

Wonford Methodist Church



Contact Newsletter
December 2020 / January 2021

(No: 495)

Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)

www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk

A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends

Many have feared that Christmas may be cancelled this year. Understandably so of course, when the threat of not being able to see loved ones and celebrate in the usual way looked very real. I'm writing this in the midst of a second lockdown, intended to prevent just that scenario, and I pray that it will. By the time you read this, things might look different. You may even have an appointment to receive the blessed vaccine, making a convivial Christmas still more likely. Still, this year has taught us that nothing can be taken for granted. Whatever happens though, Christmas will not be cancelled. How can it be? The way we celebrate Christmas might look different this year, but what we celebrate will remain real and true. What the gospel writers have recorded for us of the birth of Jesus is not the cosy story of nativity plays. It involves homelessness, persecution and probably street-sleeping (we assume there was a stable though one is not mentioned: mangers were often kept in the stable yard. Mary and Joseph's accommodation could well have been even more meagre than we often think). There's no mention of a donkey either, and they most likely undertook the journey to Bethlehem on foot.

Reading of the first Christmas, you are not meant to feel a comforting glow so much as a thrill of awe. This baby, as Matthew tells us, is Immanuel, God with us, or, "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made man", as Charles Wesley memorably put it. This means, above all else, hope, even in difficult times. If God can make the ultimate identification with us, by becoming one of us, by making Himself known in flesh and blood, then who knows what else is possible? God, the creator of all that exists, is with us, involved in the whole of our lives, including its doubts and difficulties, its struggles and uncertainties. We remember too, that God didn't just come to us in Jesus to make a point, or provide much needed reassurance to a lost humanity. No, His purpose was redemptive. Jesus would announce the coming of the Kingdom of God and that all those who choose to do so can enter it. That all those who so choose can know themselves forgiven, brought close to God, and given a hope and a future that without God, would be forever beyond their grasp. That's the Good News of Christmas, and it's as true as it ever was. In fact, the world needs hope now more than ever. Let's pray that more people discover Immanuel, and reach out their hands and their hearts to God-with-us, this Christmas.

God Bless

Rev Ben Haslam

Wonford Methodist Church Open for Prayer

We will be opening the church for **PERSONAL PRAYER** on **Wednesdays only from 10am to 12 noon.**



Personal silent prayer only and strict social distancing will apply

Carol Singing at Lidl's

This is taking place on Saturday 19th December at 10am. Further details from Monika



Christmas Services at Wonford Methodist Church

We continue to hold our Sunday morning service in the Church at 10am from Sunday 6th December 2020. Services will be broadcast on Zoom and Facebook.

Preachers for December

6th	Monika Noronha	All Age Worship
13th	Rev Norman Wallwork	
20th	Rev Ben Haslam & Prof Tony Wragg	Carol Service. (5.30pm)
25th	Rev Ben Haslam	Christmas Morning Worship
27th	Rev Alan Rothwell	

Preachers for January

3rd	Prof Tony Wragg (All Age Worship)
10th	Rev Ben Haslam (Covenant Service and Communion)
17th	Andy Mulcock (Themed Preaching)
24th	Rev Gareth Higgs (Themed Preaching)
31st	Monika Noronha (Themed Preaching)



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

A Plastic Free Christmas

My family and I decided to try to give only plastic free presents last year. It was a struggle but we mainly managed it. Books, scarves, slippers, magazine subscriptions and bottles of drink (ahem!) were some of the presents. My daughter-in-law gave me a handmade hanging macrame plant holder. My son made some homemade chutney.

Just before Christmas last year, I joined a Facebook group called 'Plastic Free Christmas'. So many ideas are on there on making homemade gifts, making present tags, crackers or Advent calendars. Where to buy plastic free wrapping paper, cards, crackers without the cheap plastic gifts etc. and hundreds of other ideas. A few Eco shops advertise on there too but these are kept to a minimum and vetted. One idea I really like is giving gifts in kind. Maybe an offer to help with someone's shopping, gardening, taking a dog for a walk etc written on a nice card and put in an envelope,

Supermarkets and shops are starting to listen and adapt. Sainsbury's, Aldi, Wilko's amongst others are offering crackers without plastic gifts in them. They also sell sellotape that is biodegradable and without the chemical glue and wrapping paper that you can put for recycling or in your compost bin.

