

Wonford Methodist Church



Contact Newsletter December 2024

(No: 535)

Minister: Rev Ben Haslam (01392 256716)

www.wonfordmethodistchurch.org.uk

A Message From The Minister

Dear Friends

Advent calendars aren't just for children anymore. You could, if you're so inclined, buy a calendar with tea, cheese, even gin behind each December door. When I was little, opening that days door was a cherished before school ritual (though if you opt for the gin calendar, I recommend you wait until rather later in the day before sampling each day's delights..). As an adult however, I've spotted a slight flaw in the very concept of Advent calendars – namely that they give the impression that Advent is simply the 'run-up to Christmas', when it is of course a season in its own right. It is connected to Christmas, obviously, and it is the season in which we do our Christmas shopping, eat mince pies, go to Carol services and put up with being bombarded by Christmas music in shops. Yet Advent encourages a richer, deeper experience beyond all the anxious Christmas preparations which fill our minds at this time of year.

Advent draws our minds to various people who were used by God to announce His purposes to the world, and to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah. In doing so, they call us to remember that there is more to life than just what we see in front of us. The power and presence of God constantly break through into our world even though, most of the time, we live as they though didn't. Advent is a good time to spend some time with the prophets, with John the Baptist, and with Mary, and pray that we might be gifted their kind of faith, the faith that, through prayer, seeks the presence of God, and draws the work of God into our lives and our churches. We, after all, are as much a part of the story of God and His people as the great Advent figures - so let's refresh our faith, pray for the renewal and revival of the church, be willing to be part of what God is doing so that we can go forward into 2025 as confident, spirit-filled people of faith, whatever the future might bring. Because we know, that ultimately, the future is in God's hands. Happy Advent!

Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for 2025.

God Bless

Rev Ben Haslam

Coffee Rota

December 2024

1st	Nessie & Melanie
8th	TBA
15th	Nessie & Melanie
22nd	Elaine & Graham
29th	Linda & Mervyn

January 2024

5th	Margaret & Terry
12th	Alison & Jenny S
19th	Rose & Paul
26th	Lisa & Shamini

Thank you for all those who have helped with teas & coffees in 2024. 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 10th



Christmas Morning of carols, stories, poems, etc

Tuesday January 21st

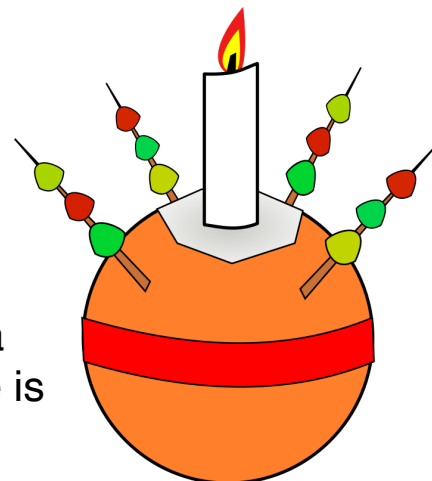
There will be a talk by Pete Kiff about 'A Missionary's Child in India'.



We meet from 10.00am until noon with coffee, cake and good company. Everyone is welcome. Please join us if you can.

Christingle Service

There will be a Christingle workshop and short service at Wonford Methodist Church on Sunday December 8th 2024 at 4.30pm. 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!



Wonford Welcome Drop-in - Saturday Mornings.

We will also serve a light lunch and pud (for a cost of £1) between 12.00 and 12.30pm.

In December we will be having the following activities for you to join, if you would like to, alongside the free cuppa & biscuits:

7th December - we'll be decorating the church and hall for Christmas, as well as making Christmas cards.

14th December - it's time once again for our Christmas party, so please come along to join us for fun games and party food.

21st December - we will be singing Christmas carols and having the dress rehearsal of our skit for the church Carol Service.

28th December - there will be no group today as we are having a Christmas break.

We will be back on Saturday 4th January!

Wonford Welcome is open to all; everyone, whatever their age or beliefs, will receive a warm welcome! If you are able to spread the word, put up a poster or share it on social media please do. And if you haven't been along yet please do come and join us one Saturday.

