



The Methodist Church

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

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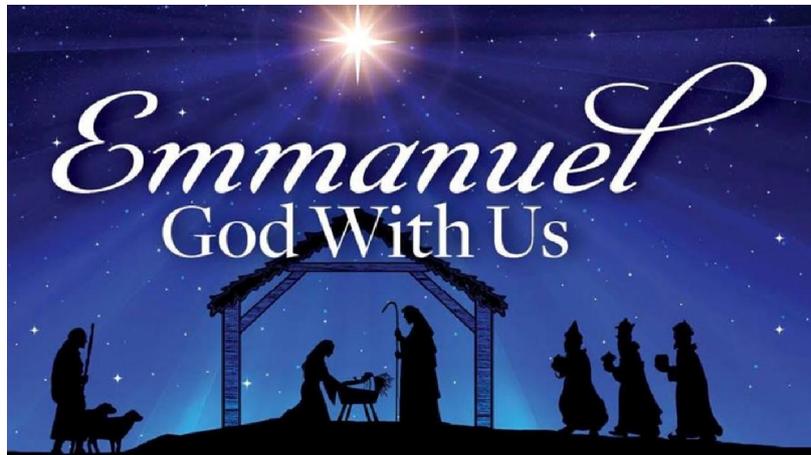
We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit (www.bsgc.org.uk),

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

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

“The best of all – God is with us.” (John Wesley).

Sunday, 20th December, 2020.



“Promised Messiah, born in a stable but born to be king.

King of kings, worshipped by wise men yet with no earthly throne.

Son of David, who came in humble triumph to show a new way.

Great high priest who came to fulfil the Law but not to maintain it.

Friend of sinners, Who befriended that the outcast and healed the sick.

Wonderful counsellor, who washed the feet of his disciples, a servant to the world.

Bread of life and true vine, who offered up himself to feed all people.

Prince of peace, Who when the crowds shouted, "Crucify!" prayed, "Father, forgive."

Lamb of God, branded as a scapegoat and sacrifice offered, a ransom paid for us all.

Son of man, who was laid in a borrowed tomb, quiet and still.

Light of the world, who overcame the darkness and ushered in a new dawn.

Name above all names, promised ascended and glorified, lead us on.

God is with you – me – us.” (Words by Deacon Becky Lovatt)

GOD
IS WITH

you
me
us
▶

I wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas, and pray for a hope-filled 2021 for you, those you love and all those Jesus calls us to love. Rev Patrick.

THANK YOU (and that's a BIG THANK YOU). This set of notices will be John Hopper's last as editor. On behalf of everyone, particularly at Horfield, I would like to offer our heartfelt thanks for all that you have done over many years, John, to produce these weekly notices including the weekly printing. Thanks to the pandemic, there has been more than enough to keep you on your toes of late, but I hope you will accept everyone's thanks for this vital contribution to church life. As you and Elaine prepare to leave Bristol, all being well in 2021, our prayers are with you as you loosen your many ties with Bristol and head west to join your son in Pembrokeshire. May God continue to graciously bless you.

p.s. Church Leadership Teams are continuing to review whether and when churches can open for worship; some church buildings are open for worship, others not. The decision to attend in person rests entirely with individuals, taking account of circumstances and health. We will continue to offer weekly online reflections and this weekly newsletter; pastoral visitors will also keep in touch regularly. Please do call your pastoral visitor or a steward if you need a chat or other support. There will continue to be an informal meeting using 'Zoom' at 3.30pm each Sunday. If you would like support to join this, please get in touch. *Rev Patrick.*

LOCAL SERVICES, DEVOTIONS, ETC.

Bishopston.

- Sunday, 20th December at 10.30am, led by members of the congregation.
- Christmas Eve, 24th December at 11.30pm, Midnight Service including Holy Communion, led by Revd Patrick Stonehewer from Horfield, relayed via Zoom.
Christmas Day, 25th December at 10.00am, Christmas Celebration **via Zoom only.**
- Sunday, 27th December at 10.30am, led by Adam Biddlestone.
- Sunday, 10th January, 2021 at 10.30am. Covenant Service led by Rev Patrick Stonehewer

Easter Compton.

No services currently scheduled in person.

Horfield and Shirehampton.

- Sunday, 20th December at 10.00am *, All Age Nativity Service, relayed via Zoom. Please dress up in your favourite character from the Christmas Story
- Christmas Eve, 24th December at 11.30pm *, Midnight Service including Holy Communion, led by Rev Patrick Stonehewer from Horfield, relayed via Zoom.
- Christmas Day, 25th December at 10.00am, Christmas Celebration **via Zoom only.**
- Sunday, 27th December at 10.00am, led by Howard Wilson **via Zoom only.**
- Sunday, 3rd January, 2021 at 10.00am led by Ken Luxon and relayed via Zoom.

* To attend Horfield in person, please reserve a place by calling 0755 278 0740. We need to do this to stay within the maximum number permitted. Please see the last page of this news sheet for the details for Zoom, including how to phone in.

