

# Wonford Methodist Church



**Contact Newsletter**  
December 2021 / January 2022

(No: 505)

Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)

[www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk)

# A Message From The Minister

## Dear Friends

As cupbearer, Nehemiah was one of King Artaxerxes' most trusted official. Nehemiah would be responsible for tasting the king's food to ensure it wasn't poisoned, so it was not without risks and, I sincerely hope, well paid! Having heard such distressing news about Jerusalem, Nehemiah boldly asks Artaxerxes for leave to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the ruins. This is a brave thing to do. Your only thought was supposed to be what you can do for the king, not to ask the king to do anything for you. Fortunately, the ground has been prepared with lots of prayer, as we shall see....

Nehemiah is clearly a down to earth and practical man. He likes to get things done. Yet it is significant how, on hearing of the desolate state into which Jerusalem has fallen, doesn't immediately leap into action. Instead, he prays – for five months. Many would be tempted to get stuck in straightaway, but Nehemiah instead chooses to do business with God first. Firstly, of course, he has to bring his grief to God. Hearing of the destruction and desolation his homeland has suffered would have been a massive shock to the system. He needs to lament and bring his pain before God – this is vital as unacknowledged pain can lead to a person either lashing out at others or turning in on themselves. Bringing his sense of loss into the presence of God, reassures him that he is not alone and resources him with the strength he needs to proceed onwards. Secondly, Nehemiah is very conscious that he is, before anything else, a servant of God. The task is God's, and the direction and inspiration absolutely must come from Him. When we approach any task as if it all depended on us, shutting God out (though perhaps saying a prayer to begin with as a formality), then we are on a hiding to nothing. Sometimes we have to set aside our assumptions and desires and ideas in order to really seek God's direction. God is not there to bless our plans – we, like Nehemiah, are His servants, not He ours. Once in Jerusalem, Nehemiah inspects the extent of the destruction for himself. Having done that, and been suitably appalled, he says to the assembled officials of Jerusalem, that he has been seeking the direction of God and now is the time to act with the stirring words, "Let us rise up and build". Beginning to go back to church again feels a little like rebuilding from scratch. Our heads are filled with risk assessments, masks, what the latest rules are, and it can seem a little overwhelming, just as the rebuilding of Jerusalem must have seemed overwhelming to Nehemiah. As we travel into an uncertain future, it is more crucial than ever that we put prayer at the heart of everything we do, seeking to embrace the future which God has

planned for us, rather than striking out on our own. This might slow us down. We might prefer to get stuck straight in. It is absolutely vital however, that we remember that, like Nehemiah, we are God's servants and it is not until we have prayerfully tuned into God's will that we can say, "Let us rise up and build".

**With every blessing**  
**Ben Haslam**

## **Carol Singing at Lidl's**

This is taking place on Saturday 18th December at 10am. Further details will be announced nearer this date.



## **Roundabout Café**

The Roundabout Café will meet on:

Tuesday December 14<sup>th</sup>

Carols & Mince Pies

Tuesday January 18<sup>th</sup>

Talk about fraud and scams from the Devon & Cornwall Police.



We meet from 10.00am until noon with coffee and nice things to eat. Everyone is welcome.

## **Coffee Rota**

### **December 2021**

5th	Terry & Margaret D
12th	David & Margaret S
19th	Elaine & Graham
26th	No Coffee

### **January 2022**

2nd	Terry & TBA
9th	Melanie & Eileen
16th	TBA
23rd	TBA
30th	TBA

Thank you for all those who have helped with teas & coffees in 2021. If you are interested in becoming a regular on the rota or just helping out occasionally see Melanie Westcott.

## **Christmas Card Tree 2021**

Once again, we will be having a Christmas Card Tree at the back of the church. The idea is that you place one card on the Christmas Card Tree to everyone at Wonford Methodist Church. The money you save by not buying lots of cards, you put in the donation box near the Christmas Card Tree. This year all money raised will be going to, The Plymouth and Exeter District of The Methodist Church selected charity – The Christian Hospital, Berhampur, India. There is some information about this Hospital near The Christmas Card Tree. More information will be available in the New Year.



