



The Methodist Church

Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter' Pilning.

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We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit (www.bsgc.org.uk),

a family of over forty churches serving communities across the local area.

These notices are also posted on <http://www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk>

**God says "When they call to me, I will answer them;
when they are in trouble I will be with them." (Psalm 91).
"The best of all – God is with us." (John Wesley).**

Sunday, 22nd November, 2020.

Look out the window at any time of day and you can usually tell what season it is. Our local weather might not always be the best indicator, but other things give it away, especially trees. Trees are remarkable parts of the natural world and have been held sacred by many cultures for many centuries. Look at a deciduous tree and you will see it either in blossom, in full leaf, losing leaves, or bare. This tells us what season we are in, where in the rhythm of the year we are. For ancient Celtic cultures the seasons and cycles of the natural world were not only part of their livelihood, but it was all also interwoven into their spirituality alongside their everyday life. There was no separating the physical from the spiritual, the sacred from the secular: everything was spiritual.

Much natural rhythm this year has been impacted by the pandemic, and as we prepare to mark Advent and celebrate Christmas, many of the usual things we do will not be possible. In the past week or so, I've picked up on several conversations about putting up Christmas decorations early, a sign of yearning for something familiar. But for those who do so, will that glitz wear off before Christmas arrives? Within the rhythm of Christian tradition is the season of Advent, a time of expectant preparation before the joyous and wonderful celebration of Christmas.

So I invite you to embody this time of preparation, getting ready to open our eyes, minds and heart. Let's allow ourselves to live out the rhythm of this time of the year, shrouded in darkness but ready to accept the light of Christ. As the Apostle Paul said "...by taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such cannot see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being" (Romans 1:20 from *The Message*). Where better to start than by looking out of the window and appreciating that which is around us, ever changing and preparing for what comes next?

Rev Patrick

SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

Please note that, in accordance with the current Government lockdown, all the churches for which Revd Patrick Stonehewer is responsible are now CLOSED for worship until further notice. We will keep you updated via the weekly notices.

Songs of Praise. BBC1 at **2.15pm**. Katherine Jenkins presents Young Chorister of the Year – Girls' Semi-final.

Bible Study. Wednesday, 25th November at 7.45pm. Zoom Meeting details:- Meeting ID: 824 4060 4625, Passcode: 202692.

BSGC Corona Virus Worship resources.

Worship resources and other resources for reflection are available on the Circuit website. There is also a daily prayer, based around the

Methodist Prayer Handbook, for people to use at 12.00noon.

Our online worship videos will continue for the time-being. Please do continue to watch these and pray for those who lead and work in all these faith-based organisations.

Dial-a-Prayer. A FREE phone service to hear prayers and news from the Methodist Church has been launched, updated each Thursday evening. Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514 and Listen to news: 0808 281 2478.

Afterzoom tea. Sundays at 3.30pm to share news informally and see friends. Please join online via zoom.us Meeting ID: 962 4920 4497 Password: 004692.

Video reflections. A video reflection for this weekend is available on church websites.

If you would like to join either the Bible Study or Afterzoom Tea, but do not have internet access, you can use your phone: please dial **0330 088 5830** then enter the Meeting number followed by the password for the particular event. We look forward to hearing you join in.

All Age devotions. Alongside our own devotions included in this news sheet, there are free materials for younger members of our congregations accessible via www.rootsontheweb.com (and other material for the young at heart too).

Please join a weekly prayer meeting for the Methodist Church, 12.45pm to 1.00pm each Tuesday. Go to www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/year-of-prayer/ for details and to register for the online link.

CHURCH NOTICES.

All churches.



All Age Worship – Advent Sunday, 29th November. Rev Patrick will be leading All Age Worship online starting at 10.00am, lasting for about 45 minutes. You are all invited to join us in one of the following ways, whether you have online access or not. It would be helpful for you to join at least a few minutes before the service starts; we plan to provide some background music from 9.50am onwards. Follow this link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83622470345?pwd=UklqZTA3c2RtMmJuMmQ3cmRwKzhmUT09>

If using Zoom directly enter 836 2247 0345 as the meeting ID and the password *Wesley*. By telephone, dial 0203 481 5240 and enter 836 2247 0345# when prompted, then the pass code 228460#.