Children's presents though are very difficult. I did find some wooden toys but so much of what they want is plastic. Last year Bethany wanted a doll which was obviously plastic but at least it will last her a good few years.

Next year the Government are bringing in a plastic tax on companies. They will have to pay £200 for every ton of waste. So that if nothing else may make them think about the amount of needless packaging.

So think about what you are buying this year and check if there is a more eco friendly version out there and don't forget our small local shops, who are really struggling to keep going, when choosing your gifts or food.

Most of all though, I hope your Christmas is not 'plastic and throw away' but that the joy and wonder of Christ's birth here on earth lasts all year and beyond.

Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

Alison for the Green Team.



The Mint Methodist Church Centre

CHRISTMAS IN THE BAG

This Christmas at The Mint, we are planning on giving out gift bags, full of essential and if possible, luxury hygiene products, to distribute out to the local women's refuges, homeless shelters and other community projects who support those desperately in need.

Because Hygiene poverty is a lot closer than you think!

We would like to do some good for those in our community who have less in these struggling times, where, not having enough is becoming the new normal. So, we are asking for donations of personal care products and hygiene essentials (see list below) or if you can, make a gift bag up yourself. You can do this collectively within your church, or as individuals. The drop off point will be at The Mint, or if needed, we can collect from you.

All items will have to be in bags or boxes and will be quarantined for 72 hours. Last date for dropping off will be Monday 14th of December.

If you would like to get involved, please do let us know.

Louise, Lesley, Chris, Kerryann and Emma

<i>Shampoo/conditioner</i>	<i>Deodorant</i>	<i>Perfume</i>	<i>Toothbrushes</i>
<i>Shower Gel</i>	<i>Aftershave</i>	<i>Soap</i>	<i>Toothpaste</i>
<i>Hand Cream</i>	<i>Facial products</i>	<i>Wet Wipes</i>	<i>Bubble Bath</i>

If you would like to make up a gift bag, please can you label if it is for a man, woman or family.

Thank you

Louise admin@pemd.org.uk 07519 930040 or 01392 211624

Lesley admin@themint.org.uk 01392 279786

Chris facilitator@themint.org.uk 01392 279786

Kerryann exetermcco@gmail.com 07907 049325

Emma eveningfacilitator@themint.org.uk 01392 279786

Leaf

On my daily walks I've been seeing God's world with new eyes. Yes - I've seen it all before, but this year has been a real eye-opener. Today I was almost captivated, as I thought more than ever I had done before, about the life of a leaf. Autumn colours abound right now, and there before me a yellow leaf twisted round and round, tumbling down before it hit the ground. And so I began to muse. . . . For maybe six months it has been joined in to its 'parent', the tree; but now it is free!!

Like our children there comes a time when they leave home and venture into the world. This Leaf had a really exciting flight as it separated from its 'parent'. Now it was on its own - what would happen? There are plenty of possibilities, I felt ; and I began to draw parallels with our 'human' lives. On the ground it could find a variety of 'lives' - just like with humans.

Perhaps it dropped in a wood on grassy ground. Would it be eaten by a hungry animal? - and would that be its 'end'? No! - even if it was eaten, Leaf would be feeding, giving new nourishment to that animal - not a bad 'job' to perform, surely? Humans do this often in other ways, as they provide food to those who need feeding.

Then, perhaps a badger picked up Leaf, and took Leaf down into its holt; and there Leaf again would be a real help for others in that community underground. Or, Leaf might be picked up by a bird next spring, and used to line its nest for the eggs and its youngsters once hatched. Another really important role, and just the sort of things that adult humans do in lots of ways. As carers, nurses, doctors, we try to keep others warm and snug and comfy in their lives.

And what if Leaf fell alongside many others? Perhaps this was on a pavement, as it was for my Leaf today, a whole crowd were gathered there. What happened to Leaf and the others was that our friendly hard-working street-cleaner soon passed by, brushing all of them together into his wheelie-bin - where they happily exchanged names and stories with each other! Just like you and me chatting away. When we meet up in a group our lives are enriched. How else would we get to know the news, or hear of people we could help by praying for them in their troubles?