Please remember to take a look at the Christmas Cards on The Christmas Card Tree and see who they are from.

**Paul Violet**

## **What more can we do to become carbon neutral?**

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference has brought the issue of climate to the forefront of our minds. World leaders recently met in Glasgow to re-sharpen their focus on what can be done to meet climate goals. I'm sure we can all agree on the need for governments to take more responsibility and action to meet the carbon neutral goals, but responsibility also falls on us. Some may feel that what we can do as individuals isn't significant, but collectively our actions do make a difference.

What does it mean to be carbon neutral? Carbon emissions are driving climate change. In our everyday lives we are contributing to these carbon emissions. To be carbon neutral our carbon emissions would be balanced by the amount of carbon that we remove from the atmosphere.

We are likely very aware of actions we can take to live a greener lifestyle such as walking more, changing our diets, buying less stuff, avoiding single use plastics, and recycling. With the new year fast approaching, we could perhaps sharpen our focus and look at what else we can do to protect God's wonderful creation.

If this is something you would like to do, you could visit the Climate Hero carbon footprint calculator to check your carbon footprint and to get tips on how you can reduce it.

<https://climate-calculator.climatehero.me/>

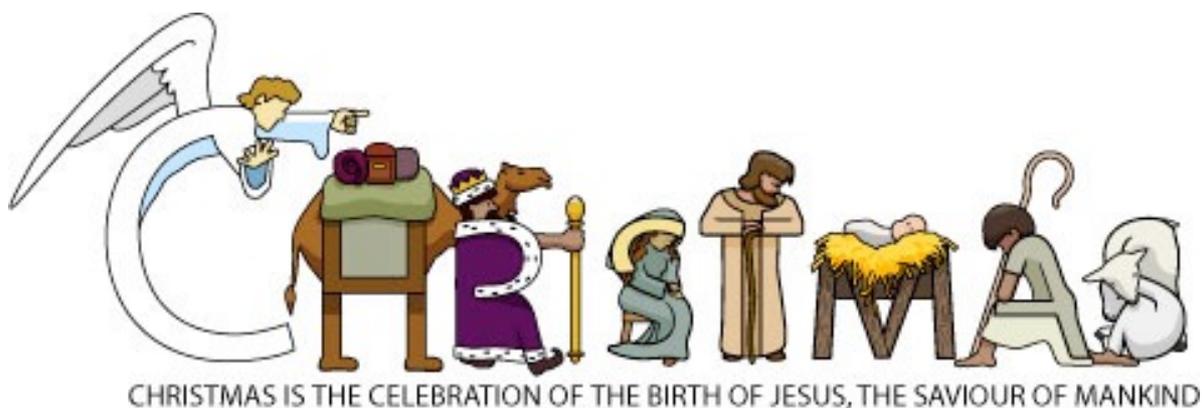
**Alison Hobbs – Green team**

## Wonford Methodist Church Themed Preaching Spring 2022

This Spring we are going to be looking at Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus, many peoples' favourite amongst the apostle's writings. We are also privileged to have three excellent guest preachers in the persons of Isca Church's Andy Mulcock, Rev Gareth Higgs from Plymouth Central Hall and the wonderful John Allan from Belmont. Do the reading up first and really enjoy this rich series. May we all be blessed and encouraged in our faith.

### Tony Wragg

Jan 16	Chapter 1	Blessings in Christ	Andy Mulcock
Jan 23	Chapter 2	The wonder of Grace	Gareth Higgs
Jan 30	Chapter 3	The mystery revealed	Terry Spencer
Feb 6	Karenza Cordery	All Age Worship	
Feb 13	Chapter 4 v1-16	Unity in Christ	Ben Haslam (S)
Feb 20	Chapter 4 v17ff	Living in the light	John Allan
Feb 27	Chapter 5 v1-21	Be filled with the Spirit	Joan Wragg
Mar 6	Leon Dundas	All Age Worship	
Mar 13	Chapter 5 v22 to 6 v9	Mature relationships	Ben Haslam (S)
Mar 20	Chapter 6 v10 to end	Put your armour on	TBA



## **OUR WORLD SLOW TO ACT**

A while ago, I watched the film 'Diamonds Are Forever' for the umpteenth time. At one point in the film, James Bond says to a group, "Good morning, gentlemen, we're cleaning up the world, and thought this would be a good point to start." That film was made in 1971, and so 50 years later, we have not made those necessary strides forward to clean up the world.