Big Church Sing Christmas Special. Sunday, 29th November at 4.00pm, join with churches all across the UK for The Big Church Sing Christmas Special live on the Methodist Church's YouTube channel! Celebrate the extraordinary news of Jesus' birth by singing your favourite Christmas carols with thousands of people alongside leading Christian musicians such as The National Methodist Choir and Lucy Grimble. You will also get the chance to join in the festive fun with a special Extraordinary Christmas Nativity narrated by Songs of Praise and CBeebies presenter Gemma Hunt! You certainly won't want to miss it!

www.youtube.com/c/MethodistChurch/videos

Bristol Methodist Centre Christmas

Appeal Gifts. You are requested this year to make Christmas parcels for guests are: Chocolate Oranges, Waterproofs, Wipes (small packs), Hand Sanitizer, Pocket packs of tissues, Reusable Masks, lynx body spray, Tealights. The Centre currently has no need for clothing, woolly hats, scarves or gloves. Donations, under current lockdown guidelines, can be taken to the Centre Mondays to Wednesdays between 9.30am and 11.00 am. They need to be at the Centre (Lincoln Street, Lawrence Hill, Bristol, BS5 0BJ) by Monday, 14th December at the latest.

Even though the future looks uncertain, the local charity SIXTY-ONE plans to go ahead with this year's Christmas Gift Project, giving bags of simple gifts to the 1,500 prisoners in HMP Bristol, Leyhill and Ashfield. This is only possible because of the brilliant support received from the prisons and local churches. This year Horfield Baptist church is allowing us to use their space to store the gifts - a huge thank you to Sarah and the team. Normally the churches who pack the gift bags provide the majority of the funding for this project. But this year some will not be able to do so, as they will not be holding the usual Christmas service collections (including members at Bishopston Methodist Church). Can you help make up the shortfall by making a donation towards these costs (each bag costs about £6)? Many prisoners will have spent the vast majority of the last eight months locked in their cell, so it is more important than ever to reach out to them this year. You can donate via

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/9773#!/#/DonationDetails> . **Thank you**

A place for all. The editors of the Methodist Prayer Handbook have put out a call for prayers to include in its 2021/2022 edition. The theme of the new handbook is "A place for all". We invite

prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, penitence and resolve that, with God's help, we may recognise and repent of our exclusivity, and that then we may be reconciling, open to all and ready to listen to all voices equally. The deadline for submission of prayers and photos is 11th January, 2021. Full submission guidelines, and details of where to send your contributions, can be found on the Prayer Handbook web page.

I heard recently of someone speaking of the difficulty that having a reduced income for a prolonged period has had on her well-being and life situation. Although helpful, furlough has left her in debt with little money for day-to-day expenses. This story is likely to be replicated time over, and as we live through this second period of lockdown, please do think about those who may be in this or a similar situation. People are suffering due to this long term reduction in income and many are getting behind on rent and mortgages, and struggling with the essentials. Both our local food banks have plenty of food, toiletries and pet food and really want to help. It is worth reminding people that they are there to be used if help is needed now. Call 0808 208 2138 for the Citizen's Advice Foodbank Referral line, refer them yourself, speak to a church steward or to Rev Patrick.

Horfield.

You are invited to join our 'Christmas in a Box' project, the idea being that you will receive a small cardboard box, which you can decorate with something special about Christmas. We are planning for the boxes to be returned to church in early December: more about that when we know exactly what will happen at the end of lockdown. The boxes will then decorate the church and halls, and be used for publicity about Christmas and for the church. Here are some ideas from when we did this a few years ago, but let your imagination work! If you would like to join in with this, please contact David Bainbridge 0117 985 7179, Jenny Cornell 07775 903131 or mail@horfieldmethodist.org.uk . **Once you have done your decoration, please take a picture so that it can be shared on the church website, and email mail@horfieldmethodist.org.uk**

Gift Service. This year we are again linking with Parkway Methodist Church to provide gifts for disadvantaged families in the inner city. You are asked to note that due to the current COVID-19 restrictions we are only able to accept **financial gifts**. As we were unable to meet in Church on 8th November for our Gift Service, donations can

be made on line by placing the following link in the web search bar: (Horfieldmethodist.mydona.com). You then need to click on **Christmas Giving** and follow the on screen guidance. Donations can also be made via a cheque made out to Horfield Methodist Church with a note marking it for **Christmas Giving** and addressed to: The Treasurer, Horfield Methodist Church, Churchways Avenue, Bristol, BS7 8SN

Junior Church. Junior Church sessions continue online every Sunday at 10:00am. Email Helen before Saturday midday, for each week's Junior Church Zoom access details (treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk).