Alison, Helen, Lisa, Liz, Mandy, Monika, Paul & Rose and Sue K



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

CREDITON METHODIST CHURCH

12 days of Christmas

EXHIBITION

December

Fridays 13th & 20th

10 a.m. to 12 noon

Saturdays 14th & 21st

10a.m. to 2p.m.

Soup & Roll lunches

Free admission



Charity No. 1185778



**ST THOMAS METHODIST CHURCH, Cowick Street,
EXETER EX 4 1JE**

Christmas Tree Festival



9th to 13th December 2024

11 am - 3 pm



**Coffee morning
Saturday 14th December
10 am - 12 pm**



vote for your favourite tree

Reduce, Re-use and Recycle this Christmas



We all know the lyrics to a well-known Christmas song, 'It's the most wonderful time of the year' (I imagine that tune is now going through your mind!), so perhaps we can look at ways to make it more wonderful for our environment and maybe our bank balance.

Before Christmas

- Only buy what you need – a shocking amount of food is thrown away over Christmas & New Year. Try to be creative with recipes to use up your leftovers.
- Sustainability - look for local produce at street markets or farm shops, locally made gifts at craft fayres and independent shops, as well as choosing items that are Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance etc.
- Reduce waste – buy items with less packaging, get reusable items, choose a living tree in a pot and avoid disposable dinnerware.
- Find alternatives to items that cannot be recycled – instead of glossy wrapping paper use wrapping paper that is made to be recyclable or plain brown paper which you can decorate with stampers or pen, cloth bags, a scarf or reusable gift bag. Instead of shiny Christmas crackers/hats you can make your own.
- Turn the heating down a couple of degrees and put on a warm, cosy jumper and thick socks – this is something most of us are getting used to doing more as we are trying to save money on our heating bills.
- Have a go at making something homemade like cards, gift tags, craft gifts, edible gifts or decorations. Or buy pre-loved items at one of the many charity shops or bring & buy sales.
- Waste-free giving - instead of giving people 'stuff & things' which they often do not want or need, why not give them cherished memories & experiences like a day out, an afternoon tea, star gazing on the moors or whatever they might enjoy doing. Or you could make up your own personalised gift coupons eg. 'I will mow your lawn once a month, 'I will babysit for an evening', 'I'll visit & read to you every fortnight for a year' or 'I will walk your dog'

After Christmas

Recycle all the rubbish you can in your green bin, a bottle bank or local council Recycling Centre, re-use by giving away unwanted items to Exeter Food Action (for food items), through Freecycle or to a local charity shop/bring & buy sale, or you can sell through eBay, Facebook Marketplace.

Gumtree, etc

**The beauty of Christmas is not in the presents
but in His Presence**

Sue Keatt on behalf of the Church Green Team

Prayer Focus for December 2024

Week Commencing Sunday 1st December

Jesus... said, 'I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.'
John 8:12

Please pray for our upcoming Christingle service taking place on Sunday 8th December. As we share fellowship and get creative, making our Christingles, may the light of Jesus shine into the hearts of all who come along.

Week Commencing Sunday 8th December

The people living in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.'
Matthew 4:16

As our various groups start to celebrate the coming of Jesus, may we share the joy of Christ's coming as a baby and may the hope He brings fill our hearts.

Week Commencing Sunday 15th December

If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and
satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
Isaiah 58:10

Week Commencing Sunday 22nd December

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 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.

Luke 2:6-7

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus!

Week Commencing Sunday 29th December

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Luke 2:17-18

Pray that we may courageously share the good news of Jesus with our friends, family, neighbours and colleagues!

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.

The Prayer Team

Friday Bible Study

We are meeting on Friday December 6th at 3pm in the lounge at church. It will be a Christmassy afternoon tea and is open to anyone who would like to join us! Please bring along a small contribution to share. Thank you! We would love to see you!

Monika

The Greatest Story Every Told

Several years ago, I led a party of 30 Church members to Cyprus, 'In The Steps Of St Paul'. One day, we visited the magnificent Roman amphitheatre at Kourion. Two coach loads of local Cypriot children were seated in a block, and their teacher began to explain the fascinating history of this place, which was their heritage.

