



The Methodist Church

Bishopston, Easter Compton, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches and St Peter's Pilning.
Minister: Rev Patrick Stonehewer T: 0117 924 8407, E: patrick.stonehewer@methodist.org.uk

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>

Sundays 19 and 26 December 2021

We celebrate Jesus being born in Bethlehem, placed in a manger. Shepherds from the surrounding hills are summoned by angels to visit him. Sometime later, visitors arrive from afar. Amidst the busyness of the angels celebrating, the shepherds hurrying to Bethlehem and the receiving of gifts, we find Mary quietly pondering what Jesus' birth means. Taking time to ponder is something that Mary comes back to again and again throughout the accounts of Jesus' life, ones of the ordinary and extraordinary mingled together. As we celebrate Christmas this year, once again when the extraordinary events of the pandemic have interleaved with ordinary life, I invite you to pause and ponder, and to appreciate what the extraordinary meaning of Jesus' birth means for you.



Wishing you a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a very Happy New Year *Rev Patrick and family*

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 & Easter Compton.

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.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES on 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 & Circuit. Candlelit Carols at 6pm in person and on Zoom led by Revs. N. Headley and P. Stonehewer.

OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 19 December and the week

Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10. Forgiveness and The Incarnation with the Chapel choir of the Methodist College, Belfast.

Songs of Praise. BBC 1 at 13.15. Christmas at Westminster Abbey

Daily Service at 09.45. BBC Radio 4 Long Wave

Open Café Church 20 December from 10.00 onwards hosted by St Peter's, Pilning. Please contact churchwardenpilning@gmail.com for the joining details.

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>

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/joinusservice-daily-prayer>

FORTHCOMING SERVICE on 26 December

Zoom Service at 10.00 led by Rev. Patrick Stonehewer.

OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 26 December and the week

Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10. Christmas Gospel Celebration

Songs of Praise. BBC 1 at 13.15. Daniel O'Donnell's Faith Journey

Daily Service at 09.45. BBC Radio 4 Long Wave.

Season's Greetings

To all members and friends at Horfield and Bishopston Methodist churches, wishing you all a joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy and blessed New Year from Linnette.

Wishing all our readers a Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year from the Combined Notices Team. Eurfron, Richard and Bob.

GENERAL NOTICES

Stamps. Over the next few weeks you may find yourself receiving Christmas cards sent through the post. If so, don't throw away the postage stamps (leave a margin around the edge of the stamps when tearing them off the envelope). You can help the Leprosy Mission transform lives, bringing hope and healing to some of the world's most marginalised people, by saving the stamps! The stamps can be sold to raise money. please bring the stamps to church and Sheila Lomas will send them to the Leprosy Mission. Or send them directly to Stamps and Collectables, The Leprosy Mission, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5GZ. The LM asks that you ensure that it is weighed and the correct postage paid - it is probable that a 'Large 2nd Class' stamp will be needed as stamps move during transit and the envelope might not then pass the thickness test for normal postage.

Horfield. The Collection during the Christmas morning service will be donated to the Children's Hospice SW in gratitude for all the care they give to children at their most vulnerable times.

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. You must 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.

Thank You. One of the good things that has come out of the Covid epidemic has been the exciting innovations used in a variety of acts of worship and meetings, which has enhanced our spiritual and community experiences. Whether we follow links at home or attend church services, we are grateful for richness and inclusiveness that has been added to our worship, so, thank you, Patrick and Howard, for all the efforts you have made to enrich our Services and meetings.

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: Lou & Carolina Carias, Rachel Canning, Sarah Chard, David and Mary Chandler, Nicholas Chivers, Joshua Cottam.

The Night Shelter

The Shelter did open at the start of November and all rooms in the B&B are fully utilised. Volunteers from a number of churches have regularly arrived bringing lunch and an evening meal for our guests.

