



## The Methodist Church

Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter's Pilning.  
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We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit ([www.bsqc.org.uk](http://www.bsqc.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's table is open to all

## Sunday 12 December 2021



Over the last few days, I've started to prepare for our Christmas services. There is something mystical about celebrating this key Christian festival, not least for me in leading worship as Christmas begins during our midnight Communion Service. I'm not always tied to the words provided in the Methodist Worship Book, but those provided for that service remind us about the mystery of God's coming amongst us in Jesus, and its place in history. John's Gospel puts it 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.' (John 1:14, KJV) which another translation renders as 'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood' (John 1:14a The Message).

Whether we prefer the traditional or the modern words, God came to be amongst us, echoed in: 'Christ is the bread of life. Christ is the light of the world. God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us light and life' (MWB p139) as we share bread and wine together in that midnight service. Sharing bread and wine hasn't been possible for everyone during the pandemic, particularly those joining services online. Following a decision at the Methodist Conference earlier in the year, it is now possible for those participating in Communion Services remotely to use their own bread and wine, so that all present (whether in the church building or online) can unite with God and each other in remembering that God is with us all, living amidst us.

If you are planning to join our Midnight Communion Service online, and would like to do this, please have some bread and some grape juice ready to use. Once the service is finished, please consume or dispose of any remaining bread and wine reverently, in common with our usual practice. Equally, just because you can, doesn't mean that you must share the elements at home - that decision rests with you. The words of our communion prayers will continue to acknowledge that we join together in God's name, however we do that. I am also intending to invite people to share remotely for future online services which include Holy Communion (usually those from Horfield on the first Sunday of each month). If you would like to know more about the discussions which have taken place about this, then please read <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/23228/f-and-o-conducting-services-of-holy-communion-online-0921.pdf> or get in touch with me.

May God fill us with light, joy and peace Rev Patrick

### **FORTHCOMING SERVICES on 12 December**

**Horfield** in person and on Zoom at 10.00 conducted by D. North.

**Bishopston at 10.30** led by Rev. Patrick Stonehewer with Holy Communion.

**Shirehampton at 11.00.** Local Arrangement with All Age Worship.

**St Peter's, Pilning with Easter Compton at 10.00** led by Adam Biddlestone.

**Circuit Evening Service at Horfield at 6pm** in person or on Zoom led by Rev. L. Maydew.

**Horfield.** We have recently reviewed the arrangements for attending worship in person, in light of the current guidance about Covid-19. The strict limit on numbers attending is removed, but the stewards on duty will use their discretion to decide when the building is full. Please continue to arrive in good time so you can register your Track and Trace details, entering via the left-hand doors from Gloucester Road, with the side (red) door in Churchways Avenue solely for those needing level access. Please wear a face covering whilst in the building unless you have a medical exemption, and follow other Covid-19 arrangements whilst inside, including maintaining two metres social distancing. Do not attend worship in person if you have any symptoms of Covid-19. You will continue to be able to join the service via Zoom.

### **OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 12 December and the week**

**Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10.** Jazz Carols from Highfields Church, Cardiff.

**Songs of Praise. BBC 1 at 13.15.** Festive joy in Lincoln.

**Daily Service at 09.45.** BBC Radio 4 Long Wave.

**Open Café Church** on 13 December from 10.00 onwards hosted by St Peter's, Pilning. Please contact [churchwardenpilning@gmail.com](mailto:churchwardenpilning@gmail.com) for the joining details.

**Evening Prayer** every Wednesday at 4.00 hosted by St Peter's, Pilning, using the Church of England "Join us in Daily Prayer - <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-andworship/joinuservice-daily-prayer>

### **WORSHIP DETAILS FOR 19 December**

**Horfield at 10.00** in person and on Zoom led by Rev N. Headley.

**Bishopston at 10.30.** Local Arrangement leading Carols.

**Shirehampton Candlelit Carols at 3.00** led by Rev. P. Stonehewer.

**St Peter's Pilning and Easter Compton** led by the Anglican Team.

**Horfield Candlelit Carols at 6pm** in person and on Zoom led by Revs. N. Headley and P. Stonehewer.

**WEEKLY NOTICES.** Please send items to Eurfron by Tuesday, [eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk) or 0117 969 1908. Note that there will not be any Notices issued separately for 26 December so any items relating to the rest of the month should be sent in by this coming Tuesday, 14 December.

### **GENERAL NOTICES**

**Fancy a day out in Gloucester?** The District is seeking to appoint two people to visit a manse in the Gloucestershire Circuit as part of the stationing process for a probationer minister appointment, to ensure that the manse is suitable and well-maintained. There will be a simple form to follow and an opportunity to have a day out in lovely Gloucester. If you would like to know more, please talk to Rev Patrick.

Our friends at **the New Room Bristol** are running a Messy Nativity and crafts on Tuesday December 21st. Come dressed as a shepherd, an angel or king, hear the Christmas story and sing some carols. See the links below for more information!