But after five minutes in this glorious setting, she had to give up. The children simply weren't listening! These hundred bored children made their way back to their very smart coaches to return to their school. I managed to speak to the dejected teacher before she left. "It is very hard. They live for themselves; they don't want to learn."

A recent study in the UK has revealed that over 40% of our people are now atheists! More than those declaring themselves Christian! Many will send 'Festive Greetings' cards this year, rather than 'Christmas Joy To You'. There's no denying our Churches have lost vast numbers of young people in recent years. Many now have no Junior Church at all.

I remember watching an old James Bond film with my grandchildren twenty years ago. All Bond stories are similarly frightening: some arch-enemy wants to possess a mega-nuclear warhead, or have global control over others. (eg, Elliott Carver, Hugo Drax, Maximilian Largo etc) Our unchanging challenge is to remind ourselves that the most sensational story of all time is still the story of Jesus! And His Church exists to share that news enthusiastically with others. In the film 'The Greatest Story Ever Told', (which received 5 Academy Award nominations) one highlight shows three men hurrying towards Jerusalem's guarded wall. One shouts up, "I've just seen a dead man brought back to life!" Then a young man hollers, "I was a cripple, but now I can walk and run!" Finally, an old man arrives and shouts, "I was blind, but now I can see!" The Roman officer yells down, "Who has done these things?" All three yell back, "Jesus of Nazareth!"

This story is not boring. It is life-giving! Christmas is meant to be **CHRISTmas!** Christ at the centre of Christmas. A Saviour has been born to us! And His emphasis? "I have come that you may have life!" ANYONE who has genuine contact with Jesus, has this life. Peace in our war-torn world is possible through this Jesus, and our vital role is to keep sharing this greatest story ever told.

"Tell me the old, old story, Christ Jesus makes you whole." ".....fling wide the gates, and welcome Him into your lives."

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU!

Rev Malcolm Carter

Dates For Your Diary

December 2024

Sun 1st	10.00 a.m.	ICE Team. All Age Worship.
Sat 7th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)
Sun 8th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Ben Haslam / Dr Joan Wragg Sacrament & Themed Preaching
	4.30 p.m.	Christingle Service **
Christmas Tree Festival at St Thomas Methodist Church from 9th to 13th December 2024 from 11am to 3pm **		
Tue 10th	10.00 a.m.	Roundabout Café (until 12pm). Christmas Party **
Crediton Methodist Church 12 Days of Christmas Exhibition - 13th/14th Dec **		
Sat 14th	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)
	5.00 p.m.	Young Church Christmas Party **
Sun 15th	10.00 a.m.	Monika Noronha
Thu 19th	7.30 p.m.	Joan & Tony's Christmas Evening **
Crediton Methodist Church 12 Days of Christmas Exhibition - 20th/21st Dec **		
Sat 21st	10.30 a.m.	Wonford Welcome Drop-In (to 12.30 pm)
Sun 22nd	10.00 a.m.	Prof Tony Wragg
	5.30 p.m.	Carol Service - Rev Ben Haslam / Dr Jon Curtis
Wed 25th	10.00 a.m.	Christmas Morning Worship
Sat 28th	10.30 a.m.	No Wonford Welcome Today
Sun 29th	10.00 a.m.	Rev Dr Simon Leigh

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



The deadline for items for the January 2025 Newsletter will be Sunday 15th December 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 andrew.m.jackson@me.com

**Young Church
Christmas Party**

**Saturday 14th
December 2024**

5.00 to 6.30pm

**Christmas Day
Service**

**Wednesday 25th
December 2024**

10am



**Christmas
Evening**

All Welcome

**Thursday 19th December
7.30 p.m.**

**An evening of food,
fellowship and carol singing
at**

**2 Wallace Avenue, Whipton
- Joan & Tony Wragg**

**Small contributions to the
table appreciated**



Carol Service

All Are Welcome

**Sunday 22nd
December 2024**

5.30 pm