Perhaps this was in a garden, and the tidy gardener might sweep them all up together and pile them on his compost heap. Was that 'the end' of Leaf?

No! Here, in a great company, Leaf would slowly change its nature. All the good parts would collectively break down, that's for sure. But it again would not be the end for them all! The essential goodness of Leaf, together with all the others, would give new life to many. It could be in the vegetable plot next year, or in the flower garden. A huge variety of new lives would be enriched by all the goodness that made up Leaf. Or it could be that that compost, over the next few years, was absorbed into a big tree - - - just like Leaf's parent tree!! Leaf's life goes on for ever; a full circle of life going round and round year after year after year.

Leaf asks you: did you go in September to see the artistic display of steel leaves before the High Altar in Exeter Cathedral? There were hundreds littering the floor, some already rust-coloured like many leaves in autumn, and some still the grey of steel. All had the word HOPE on them; and that is what all leaves feel.

**There is always HOPE - and I believe that too - said Leaf!
Praise the Lord!!**

Themed Preaching Series on Holy Habits Spring 2021

The theme topics are taken from the book Holy Habits by Rev Andrew Roberts (Malcolm Down Publishing 2016).

Jan 17th	Andy Mulcock	Bible Teaching
Jan 24th	Rev Gareth Higgs	Sharing food and fellowship
Jan 31st	Monika Noronha	Praying
Feb 7th	Mary Hext	All-Age Worship
Feb 14th	Rev Terry Spencer	Serving
Feb 21st	Rev Ben Haslam	Breaking Bread (Communion)
Feb 28th	Dr Joan Wragg	Sharing and Generosity
Mar 7th	Karenza Cordery	All-Age Worship
Mar 14th	Rev Ben Haslam	Worship (with Communion)
Mar 21st	Rev Paul Smith	Making Disciples (Passion Sunday)
Mar 28th	Prof Tony Wragg	Palm Sunday
April 4th	Caroline Colin and Alan Rothwell	Easter Day (Communion)

All the above dates are for 10am services only.

Fence Report November 2020

Introduction

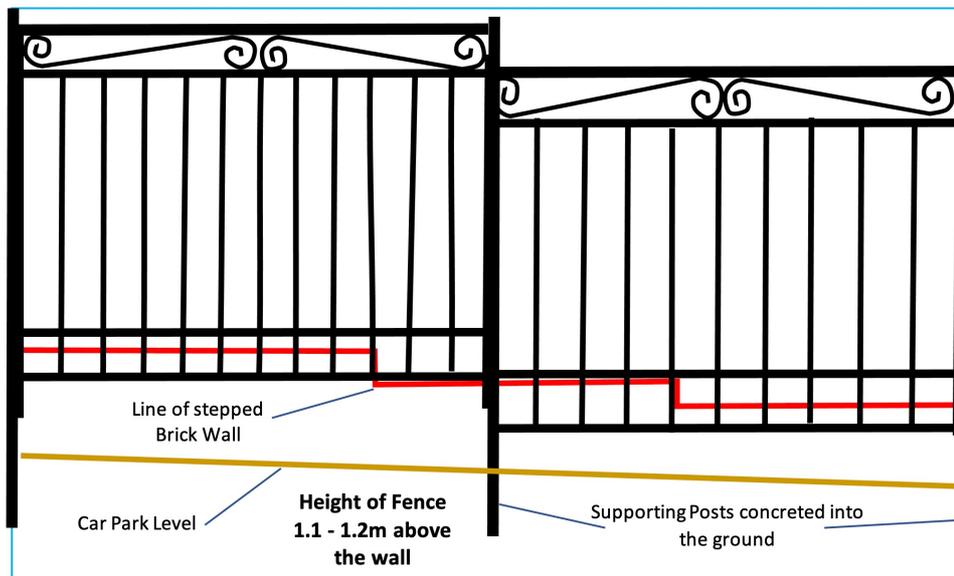
After some discussion about the idea of a fence or hedge or nothing it was concluded that a more attractive – less traditional fence would suit us best.

There are two ways forward.