Way back in the 1960's, a young American singer made a wonderful, challenging vinyl record about the damage done to creation. I nearly wore my copy of the record out. The chorus booms out:

***"We're using up the world, can't you see,  
Saying that it's all for you and me,  
We're using up the world one more time,  
And taking away what's yours and mine."***

Sixty years on, our world is still slow to act as ecologically as it should. James Bond's fictional enemy, Blofeld, had a plan to blow up Washington DC, but if we do not clean up the world, the consequences are a million-time times more dire. Diamonds are forever, but our world is teetering on the edge of destruction!

Extreme weather conditions worldwide such as floods, fire, volcanic eruptions are wreaking havoc, and thousands of terrified people are forced to flee their homes which are destroyed before their eyes. Closer to home is Happisburg on the Norfolk coast, where acres of land keep collapsing into the sea and people's homes are cruelly swept away. We persist in damaging the world God gave us by chopping down forests, continually burning oil, coal and gas, and thus increasing global temperatures alarmingly, melting ice caps and raising sea levels.

It is time to act NOW, and the world's last BIG chance is in Glasgow at the COP26 Conference. Will the nations who gather make those vital changes? Will we ever be able to sing with confidence again?

***"Thank you for the world so sweet,  
Thank you for the food we eat,  
Thank you for the birds that sing,  
Thank You God for everything."***

Some thoughts Rev Malcolm Carter shared with us at The Harvest Songs of Praise

# Prayer Focus for December

## Prayer – Our Strongest Weapon – Pray Without Ceasing

We are now in the season of Advent. Throughout Advent our focus is on the build up to The Christ Child coming to earth as a baby on that first Christmas. We are also reminded that we should be preparing ourselves afresh for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. During your build up to Christmas, try and take time out to spend time with God, so that you can know His Everlasting Peace and Assurance during this busy season. Here are some thoughts to help you, using the theme for each of the Sundays in Advent.

**Week beginning 5th December 2021** – The 2nd Sunday of Advent – The Word of God in The Old Testament. Thank God for the precious gift we have of The Bible, His Holy Word. Give thanks for those who over the years and still today work to make it relevant for today. Give thanks for preachers, Bible teachers, Bible translators, printing processes and new ways of giving people worldwide, access to The Bible in a language they can understand.

**Week beginning 12th December 2021** – The 3rd Sunday of Advent – The Forerunner, John The Baptist. Praise and thank God for the prophets of old and John The Baptist, how they prepared the way for The Christ. How they stood steadfast to the message God gave them to give to those who would listen. Pray for all those people today, who point people to Jesus Christ and the joy and riches that can only be found in Him.

**Week beginning 19th December 2021** – The 4th Sunday of Advent – The Annunciation – Traditionally, we think about Mary, but we should also think about Joseph and the role he had in raising Jesus. Pray for all parents today, the struggles they face in raising children. Pray for those whose children are sick or terminally ill. Pray for those who will be finding this Christmas difficult because they have lost a child or partner.

**Week beginning 26th December 2021** – This Sunday is Boxing Day or The Feast of St. Stephen – the first Christian martyr. Give thanks for all those who have held fast to their faith in Jesus Christ, even when it meant death. Pray for those who are persecuted, imprisoned and die for their faith in Jesus Christ today.

# Prayer Focus for January 2022

## Prayer – Our Strongest Weapon – Pray Without Ceasing

Another Christmas is over and another New Year is starting. What will 2022 bring us? What are our hopes and dreams for this New Year? What are our hopes and dreams for our world; our country; our communities; our friends; our families; the church; ourselves? As with past years, the year will bring times of happiness, immense joy, sadness and hopefully not too much pain and despair. With each new day we should remember to pray for anything and everything.

**Week beginning 2nd January 2022** – During this week (6th January) many Churches will be celebrating Epiphany – the visit of The Wise Men to the Holy Family. Pray for your own family and families you know. Pray for families across the world, especially remembering those who are separated for whatever reason.