St Peter's Pilning.

- Sunday, 20th December 10.00am.
- Sunday, 27th December at 10.00am, with Holy Communion, Rev Patrick Stonehewer.
- Sunday, 3rd January, 2021 at 10.00am, with Holy Communion, Revd Philip Rowe.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

You are all invited share a **Carol Service** at the same time as AfterZoom tea on Sunday, 20th December from 3.30pm. Dress festively, and bring your own mince pie and cuppa!

Christmas Eve, 24th December at 11.30pm, Midnight Service including Holy Communion, led by Rev Patrick Stonehewer. This will be led from Horfield and available via Zoom too.

Christmas Day, 25th December at 10.00am, Christmas Celebration from your home, **via Zoom only.**

Please see the last page of this news sheet for the details for Zoom, including how to 'phone in. If you would like support with accessing these services online or via the phone, please make contact with a Church Steward or Rev Patrick.

Sunday Worship.

Sunday, 20th December. BBC1 at 11.00am. Revd Canon Roland Riem leads morning worship from Winchester Cathedral. With carols from the Songs of Praise archive and a special performance from the boys choir Libera.

Sunday, 27th December. BBC1 at 9.10am. The Revd Canon Mark Preece leads morning worship from Llandaff Cathedral. With hymns from the Songs of Praise archive and new recording from the Cardiff-based choir Cordydd.

Songs of Praise.

Sunday, 20th December. BBC1 at **12.00noon.** The UK's Favourite Carol. Aled Jones reveals the UK's favourite carol from St Paul's Cathedral with star guests Andrea Bocelli, Cliff Richard, the Kingdom Choir, The Priests and Katherine Jenkins.

Sunday, 27th December. BBC1 at 1.20pm. Mark De-Lesser joins soul legend as she shares her journey of faith from her Pentecostal upbringing, through global fame, family tragedy and her return to gospel music.

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>

BSGC Coronavirus 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.

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.

BIBLE STUDY. The Weekly Bible Study will recommence in the New Year. More details to follow.

Afterzoom tea.

Sundays at 3.30pm, to share news informally and see friends. Please see the last page of this news sheet for the details for Zoom, including how to phone in.

Video reflections. Our online worship videos will continue for the time-being, available via church websites. Thank you to those who have contributed to these.

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.

Thank you. May I say thank you to the stewards of all the churches who have looked after me over the years whenever I have had the privilege of preaching at their church. *John Hopper.*

The CAPtivating Quiz. Come and join us on Saturday January 16th 2021 for the online CAPtivating quiz in order to raise awareness of and funding for the Bristol NW CAP Debt Centre. If you know your CAPitals, the difference between a latte and a CAPpuccino and know about the CAPed crusader then this quiz is for you. Details to follow in January but why not put the date in your diary today. For more info email: debzspinney@capuk.org

Singing for Wellbeing Workshop. Monday, 18th January, 2021, 10.30am to 11.30am. Singing has many benefits to our health and wellbeing. This **free online workshop** is an opportunity to experience some of the ways in which singing can improve your physical health and lift your mood. The session is hosted by registered music therapists and New Room community choir leaders Judit and Meg. Singing is a mindful activity that demands our full concentration, taking our minds away from worry and stress. Come along and enjoy an hour of mindful singing with the aim of improving our wellbeing. To book your free place go to the New Room website and click on Events. *"Very enjoyable and uplifting, thank you". "Made me happy!" "Fun, active and relaxing."* Interested in improving your wellbeing, but can't make the workshop? There is The New Room Community Choir who sing together every Wednesday lunchtime during term time.

Please continue to pray for the work of the **Winter Night Shelter** over the coming weeks as the final preparations are completed. The headlines are that seven en-suite rooms will be available in a centrally located B&B with Covid-secure accommodation. There will be between 7-14 guests at any one time (allowing for any couples). The funding target has almost been met (THANK YOU!), recruitment for a Deputy Coordinator continues, and lastly volunteer churches and individuals are signing up, but there are still gaps. There are several ways in which you can support this work. Prayer support, co-ordinated by Revd Patrick Stonehewer. He will send email updates to those who are on his list.

- By thinking about being a mentor, to support the homeless guests. If you think you have some of the following skills, please talk to Rev Patrick about the possibility of offering your time in this way in January, February and March: excellent listening skills, ability to empower others, ability to ask open questions, can maintain boundaries, non-judgemental character, encouraging, ability to challenge, reliable, accountable. Training will be provided in early January.

You can provide financial support, if you are able:

- By transferring money to the Horfield Church bank account, using reference BCWNS. If you do not have the account details, please email treasurer@horfieldmethodist.org.uk.
- Sending 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 is looking for someone to manage the financial books on a month to month basis. Some knowledge of book keeping would be an advantage. Remuneration to be negotiated. If you are interested please contact Mrs Pauline Harris on pfharris@blueyonder.co.uk. Thank you.

Horfield.