"Magnet". We will no longer be doing a church order for the "Magnet". Anyone wishing to receive this magazine is asked to make their own arrangements as individual subscribers.

Christmas crafts. A full list of items is available on both the Horfield Methodist Church website and at www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk/fundraising, and can be ordered from there. The Christmas wreaths are expected to sell out quickly.

Fundraising. More items (including face masks and knitted Christmas tree bunting) have been added to our Christmas fundraising page - please check weekly as items are added from time-to-time. See www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk/fundraising Please note that it is advised that the last date for ordering handmade Christmas wreaths is Sunday 15th November, otherwise you may be disappointed. Watch this space for details of an online fundraising Christmas quiz evening - details soon.

An important part of our discipleship is to pray for our community and each other. This week you are asked to pray for the following people and their families:- Joan Davis, Libby Deeks, Disabled Christian Fellowship, and Jane Duffy.

Shirehampton.

Christians on the Cotswold was unable to meet last weekend because of the current COVID19 restrictions, but you are invited to listen to the second session on the prayer course (<https://prayercourse.org/>) and maybe have a chat (on the phone or email) to someone else about it afterwards? There are also various resources on the website as well - under the

section called "Toolshed". Certainly we will need to be praying over these next weeks and months!

Jean Dodrell plans to offer a Music Appreciation Course and invites interested people to contact her on 0117 985 0846.

WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.

Please continue to submit all items to John Hopper by each Tuesday (0117 951 4529 or p.hopper1@btinternet.com). To be added to, or deleted from, the electronic circulation, please email John Hopper.

This week's lectionary readings are:

Ezekiel 34: 11 – 16 & 20 - 24; Psalm 95: 1 - 7a or Psalm 100; Ephesians 1: 15 - 23; and Matthew 25: 31 - 46.

Reflection on Matthew 25: 31 - 46 by John Hopper (Horfield) - The Judgement of the Nations.

Our reading from Matthew tells of the end of time when all will be judged by Jesus. Jesus uses the image of a shepherd who sorts out the sheep from the goats. There will be a separation of those people who have done good things, and those who have failed to do good things. The image is about judgement – the judgement of all people, everywhere and from all times. Judgement is something we tend not to think about in this day and age. But it is part of the Gospel message, and we should not ignore it.

We should perhaps begin by recognising the plight of the poor old goat. The sheep seem to get all the praise. Of course, goats are not worse animals than sheep. Shepherds did separate sheep from the goats as sheep tolerate cold better than goats. So shepherds put goats in a protected spot, while the sheep continued to forage. For the readers of the book of Matthew this would have been a familiar.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus is coming to the end of his teaching, before he goes to Jerusalem where He will be crucified. As He concludes this teaching session it is as though Jesus is shown by Matthew to say "Look! what I have said is serious. This is important. Listen to what I say because there are consequences". It was not just for fun. God notices what goes on. God does indeed believe that the lives we lead here on earth are of consequence, and so our behaviour has serious consequences. The way in which we treat others is important to God. He takes note and, at the end, there is judgement.

The good news is that the challenge which Jesus gives can be fulfilled by anybody, by every one. Jesus simply tells his followers to be kind to one another - look after the poor, visit the sick, give food to the hungry, visit those in prison. We have heard it all before. In other words, love your neighbour. We can all do this. It is in doing so that we become a part of God's family.

Jesus is stressing the need for us to take His teaching seriously. How we behave now is important. In so much as people show kindness and mercy, they demonstrate the presence of God within them and live by the standards of His kingdom. They are to "Love one another, as I have loved you". Through their behaviour, they make themselves citizens of that kingdom of Jesus today, as the 'friends of Jesus', they become Christ's sheep.

The faithful see everyone as a brother or sister in Christ and respond in love to the need to care for all God's children, everywhere.

As for us, we know that we too are called to the service of others. We too are called to work to change oppressive systems and human structures that fail to serve the needy. We too are called to work towards relieving troubled lives and broken spirits. God's calls us to take the resources He has given to us and to use them for the good of all.

"When I needed a neighbour were you there?"

"Brother, sister, let me be your servant..."