- To ask a local company to produce a fence of our design – a bespoke fence
- To buy ready made fence panels of a standard design and get them fitted by an approved fitter.

Bespoke Fence

We opted for a simple design like this, of course other designs are possible.
View from inside looking out



Top Rail – round cross section.

Vertical bars at each end - square box section

Supporting Posts – square box section

Each section of fence could be the same length 2m? 3m?

Hopefully the bottom rails could be aligned as shown above.

The idea is to keep the brick wall as it is and to fix the fence inside the wall on supporting posts which are concreted into the ground.



We obtained two quotes for this design

Pilgrim Projects – Cullompton
Besgara - Torbay

£16,006
£17,459

Ready Made Design

This quote is from Jackson Fencing in Bath.

As you can see the picture shows it fitting behind the wall just as the old fence does.

This design is called 'Bow Topped' and the quote we have is for 1.5m high, (other heights and other designs are available).

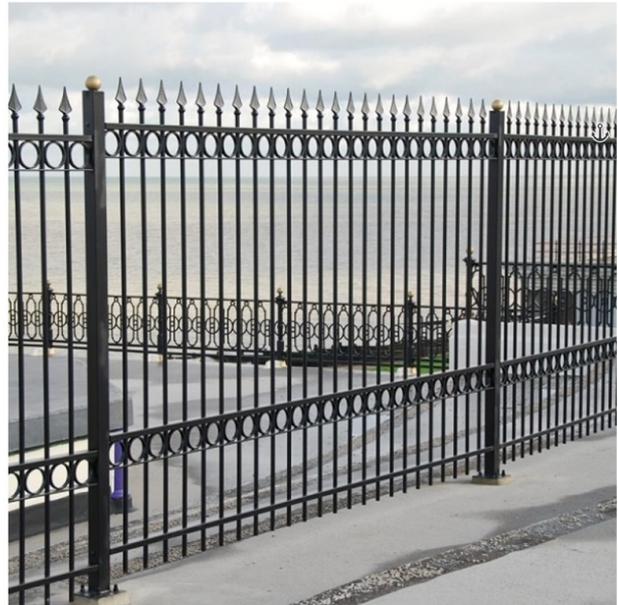
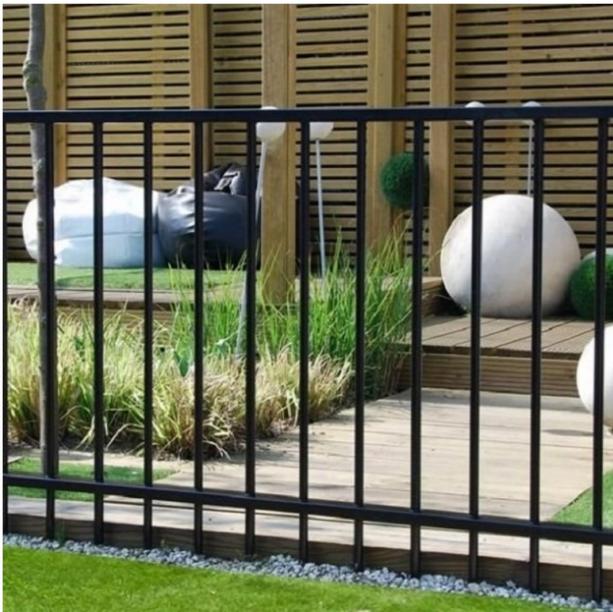


Total Cost **£8,644**
Fitting **£2,000 (awaiting exact figure)**

Just so you can see the height of the fence we have put a piece of white tape through the old fence at about the correct height. It's still there (hopefully) so when you next pass the church have a look. (We got some unsuspecting passer-by to point out the height)



Below are photos of two other designs of ready made fence.



This is a large expense for the church and we want to get it right so we need everyone to think about what they would like and what looks best.

Please make comments to the Paul, Tony, Alison or David so that the fence we choose is not that chosen by one or two people.

Comments before Christmas would be welcome.

