



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, 29th November, 2020.

Advent begins this Sunday, a time of hopeful and expectant preparation as we approach the celebration of Christmas. Amidst the uncertainties which surround us at the moment, I hope and pray that we can all use this time as a way of expressing the deep and lasting hope expressed in Jesus Christ, God who is with us, in all seasons of life. Our worship over the coming weeks will focus each week on one aspect of 'A Methodist Way of Life,' a framework within which we express our relationship with God, both individually and collectively. The focus this week is on Learning and Caring, through which we aspire to help each other grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care. That takes shape in many ways, not least in our pastoral support for each other, but also in the way in which we seek to study God's word and bring it to life.

Many of you will be familiar with the work of George Müller, whose reading of the Bible and prayerful life encouraged him to set up orphanages locally in the 19th century, the legacy of which lives on in the Mullers organisation which continues to show Christian hope through the care which it provides for children and young people across the globe today. As we look for encouragement in our own care for each other, here are some words from George Müller's sermon 'The Secret of Prevailing Prayer' (NB 'profit' refers in context to the good outcome from an action or activity, not the monetary interpretation!):

"..let us persevere and go on steadily praying, and be assured that God is both able and willing to do it for us; and that it is the very joy and delight of His heart, for Christ's sake, to give to us all things which are for the glory of His name, and our good and profit."

Rev Patrick

SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

Songs of Praise. BBC1 at **2.15pm**. Aled Jones presents Young Chorister of the Year – Boys' Semi-final.

Bible Study. Wednesday, 2nd December 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. This is 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 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.

Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter. This year we will not be able to host homeless guests at Horfield as we have done over the last two years. Covid restrictions have forced the project into a new way of working. A B&B hotel has been hired for 12 weeks for the guests over the coldest months and various churches are supporting either directly or indirectly. From Horfield a few people will be volunteering at the B&B, but many cannot do that. There are other ways in which people can support this work.

- Prayer support will be co-ordinated by Rev Patrick Stonehewer and he will send email updates to those who are on his list
- Toiletries will be collected once again by children at Horfield CVEC school and we will make sure they are delivered to the B&B.
- Clothing donations may be welcome and more details will follow.

We can also support financially and a number of people have already indicated that they would like to donate to the project. The project has some reserves left from last year, but not enough to fund this year's work so financial support will be very welcome. There are three ways in which you can do that:

- Transfer money to the Horfield church bank account. You must use the reference BCWNS. If you do not have the account details and would like to pay by BACS please email treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk for the relevant details.
- Send a cheque payable to Horfield Methodist Church and include a covering note explaining that it is for the night shelter. It can be sent to: HMC Treasurer, 20 Cransley Crescent, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4PG.
- Donate by card by going to horfieldmethodist.myдона.com (if this link

does not open cut and paste it into your web browser).

Some of the Horfield Christmas offerings at church will also go towards the Night Shelter. I hope you will still feel able to be connected to the Night Shelter Project this year and that, next year, we might be able to host guests again at Horfield with our large and committed team of volunteers! *Stephen Holliday.*

Even though the future looks uncertain, the local charity SIXTY-ONE is going 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 year Horfield Baptist church is allowing the use their space to store the gifts. 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. 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". They are inviting prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, penitence. 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.

Do not forget the people who 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. They are there to be used. 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.

Fundraising. We are almost at the final stretch with our fundraising activities for this year and will be taking in our last orders on 10th December. We will not be taking any orders after that date. Please also note that we will need at least one week from order confirmation to delivery as a lot

of these items are made to order. We have one new item to add to our growing list: Christmas Crackers: (£2 for pack of 12).



Only 12 boxes available in Red (4), Silver (4) and Gold (4). Please use the Order Form (<http://www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk/fundraising-order-form>) or contact fundraising@horfieldmethodist.org.uk to make your purchases. Thank you and God Bless, *HMC Fundraising Team.*

Church notices. As some of you are aware, Elaine and I have decided to move in the New Year down to Pembrokeshire to be nearer our son and grandson. In view of this I have previously given notice of the following roles needing to be filled:-

- 1) Compilation and distribution of notices/news sheet.
- 2) Point of contact for preachers leading worship at Horfield.

As of 1st January, these positions will be vacant. If you would like to undertake either them, please contact Rev Patrick. *John Hopper.*

Christmas trees. Once again the 62nd Scout Group will be selling Christmas trees. This will be on Saturdays 5th and 12th December at Horfield Parish Hall, Wellington Hill between 9.00am and 4.30pm.

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. The boxes will then decorate the church and halls, and be used for publicity about Christmas and for the church. 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. 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.myдона.com). 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).

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:- Sue Dyer, Oliver Fairman, Finance and Property Group, Betty and Graham Franklin, and Pam Gannon.

WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.

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

Please note that the notices for **Sunday, 20th December** will be a **double** issue and will be issued on Friday, 18th December. All items must be with me by **Tuesday, 15th December**. The next issue after this will be that for Sunday, 3rd January, 2021 and will be compiled by my successor (to be notified). *John Hopper.*

This week's lectionary readings for the First Sunday in Advent are:
Isaiah 64: 1 – 9; Psalm 80: 1 – 7 & 17 – 19; 1 Corinthians 1: 3 - 9, and Mark 13 : 24 – 37.

Reflection on the gospel reading is by Christine Stones (Victoria).

In the middle of November, the WhatsApp group for my road began a discussion in response to a resident's question, "How soon can I put up my Christmas lights to bring some cheer to the street?" Today, is the first Sunday in the Church's season of Advent, a time associated with waiting and expectation, when we prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Today's Gospel passage certainly has an air of expectation, something significant is going to happen. But, the impending event is not the coming of the baby Jesus, the passage does not focus on what people associate with the message of Christmas. It starts, "*But in those days after that distress...*" The chapter is the final speech of Jesus' ministry and is a collection of dire warnings predicting suffering, persecution, disaster and desolation. It contains echoes of the prophetic tradition, where contemporary history and foreseeable events were viewed in the wider context of God's judgment and providence; here events are also linked with end times.

In verses 24 and 25, Mark continues the warnings of an unprecedented event with a stark picture of cosmic disturbance which heralds something very different.

"And then they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory and he will gather the elect from the corners of the earth."

After the devastation, the hopelessness and despair, here is the promise of God finally manifesting his sovereignty and the full realisation of His kingdom, in the coming of his Son. And *this* time the Son will come in glory and power.

Mark's readers, aware of this promise, were grappling with two dangers. Firstly, that as the end had not come at once it would not come and they no longer should be vigilant. Secondly, they struggled with speculation about date and time. These dangers are addressed by Jesus in two parables.

The first parable is about the Fig Tree. Many trees in Palestine were evergreen, but the dormant, seemingly dead, Fig Tree brings promise of new life as its leaves unfurl in spring and in a very short time summer arrives. The message is do not lose hope, be patient and read the signs that will tell you the time is near.

The second parable warns against speculation. Today some people would link devastating events of this year (flood, fire, earthquake and pandemic) with this chapter and use them to predict a date for the end of the world. These extreme events demonstrate humanity's disastrous impact on the natural world, but this passage firmly warns against speculation. No one, not even the Son, knows the day or hour. The disciples, like the second parable's servants, must wait and watch for their master's return. The parable also says that the servants are given tasks by their master and must continue to work. So, we too are called to wait, watch and continue the Master's work.

Prayer.

"God our deliverer, whose approaching birth still shakes the foundations of our world:

May we so wait for your coming with eagerness and hope that we embrace without terror the labour pangs of the new age, through Jesus Christ, Amen." (From Janet Morley, 'All Desires Known', published by SPCK.)