



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, 6th December, 2020.



As we approach Christmas, we look back on a strange, unsettling, chaotic year. So much has happened; so much news to process, respond to and have an opinion on: a global pandemic, political upheaval, racial injustice, environmental crisis; the list goes on. For many of us this will have caused anxiety and stress, an almost overwhelming tide of pain, turmoil and injustice. For others the effects are maybe less, but the regular punctuation of bad news chips away at our sense of well-being. It has been a year of loss, grief and shifting perspectives, no matter who we are or what our situation. It may be tempting to race to the end of the year, to write it off and get ready to start again. But Advent asks us to pause, take stock; to wait and prepare for Christmas.

In the book of Isaiah, we read “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned”, words which not only ring true in the challenges around us, but also in the counsel, protection, rescue and peace that Jesus offers.

As we take this Advent season to stop, rest, acknowledge the pain and ask for healing and peace, let us consider what is lost and ask what it means for God to be with us. That helps us to not just look back, but also look forward in hope, anticipating the light even into deep darkness.

Rev Patrick

P.S. You will see below that some of our churches will be reopening over the coming weeks, but others will not. Thank you to the Church Stewards and others in each church community who have been handling discussions about this, and coming to an appropriate decision in each place. Things may well change over the coming weeks, and we will do our best to communicate with you as things develop.

I would like to re-iterate the information circulated before about your decision to attend worship in person: the decision to do so rests entirely with you, taking into consideration your own circumstances and health. It is worth emphasising that although you could come to church, the decision about doing so rests with you individually and you must take responsibility for your own health in deciding whether to start attending again. For those who choose not to come or are unable to, we will continue to support you by means of online reflections and those in the weekly newsletter; pastoral visitors will also continue to try to keep in touch by phone. Please feel free to call your pastoral visitor or a steward for a chat. There will continue to be an informal meeting using 'Zoom' between 3.30 – 4.00pm each Sunday afternoon. If you would like support to join this by phone or your own electronic device, please get in touch.

LOCAL SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

Bishopston. The next service is currently planned for Sunday, 13th December at 10.30am. Revd Patrick Stonehewer. Will include Holy Communion. Following service Sunday, 20th December.

Easter Compton. No services currently scheduled in person.

Horfield. Sunday, 6th December at 10.00am. Revd Patrick Stonehewer. Will include Holy Communion and will also relayed via Zoom. To attend in person, please reserve a place call 0755 278 0740. We need to do this to stay within the maximum number permitted. The steward taking the call will remind you about the COVID19 secure arrangements which will be in place. Those wishing to join via Zoom, use the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89060684100?pwd=SnFyYzIPdDNwQ1QxeDUrNmVQK1QxUT09> , or if using Zoom directly, enter 890 6068 4100 as the meeting ID and the password 'Wesley' By telephone, dial 0203 481 5240 and enter 890 6068 4100# when prompted, then the pass code 896254#. Following service Sunday, 13th December.

St Peter's Pilning. Sunday, 6th December at 10.00am in the church, led by Rev Philip Rowe. Will include Holy Communion. Following service Sunday, 13th December.

Shirehampton. Sunday, 6th December at 11.00am via Zoom, led by Ken and Pearl Luxon. Please contact Vick Crane or Colin Sleath for the Zoom link. The remainder of December's services will join with Horfield, online.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

- There will be an online carol service, with material from across the Circuit, available over the weekend of 19th/20th December. More details to follow.
- **Christmas Eve.** 11.30pm at Horfield, led by Rev Patrick Stonehewer, with Holy Communion. This will also relayed via Zoom. Details to follow.
- **Christmas Day.** 10.00am, led by Rev Patrick Stonehewer, via Zoom. We are hoping for as many of you who can to join us from your homes, either on line or via phone link.

Sunday Worship. BBC1 at 11.30am. Revd Allan Miller leads a service from the Church of the Holy Rood, Stirling.

Songs of Praise. BBC1 at 1.15pm. Revd Kate Botley hosts the final of Young Chorister of the Year.

Bible Study. Wednesday, 9th 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. Share news informally and see friends. Join online viza 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, 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. Free materials for younger members via www.rootsontheweb.com.

Methodist Church prayer meeting. 12.45pm to 1.00pm each Tuesday. Go to www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/year-of-prayer/ .

CHURCH NOTICES.

All churches.

Big Church Sing Christmas Special. Join with churches all across the UK for The Big Church Sing Christmas Special on the Methodist Church's YouTube channel. Celebrate Jesus' birth by singing your favourite Christmas carols with thousands of people alongside leading Christian musicians. Also a chance to join in the

festive fun with a special Extraordinary Christmas Nativity narrated by Songs of Praise and CBeebies presenter Gemma Hunt!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSeBSH2w1GQ>

Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter. This year a B&B hotel has been hired for 12 weeks. Many churches are supporting either directly or indirectly. There are several ways in which you can support this work.