Prayer Focus for December/January

December

PRAYER - OUR STRONGEST WEAPON - PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

Here we are at the end of another year—and what a year it has been! Who would have thought that as we were wishing everyone a happy new year & celebrating together, we would be facing a pandemic. COVID 19 has swept through the world, an unstoppable force! As I write we are in our 2nd lockdown. With this pandemic may I encourage you to thank the Lord that we have come through it. Pray for those who are ill now whether it be with the virus or with other illnesses. Keep praying for a vaccine to be found. Pray that those who need other treatments get the treatment they need. Pray for all the medical staff, especially those working in the COVID wards. There is a list of essential workers as well. Non medical staff at hospitals and doctors surgeries, dentists, supermarket staff and takeaway outlets,

transport workers and many others working to help us live as safely as possible. Pray for those who have lost loved ones, whether with COVID or other illnesses or accidents or terrorist action.

Pray that as we leave 2020 behind, we will be able to move forward into 2021 with a new vision. Thank the Lord for the ability of those who work the technology to enable us to 'attend' church. Throughout the pandemic more people have joined church services online than normally attend church when they are open. Pray that they would accept the Lord for themselves. Pray also for those caught up in wars, terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

May Alan & I take this opportunity to wish you a blessed & peaceful Christmas.

January

PRAYER - OUR STRONGEST WEAPON - PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE

At the start of 2021 may we look forward with a new vision. Pray that a vaccine for the virus will be found. Pray for those who begin the new year mourning the loss of a loved one.

Pray for governments around the world to seek ways to live in peace with one another and pray that they are able to keep us safe from terrorism. Pray that a vaccine will be found against the virus.

Pray that we will be able to attend church in the normal way, singing our praise to God and worship Him as we are used to doing. Pray for our church leaders and local preachers as they guide us through the scriptures. Pray for our world leaders, that they would seek peace rather than war, that they would care for the poorest in their country. Pray for President elect in the USA and the out-going President. Pray for our own leaders as they negotiate trade deals following Brexit. Pray for any world events that have happened between November and January.

Finally, pray for each other.

May you all be richly blessed as you pray for all the activities at Wonford, surrounding area & the wider world.

