenty of ideas on the internet if you need help.
- 4. Re-use cards and wrapping paper. Help reduce the amount of trees that go into making Christmas tags by cutting up old Christmas cards. Open present wrapping paper carefully and you can re-use it next year. You can also use fabric pieces to wrap your presents that can then be used again and again. Or, decorate brown paper which has a much lower ecological footprint than Christmas wrapping paper. Children might enjoy decorating it and love to be involved.
- 5. Remember to recycle as much as possible. More waste ends up in landfill at Christmas than at any other time of the year. Wrapping paper and Christmas cards in Exeter are not recyclable, but the brown paper wrapping is. You can take the back off the cards and recycle this part.
- 6. The glitter on Christmas cards are usually coloured pieces of plastic so buy cards without any glitter to help keep plastic out of our oceans and land. There are a few places that sell cards with a recyclable, non plastic, glitter on them, so check and see on the label.
- 7. Make homemade gifts like biscuits or sweets and place in an attractive jar. Or look in charity shops – you will be amazed at what you can find.
- 8. Check labels to see if they have used unsustainable palm oil. Beauty products often have palm oil in them
- 9. Give the gift of time i.e. a promise to babysit, take for a coffee or give a voucher to a local attraction.

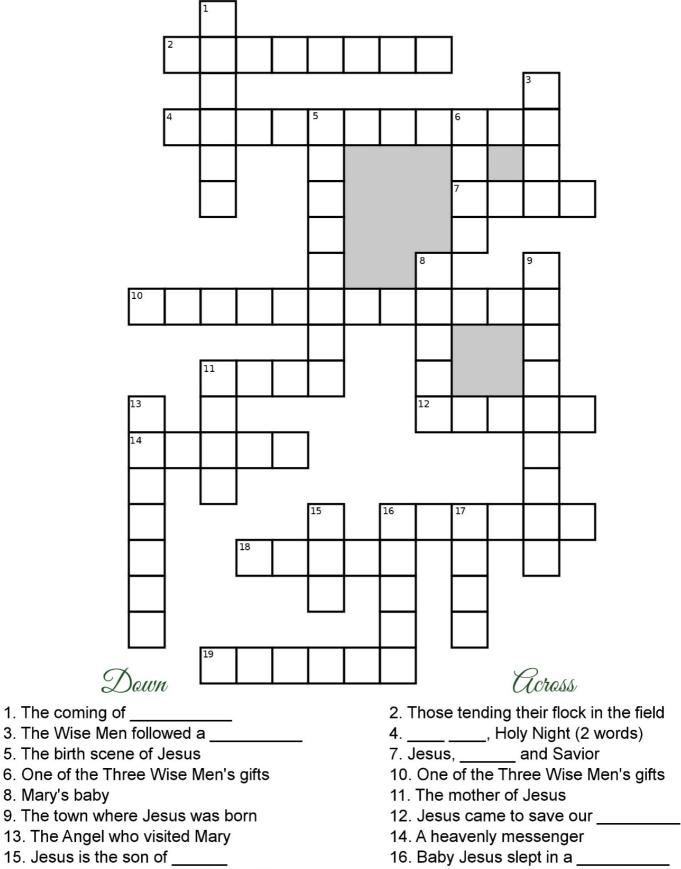
10. Lastly remember the reason for the season. Practice generosity and hospitality to show Christ's love at Christmas. Maybe invite someone who otherwise would be on their own at Christmas. And carry on caring for God's earth through 2024.

(Adapted from the UK Arocha Organisation November Newsletter)

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas from the Green Team.



Christmas Crossword



- 16. One of the Three Wise Men's gifts
- 17. Christmas refrain

- 18. "For the _____ of God"
- 19. Mary's husband

Dates For Your Diary

December 2023				
Sat 2nd	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 3rd	10.00 a.m.	ICE Team. All Age Worship.		
	4.00 p.m.	Christingle **		
Fri 8th	5.00 p.m.	Young Church Christmas Party **		
Temple Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival - 8th to 12th December 2023				
Sat 9th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 10th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Ben Haslam - Sacrament		
	5.00 p.m.	LAMPS Production - Bread & Starlight **		
Tue 12th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm). Christmas Party		
Sat 16th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 17th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Gareth Higgs		
	5.30 p.m.	Carol Service - Rev Ben Haslam / Monika Noronha		
Tue 19th	7.30 p.m.	Joan & Tony's Christmas Evening **		
Sun 24th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Dr Brenda Mosedale		
	4.00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Sacrament with Rev Ben Haslam		
Mon 25th	10.00 a.m.	Christmas Morning - Rev Ben Haslam		
Sat 30th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 31st	10.00 a.m.	Local Arrangements		
January 2024				
Sat 6th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 7th	10.00 a.m.	Chris Carter - All Age Worship		
Sat 13th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 14th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Ben Haslam - Covenant Service		
Tue 16th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm). **		
Sat 20th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 21st	10.00 a.m.	Andy Mulcock - Themed Preaching **		
Sat 28th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)		
Sun 29th	10.00 a.m.	Lloyd Smale - Themed Preaching **		

** Details in this newsletter or on the notice board in the hall.

The deadline for items for the February 2024 Newsletter will be Sunday 14th January 2024. There is no guarantee of inclusion, but they may be given to:

Andrew Jackson - 19 Hills Orchard, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6DF.

Tel: 01935 826072 or e-mailed to <u>andrew.m.jackson@me.com</u>

Young Church Christmas Party Friday 8th December 2023 5.00 to 6.30pm Christmas Day Service

Monday 25th December 2023

10am

Rev Ben Haslam



Carol Service All Are Welcome

Sunday 17th December 2023

5.30 pm