Thank you. May I say a big thank you to everyone who have helped and supported me in producing the notices over the last ten years, especially Michael and Elaine Gibson for their proof reading. Also, thank you to all our various and many lesson readers for their devoted service. *John Hopper.*

Many thanks to all those who have given donations through the church for the charities we have supported since September, as well as our online virtual Christmas Fair in aid of our own church funds. Amounts as follows: Harvest offering in aid of the Bristol Methodist Centre - £177.00 (we are also aware that some donations were paid directly to the Centre); Parkway Methodist Christmas Box appeal for those in their local community (Easton and surrounding areas) £220.00; Virtual Christmas Fair in aid of HMC - over £700 (a late order received will add to this total!); Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter received so far (donations still welcome) - £464. Many thanks for your continued generosity. Helen Wallbridge, Treasurer, Horfield MC.

Greetings from Linnette Nelson to all members and friends at Horfield, wishing you a happy Christmas and peaceful and blessed New Year.

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.

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:- Jade Heal, Gail and Stephen Holiday, John Hopper, and Brenda How.

SHIREHAMPTON.

Local churches in and around Shire are planning to lead an Alpha Course, starting in the New Year. Alpha is ideal for anyone asking questions about faith and interested in exploring ideas. It's also good for new Christians, newcomers to church and those wanting to brush up on the basics. Further details from John Goodenough, Lawrence Weston Baptist Church: 0117 950 6755, 07773 110635 or johnthebaptist19a@hotmail.co.uk

WEEKLY NOTICES, ETC.

All items to be sent to Eurfron Parry by each Tuesday (eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk , or 117 969 1908). The next issue will be that for **Sunday, 3rd January, 2021.**



This week's lectionary readings for the Fourth Sunday in Advent are:

2 Samuel 7: 1 – 11, 16; Psalm 89: 1 – 4 & 19 – 26; 1 Romans 16: 25 - 27; and Luke 1: 26 – 38.

The reflection on the gospel reading is by Ruth Marshall (Lay Pastor, Summerhill).

Almost there.

Today, we celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Angel's Candle symbolizing PEACE. With just four days left to prepare for Christmas Day celebrations, it is a time of final preparation. In today's secular world it is a time for many of us to be rushing to get the last few things for the Christmas festivities. For many of us these last few days leading up to Christmas Day are anything but peaceful!

However let us ponder on "Almost There". Almost there, just four days left before Christmas Day - we are almost there. Almost there, whether in favour or not, Great Britain will soon be leaving the European Union - almost there. Almost there, an effective vaccine has been found against Covid-19 and vaccinations have started to be administered almost there. Many of our churches have been closed during this Pandemic, some have re-opened their doors when allowed, but services have been restricted to a certain number of people, no singing has been allowed, social distancing and face coverings have been mandatory. However, despite buildings being closed and services being restricted the people of the Church have found ways to continue in fellowship with one another via Zoom, phone calls, emails, or mailing reflections offering words of hope and encouragement.

In this week's Lectionary from 2 Samuel David seeks to build a permanent building for the Ark of God, which had previously been housed in a tent. God tells Nathan to remind David that God had been moving about in a tent during the journeying of the Israelites and it will be David's son, not David, who will build a permanent dwelling place for the Ark of God.

As we ponder on the final push to control Covid-19 and how we might once again worship whilst being physically together again, let us not forget that God has been continually **with us**, whether we have embarked on restricted services in buildings, or whether we have worshipped Him in our own homes. God is not confined to buildings.

"Almost there" conjures up a whole load of thoughts, dreams, aspirations, anxieties, and worries. "Almost there" may bring an end to what we had previously envisioned, but it might also bring new opportunities. Are we ready for that? It is recorded in the book of Acts that when Paul met with King Agrippa, he reminded the King that he was most knowledgeable about the Old Testament Prophets, to which King Agrippa replied "*Almost thou hast persuaded me to be a Christian*". (King James Version Acts 26 v 28). King Agrippa was 'almost there', but seemed to have missed the opportunity to accept Jesus as his Saviour.

"Almost there," we stand on the threshold of possible immense change. However, as we draw close to once again reminding ourselves of the baby born in a stable who was to become the Saviour of the world, may we recall the continual presence of God. When the rush of Christmas preparations is complete, let us take time to be at Peace, to meditate on the first Christmas, meditate on the journeys of Jesus Christ our Saviour and seek His will going forward. As God given opportunities arise, let us remember the sad rendition of King Agrippa, "*Almost thou hast persuaded me*". Let us not miss an avid opportunity to move forward. Let us be prepared to follow God's leading wherever that path might lead.

Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, as we draw closer to the day we celebrate your birth, help us to ponder on your Holiness, Love, and provision. Help us to be open to your calling and direction, embracing change if that's what is required. Help us to share your love with others as you first loved us. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Post Script (John Hopper).

I am convinced that nothing can separate us from His love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below - there is nothing in all creation (**not even Corona virus**) that can ever separate us from the love of God.

God is indeed 'WITH US'.