**Week beginning 9th January 2022** – This Sunday we remember Jesus being Baptised by John in the River Jordan. At Wonford we will be having our Annual Covenant Service. As we go through this act of recommitment, ask God to refresh you with His love and show you how He wants to use you in the year ahead.

**Week beginning 16th January 2022** – On this Sunday, the Gospel Bible reading, is of Jesus at the Wedding in Cana and performing His first miracle. Pray for those you know who are engaged and planning to marry this year. Pray for those who have married during the past year. Pray and thank God for those who have been married for many years. Pray for those whom you know who may be struggling in their marriage.

**Week beginning 23rd January 2022** – Today's Gospel reading from Luke, we can read about Jesus reading from the prophet Isaiah in His local Synagogue. Jesus ends the reading by saying, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Pray for our Methodist Circuit, the various churches within it, the Ministers and Deacon, the various staff, paid and volunteers. Pray that God will give us a vision and goal that He wants for us in the year and years ahead. Ask God to give us guidance on how He wants us to reach these goals.

**Week beginning 30th January 2022** – In today's reading from Luke's Gospel, Jesus faces opposition in His home town of Nazareth. Pray for all those who face opposition because of their faith in Jesus. Opposition from family members, their community, their governments. Pray for those who have taken the decision to leave their own country to find safety in another country.

### **Our Prayer Phone Link**

Should you, or those you know, wish to be supported in prayer, the first contact is now Rose Smith (01404 510853). 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).

### **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**

### **Refugees**

I was very moved by this following poem by Brian Bilston, read in another Church Newsletter. It reminded me that, soon after Christmas, we read of Jesus becoming a "refugee" in Egypt.

### **Margretta Bowstead**

#### **Refugees**

*They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not*

*Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way*

***(Now read again line by line from bottom to top)***

*(Brian Bilston from his book "You Took the Last Bus Home")*

## **Advent Studies**

On Thursday evenings, 7pm for 7.15pm start on Zoom, Deacon Becky Lovatt will be leading four Advent studies, which last about an hour, and will be somewhat based on her own book "Beyond the Chocolate Window", which we at Wonford heard her speak on. The dates are: Thurs 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd December.

If you are interested in joining you can get the Zoom link by emailing Deacon Becky Lovatt - [deaconbecky@outlook.com](mailto:deaconbecky@outlook.com)



# Dates For Your Diary

## December 2021

Sun 5th	10.00 a.m.	Sally Naylor & ICE Team. All Age Worship.
Sun 12th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Paul Smith - Sacrament
	6.30 p.m.	Candles of Remembrance - Rev Ben Haslam
Tue 14th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm). Carols and Mince Pies
Wed 15th	3.00 p.m.	Wednesday Bible Group in the Church
Sat 18th	10.00 a.m.	Singing Carols at Lidl's
Sun 19th	10.00 a.m.	Stephen Haddad
	5.30 p.m.	Carol Service - Rev Ben Haslam / Dr Jon Curtis
Sat 25th	10.00 a.m.	Christmas Morning - Rev Ben Haslam
Sun 26th	10.00 a.m.	Prof Tony Wragg

## January 2022

Sun 2nd	10.00 a.m.	Pamela Murphy All Age Worship.
Sun 9th	10.00 a.m.	Covenant Service and Sacrament
Wed 12th	3.00 p.m.	Wednesday Bible Group in the Church
Sun 16th	10.00 a.m.	Andy Mulcock - Themed Preaching **
Tue 18th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm). Talk about fraud by Devon & Cornwall Police **
Sun 23rd	10.00 a.m.	Rev Gareth Higgs - Themed Preaching **
Wed 26th	3.00 p.m.	Wednesday Bible Group in the Church
Sun 30th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Terry Spencer - Themed Preaching **

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



The deadline for items for the February 2022 Newsletter will be Sunday 16th January 2022. 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](mailto:andrew.m.jackson@me.com)**



# **Carol Service**

**All Are Welcome**

**Sunday 19th December 2021**

**5.30 p.m.**

# **Christmas Day Service**

**Saturday 25th December  
2021**

**10.00 a.m.**

**Rev Ben Haslam**