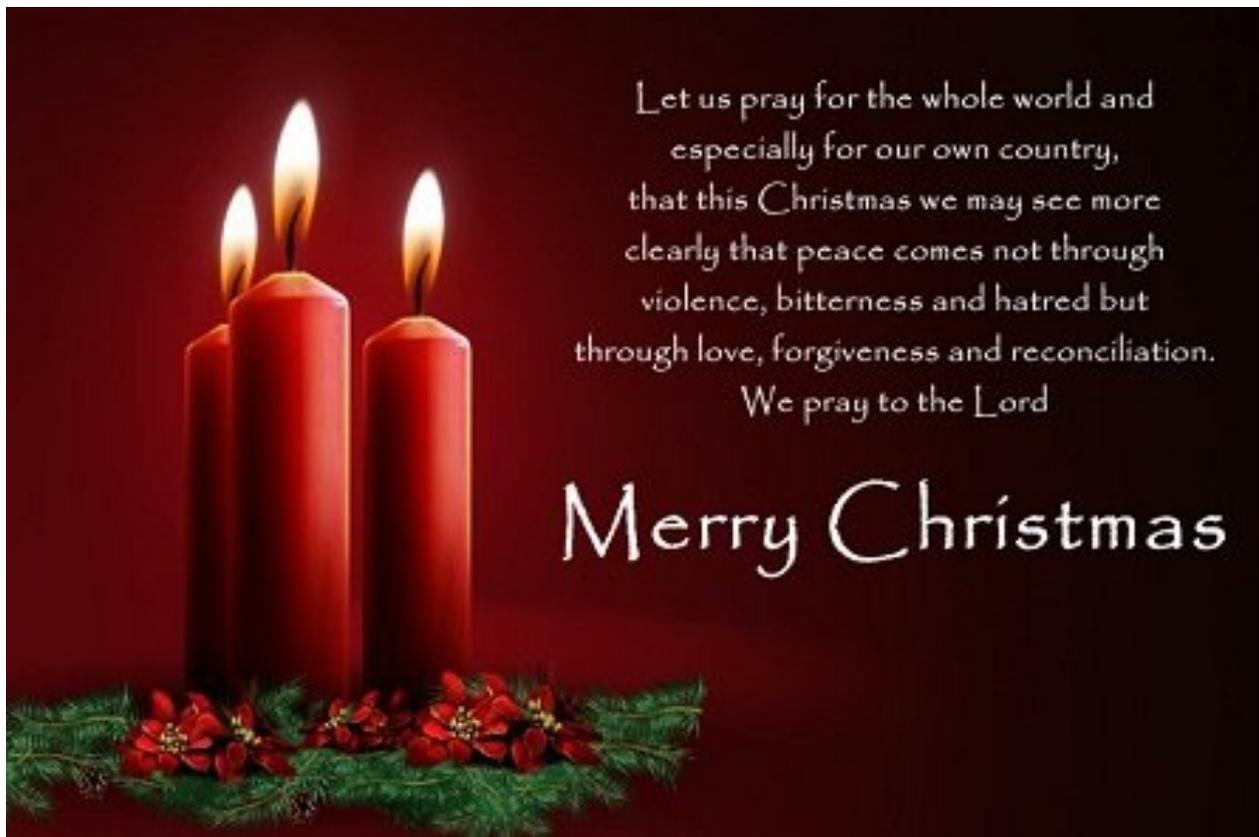
Our Prayer Phone Link

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rev Alan Rothwell (01392 926840). 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 Margretta Bowstead (01392 437329) or 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.

The Prayer Team



The deadline for items for the February 2021 Newsletter will be Sunday 17th January 2021. 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 andrew.m.jackson@me.com

#GodsWithUs Christmas Campaign 2020

It is fair to say we're all a bit uncertain about what Christmas is going to be like this year – and perhaps we're feeling a bit anxious about this. It's also fair to say that this year as much as ever it is critical we reach out to people who aren't part of our churches. The Christmas message of Emmanuel – the good news that God is with us – feels perhaps more pertinent than ever before in this extraordinary year.

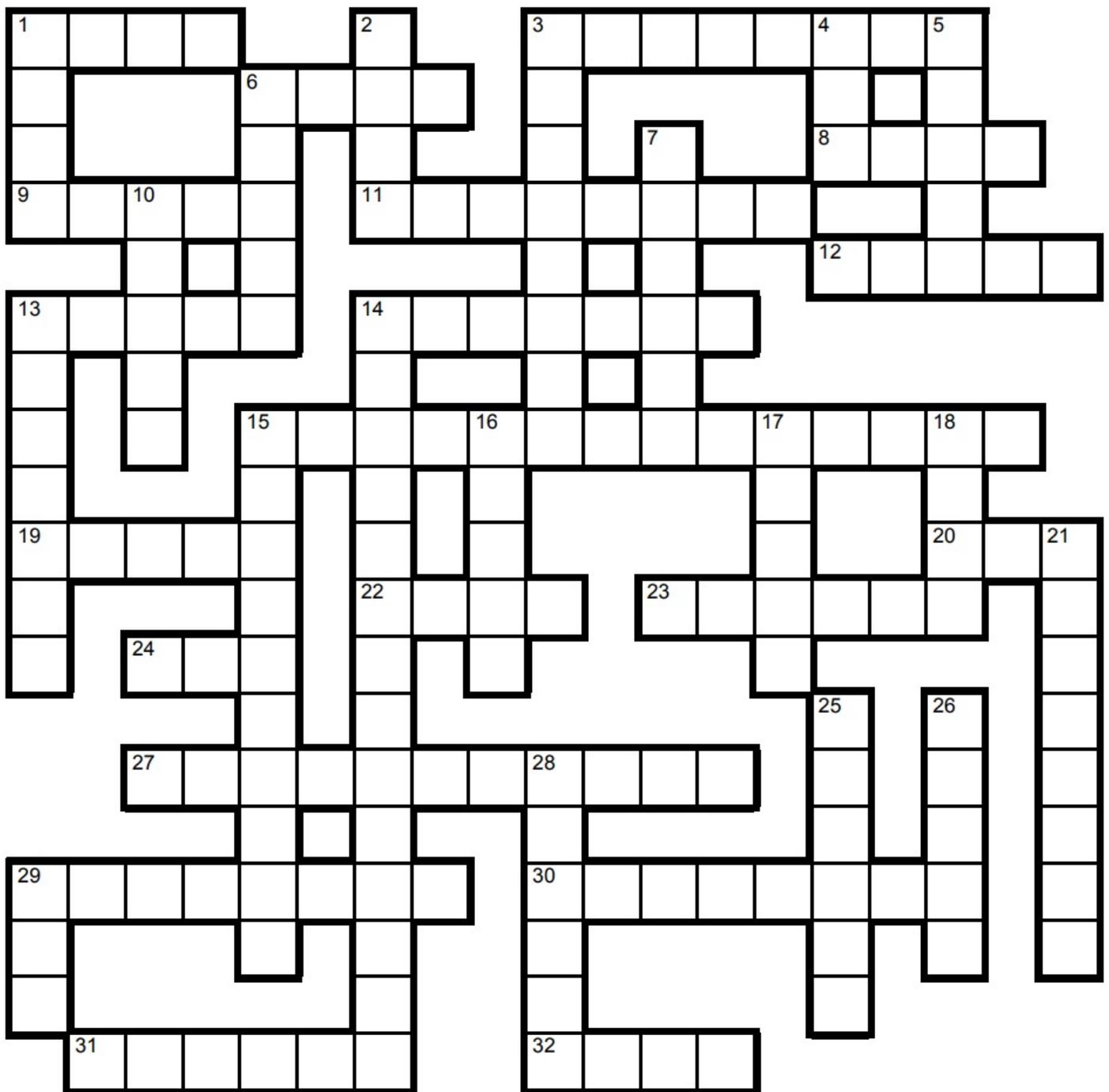
The Methodist Church Christmas campaign for 2020 #GodsWithUs seeks to share this good news through twenty-four stories of individuals and their experiences of this extraordinary year. Each day of Advent we will share a testimony from somebody connected to the Methodist Church reflecting on what hope has looked like for them this year and how they have experienced God with them.