Christmas Crafts. <https://www.facebook.com/events/3096501990630824>

Nativity. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1229875317519600>

The theme for next year's **Methodist Prayer Handbook** is 'The Greatest Commandment': Matthew 22: 37-39. Further inspiration for the prayers comes from Acts 2. Imagine the Church filled with a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and completely dependent on the sovereign work of God. Imagine the Church filled with people wholly focused on loving God, loving our neighbours and loving of ourselves. Prayers are invited for the Methodist Church to be the Church that God desires, and that explore how we should live out Our Calling, as we respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ through discipleship, worship and mission. The deadline for submission of prayers and photos is Monday 10 January 2022. Please email prayers and photographs to: Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR

**Shirehampton.** Cotswold Christian Community will be holding a Christingle Service in the Community Centre on Sunday 12 December at 5pm.

**Horfield.** An Afternoon Christmas Tea will be held on Tuesday, 14 December from 2.30. to 3.30. This event is open to anyone who wishes to come. Please contact Eurfron on 0117 9691908 if you intend coming so that we can make sure we have ample food.

**Horfield Church offering.** Along with most churches Horfield Methodist has suffered a significant drop in income due to the church being closed for periods during the pandemic. The main impact has been loss of income from users of the building. However, whilst congregational giving is also down it has been greatly helped by those who have sent cheques, continued to set aside their weekly offerings and especially those who have made the change to standing order payments. This has not only helped the church's cash flow but also reduced the need to handle money with the risk of contamination. We would encourage as many people as possible to continue making standing order payments but some will wish to continue to make their contribution via the offering plate or through the envelope scheme. Please, could those who wish to continue using weekly offering envelopes let me know as soon as possible. If I don't hear from you I will assume you no longer wish to give in this way. David Bainbridge - tel. 0117 9857179

**Horfield and Bishopston.** An important part of our discipleship is to pray for our community and one another. This week you are asked to pray for the following and their families: Monique Brocklesby, Jayne Brown, Richard Brown, Brownies, Janet Browning.

**Bristol Passion Play.** Together4Bristol are putting on a Passion Play at five locations around Central Bristol on Good Friday, 15 April 2022. Volunteers are needed for the street performances and supporting roles leading up to the Play and on the day. More information can be found in the briefing paper below and on the Together4Bristol website. [https://mcusercontent.com/bcf1bde8bc4a29dae7362b02a/files/e41a4e8b-7230-2278-37bff33cd056e6d7/Passion\\_Pitch\\_Engagement.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/bcf1bde8bc4a29dae7362b02a/files/e41a4e8b-7230-2278-37bff33cd056e6d7/Passion_Pitch_Engagement.pdf)  
[https://www.together4bristol.org.uk/Articles/623167/Bristol\\_Passion\\_Play.aspx](https://www.together4bristol.org.uk/Articles/623167/Bristol_Passion_Play.aspx)

**Dates for your diary.**

**Horfield and Bishopston.** Sunday 16 January, Covenant Service and Church Meeting.

**Special days this week.** 13 December, St. Lucia Day; 16 December, Jane Austen Day; 17 December, Wear a Christmas Hat Day.

## **Christmas Services**

### **Bishopston**

Sunday 19 December at 10.30. Coffee and Carols.

Christmas Eve 24 December at 11.30pm. Joint Christmas Communion Service at Horfield (also on Zoom).

Christmas Day 25 December at 10.30. Christmas Day Worship.

### **Horfield**

Sunday 19 December at 6.00. Candlelit Carols (also on Zoom).

Christmas Eve 24 December at 4.00. Messy Christmas for all ages.

Christmas Eve 24 December at 11.30pm. Joint Christmas Communion Service (also on Zoom).

Christmas Day 25 December at 10.00. Christmas Day Worship (also on Zoom).

### **St. Peter's, Pilning**

Monday 20 December at 7.30pm. Candlelit Carols at St Peter's School, Bank Rd, Pilning, Bristol BS35 4JG.

Christmas Eve 24 December at 9.30. Christmas Communion Service.

Christmas Day 25 December at 10.30. Christmas Day Worship.

### **Shirehampton**

Sunday 19 December at 3.00. Candlelit Carols.

Christmas Eve 24 December at 11.30pm. Joint Christmas Communion Service at Horfield (also on Zoom).

Christmas Day 25 December at 10.30. Christmas Day Worship.

### Reflection on the Lectionary, Sunday 12 December, (Advent 3)

Isaiah 12 : 2 - 6; Zephaniah 3 : 14 - 20; Philippians 4 : 4 - 7; Luke 3 : 7 - 18

This reflection is provided by Adam Biddlestone

Like a good soap opera or drama series, the Lectionary gospel often leaves us with a cliff hanger. Last week was no exception, John's coming as a voice, calling people to repent and be baptised, familiar words from the Prophet Isaiah provides the cliff hanger. So, what is going to happen next, as a result of John's call?