- Prayer support, co-ordinated by Rev Patrick Stonehewer. He will send email updates to those who are on his list
- Toiletries will be collected by children at Horfield CVEC school. We will make sure they are delivered to the B&B.
- Clothing donations are welcome. More details will follow.

There are three ways in which you can provide financial support.

- Transfer money to the Horfield church bank account. 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.
- Send a cheque payable to Horfield Methodist Church, with a covering note, to HMC Treasurer, 20 Cransley Crescent, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4PG.
- Donate by card by going to horfieldmethodist.myдона.com.

Bishopston.

Thank you. The following letter has been received from the Bristol Methodist Centre in response to a donation of £185: "Thank you for the generous donation you sent on behalf of Bishopston Methodist Church, from the harvest service. We are so grateful for all the support we have received during the pandemic. It has enabled us to provide take-away food and support for our guests, in a way that is safe for everyone. With best wishes from the staff and Management Committee at Bristol Methodist Centre."

Horfield.

'Christmas in a box'. The church will be open on Wednesday, 9th December, 6.30pm to 7.30pm for you to bring your completed boxes along to help decorate the church. We have already had lots of great contributions! If you would still like to contribute, the idea is that you will receive a small cardboard box, which you can decorate with something special about Christmas. If you would like to

join in, please contact David Bainbridge on 0117 985 7179, Jenny Cornell on 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, by emailing mail@horfieldmethodist.org.uk

Family-fun festive fundraising quiz! Join us for a fun time on Zoom for a 'not-too-taxing-on-the-brain' quiz for all the family, hosted by Dan Smith on Saturday, 19th December, 4.30pm - 6.00pm. Christmas jumpers welcome! There will be a 10-minute interlude halfway through when you can make yourself a cuppa and have a mince pie/sandwich whilst working on the answers for one of the rounds - or just have a quick chat with some of the other quizzers! Suggested minimum donation of £2 per adult, children - free. No prize - just a big round of applause at the end for the winner! Some rounds will be visual (e.g. charades), but the rest will be fine if you are only able to join us by phone. Contact Helen (Email: treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk or tel 0117 9624 257) for the Zoom access details and also how to pay.

Fundraising. We will be taking in our last orders on **10th December**. 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. Please use the order form <http://www.horfieldmethodist.org.uk/fundraising-order-form> or contact fundraising@horfieldmethodist.org.uk.

Church notices, etc. As of 1st January, the following positions will be vacant.

- 1) Compilation and circulation of notices.
- 2) Point of contact for preachers leading worship at Horfield.

If you would like to undertake either them, please contact Rev Patrick.

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:- John Gard, Judith Gardiner, Ada Gilbert, and Elaine and Michael Gibson.

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 Second Sunday in Advent are:
Isaiah 40: 1 – 11; Psalm 85: 1 – 2 & 8 – 13; 2 Peter 3: 8 - 15a; and Mark 1 : 1 – 8.

Reflection on the gospel reading is by Dottie North (Victoria).

Sometimes, when you hear the same thing all the time, it starts to become less and less meaningful. For example, right now, at this time in the year, the newspapers, the TV, and the internet have all been saying the same thing, "It's Black Friday week". There are special sales going on right now. At first, you might think, "I really don't need anything, but it sounds too good to miss." Then, of course there are all the adverts geared to what to buy for Christmas, even though we all know that it is going to be a very different Christmas for lots of us this year. After a while the advertising, the sales, all become less and less meaningful. We become saturated with advertising language. It all sounds the same.

Now we are hearing so much talk about we shall have to miss sharing and caring, singing and hugging, large Christmas lunches, family time. Of course, it will be sad to have to miss many of these things for many people – for people of all faiths or none. Yet, as Christians, surely the real meaning of Christmas is different – just as if we had met John the Baptist we would have realised straight away that he was different.

What would it be like to meet John the Baptist? If he sat across from you at your kitchen table, what do you think he would say to you? The first thing he'd probably tell you is that he has a special job to do because it is John that Isaiah is talking about in today's Old Testament reading.

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, a voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

John's job was to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. That is what he would do if you had been able to talk to him face to face - to work on preparing you to celebrate Christ's birth. He would also work on preparing you for the second coming of Christ. What would be his message? Would he tell you, "Do not forget about sharing and caring and loving as you prepare for Christmas?" Or would he be telling you that it is time for repentance – a time to change?

I think he would tell you about someone who is coming who is greater, more powerful, more compelling, more amazing than anyone that has ever lived. Someone who will demonstrate his power in all kinds of ways: through his miracles, his death and resurrection and through his gift of the Holy Spirit, his faith, hope and love to you.

So, let our Christmas preparation be a time filled with more than just a series of advertising and empty clichés. Caring and sharing and family and giving and charity are all good things, not just for Christmas, but all year round. Advent is the time to rejoice that someone has come, someone greater than John the Baptist, than you or me, someone has come who brings real meaning to this special time of the year.

"Loving God, in this season of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son may we, as John the Baptist was, be bold in sharing the great news of His coming. Amen."