The individuals whose stories the campaign tells include those who have felt the painful effects of isolation this year, who have experienced extreme poverty, who have struggled with poor mental health, who have lost loved ones – like so many millions of others. But ultimately, incredibly, God's loving presence radiates from each of them in beams of powerful hope. Hope that is so necessary for such a time as this.

The campaign name, which ties in with our Presidential theme for the year, of course comes from John Wesley's purported words on his death bed: 'the best of all is, God is with us' which reminds us that even in the times which feel most uncertain, we can be certain of God. Who do you know who needs to hear this message over the coming months?



Christmas Crossword Puzzle



Across

1 Transportation for going over snow (4)

3 Mixture of seasoned ingredients (8)

6 Baby's bed (4)

8 Period from December 24th to January 6th (4)

9 Red-breasted bird (5)

11 Twelve days after Christmas (8)

12 Alcoholic drink normally served in a bowl (5)

13 Jolly (5)

- 14 News (7) 15 Goes with the turkey (9,5)
- 19 A type of tree used at Christmas (5) 20 The colour of Santa's hat (3)
- 22 ____ log; traditionally burned at Christmas (4) 23 Sanctified (6)
- 24 Cured leg of pork (3) 27 Christmas song (6,5)
- 29 Found under the Christmas tree? (8) 30 Grace (8)
- 31 Snow falls in this season (6) 32 Given at Christmas (4)

Down

- 1 Bright celestial body (4) 2 Christmas tree type (4)
- 3 Take aback (8) 4 No room here! (3)
- 5 Elvish colour (5) 6 Sweets; flavoured sugar (5)
- 7 Container usually found in a stable (6)
- 10 Beginning of life (5) 13 Amazing event (7)
- 14 Written after Christmas? (5,3,6) 15 Formal events (10)
- 16 Ring out from churches (5) 17 Accompaniment for food (5)
- 18 Printed or written greeting (4) 21 Month in which Christmas falls (8)
- 25 Nature of God (6) 26 One was born in Bethlehem (5)
- 28 Sweetened milk drink, with eggs and alcohol (6)
- 29 Pastry dish (3)





Carol Service

All Are Welcome

Sunday 20th December 2020

5.30 p.m.

Christmas Day Service

Friday 25th December 2020

10.00 a.m.

Rev Ben Haslam