The answer comes in this week's instalment. Depending on the lectionary year will depend on the next instalment. In Matthew and Mark's gospels John uses a shorter form of Isaiah's call to catch people's attention. We are then told about John's appearance and how people came from Jerusalem, all Judea and the region of the Jordan to repent and be baptised. An impressive turn out and response!

In Luke's gospel, John's call quotes a longer section of Isaiah's prophecy, after which he continues preaching. *'You brood of vipers!'* he begins. An abrupt way to speak to people, especially when your aim is to get them onside to make the intended response, to repent and be baptised. His words appear to hold the crowd and open up conversation demonstrating how his words challenged ordinary people, tax collectors and soldiers, each wanting to know what they should each do to respond to the call. Repenting, accepting forgiveness and baptism is only the beginning of the story, a catalyst for change. *'Produce fruit in keeping with repentance,'* John encourages them. The questions that follow open up conversations about the practical implications of responding to John's call. The crowd are told, *'anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none and anyone who has food should do the same.'* Tax collectors are told, *'don't collect any more than you are required to,'* and soldiers, *'don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely - be content with your pay.'* I wonder what their response was, how many accepted the call? I wonder how many felt the demands were too high because keeping food and possessions and taking too much money was still too attractive?

For most of us, confession is part of the regular diet of our worship. We are invited to call to mind the wrong things we have done and the things we have failed to do and are then assured of God's forgiveness, through Christ's death and resurrection. I wonder if we ever stop to ask what the implications are? I wonder if the same things enter our head week after week, month after month at this point in the service. If they do, surely we are missing the purpose of the transformational element of our confession and acceptance of forgiveness.

John was not expecting people to change the world but to change themselves, to act differently as a result of their repentance, forgiveness and baptism. The world of John's Day, as today needs to change but it can only change when enough individuals change resulting in a fairer, more just and loving world. Our Circuit focus for this season is raising issues around homelessness and linking them to the story. Each Sunday we attend worship this Advent and in our private devotions, we will repent and ask forgiveness.

As we are encouraged to think more about issues facing the homeless and those who are living on the brink of homelessness, what will you do differently this Advent? I wonder how this will prompt us to reflect on the way we donate clothing, donate to foodbank collection points in churches and supermarkets, donate money to the Methodist Centre, offer our time to support good causes?

At a time of year when we often receive and spend more than we need to, how can we be challenged to donate more to those for whom this Christmas season is the most challenging time of the year.

Our thanks to Adam for this reflection

## **Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter 21/22 News #2 (Dec 21)**

Public Health and Housing Justice have advised that no dormitory/communal style shelters should run during winter 2021/22. BCWNS has therefore block booked 8 rooms at a centrally located B&B from Nov 21 to Mar 22 to house low support needs guests. This means that we have a five month shelter. Guests: BCWNS has been running now for a month and there is a wonderful group of guests staying at the B&B with all the rooms full. The difference it makes to their lives is tangible.

"I've done more to sort out my life in the last week staying here than I have in the last two months of rough sleeping. I couldn't ask for anymore"

**Job Vacancies.** There is an immediate need to recruit BCWNS NIGHT WORKERS (paid) to provide night concierge at the Bed & Breakfast. We are currently operating with night agency staff but hoping to fill the role from January. Please share with your connections!

**Prayer Updates.** Please go on our mailing list for prayer updates.

**Referral Agencies.** This year we will be operating a joint referral process between St. Mungo's and Borderlands. The agencies will work together to provide referrals for low support needs guests who find themselves at risk of rough sleeping.

**Church teams.** So far, we have twenty church teams involved in providing food and/or volunteer teams to support the running of BCWNS. We currently need additional church teams to cook evening meals for Wednesdays in Jan-Mar as well as a team who can provide volunteers/meals on Saturdays Jan/Feb. Please get in touch to find out more [bristolchurcheswintershelter@gmail.com](mailto:bristolchurcheswintershelter@gmail.com)

**Finances.** The project has been awarded a Winter Transformation Fund grant (provided by DLUHC, managed by Homeless Link) to cover the extraordinary costs of the B&B for this winter. There are funds brought forward from last winter which will be used to cover some of the overhead costs (Project Coordinator and Deputy, Housing Justice liaison, church expenses e.g. food). However, there will remain a gap in funding for the project of approximately £13k. Current expenditure is in line with expectations. If you, or your church, would like to support this winter's BCWNS, contributions can be made directly to the account below or via:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/bristolchurcheswinternightshelter>

Account Name: in Hope Account Number: 01408518 Sort Code: 40-14-13 Payment reference: BCWNS

BCWNS Contacts Project Coordinator: Amanda Munday; [BristolChurchesWinterShelter@gmail.com](mailto:BristolChurchesWinterShelter@gmail.com);  
Mobile 07507 735798;

Bristol Churches Winter Night Shelter Project Oversight: in Hope, registered charity (no. 298528), Registered Office: 32-34 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0QY.