Three guests have already found employment and are looking for private accommodation. A frequent comment is that no longer having to fend for themselves on the street they now have time and the energy to seek out a regular job. When you pray please ask the Lord to bless their efforts as it takes a determined desire to search out suitable employment. Thank God for Tracy the owner of the B&B. She is very supportive of what we are trying to do and learning a lot about homelessness.

Please pray strength and safety for Amanda and Jo who are effectively on call 24/7. There has been no success in finding permanent night staff and we still rely on two agency workers who have filled the gap exceedingly well. Please pray that the agency can find suitably experienced staff to cover the remaining months.

"Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty."

This is the first time that the Shelter has been open over Christmas. During this period please continue to pray that the B&B can provide a sense of hope for all our guests. For many of them it's a difficult and lonely time which they don't look forward to. There will be opportunities and invitations from participating churches. May our prayer be that like the shepherds our residents will discover that the infant in the nativity came for them as well.

One guest has come to stay recently after having been on the streets for a long time. He was very reluctant to move in as he has had some bad experiences in night shelters in the past. The fact that he is staying with us means that his support workers are able to work with him more intensively to develop a plan for him to move forward. Please pray that he can be well supported while he is with us and that they are able to find a good plan for him. Another guest who has been with us from the start has been working full time now for several weeks. He is all ready to move into private rented accommodation as soon as he finds something suitable. Please pray that something comes up soon. One guest has secured a new job and permanent accommodation. Pray that the move goes well and that he is able to move on in early January as planned. Another guest is starting a new full time job on Monday. Pray that the job suits him well and that he is able to find permanent accommodation soon. One guest is being assessed for a move to supported accommodation on Monday. If the assessment goes well then he will be moving on next Thursday. He is a bit anxious about this move, so it would be good to pray that it all goes smoothly.

In addition to these requests, please pray for the members of the 'Horfield team' who are volunteering over the coming weeks too.

Dates for your diary.

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

Special days in the next two weeks. 21 December. National Robin Day and the Winter Solstice, shortest day.



Reflection on the Lectionary, Sunday 19 December, (Advent 4)

Psalm 80 : 1 - 7; Micah 5 : 2 - 5a; Hebrews 10 : 5 - 10; Luke 1 : 39 - 55

This reflection is provided by Adam Biddlestone.

As we celebrate the Christmas story again, we are conscious that it is the best known, most celebrated, most told story of all times. Even if people are not aware of all the detail anymore, they still enter into the story as they celebrate, send cards, exchange gifts, make an annual visit to church or watch their children in Nativity plays

There is so much ordinariness about this miraculous and marvellous story. In our readings today, we are reminded of the ordinariness of the place chosen by God, Bethlehem as Micah tells us is, 'small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come one who will be ruler over Israel.' The actual setting within Bethlehem is described in Peter Relf's hymn (STF 220 verse 2), 'In a shed to house the livestock Mary's baby then was born - nowhere for a child to lay but a feeding trough with hay.'

We are also reminded of the ordinariness of the people. In the opening two chapters of Luke's gospel we are introduced to ordinary people who in different ways play a key part in the story. Elizabeth and Zechariah, Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna. After being visited by the Angel, who interrupted Mary in the ordinary routine of her life to bring the good news, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth. There is much celebration between these two ordinary women as they delight in the news. Elizabeth doesn't seem surprised by Mary's news, it is almost as though she was expecting it, 'blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear

The angel encouraged Mary, 'do not be afraid,' this is very easy to say when you are delivering rather than receiving such news. Mary clearly had a good rapport with her relative Elizabeth and they were able to support each other in living with the reality of their situation. Elizabeth, in her old age and Mary in her youth, they encourage each other. Elizabeth echoes the angel's words of encouragement, resulting in Mary bursting into song. Mary and Elizabeth remained together for three months, supporting, encouraging, reassuring each other. In this season our minds are very much with those who are estranged from their families, living with realities of unexpected pregnancies, illness, addiction, debt, homelessness, abuse. We are also mindful that many support networks offered throughout the year close down and people feel more vulnerable and isolated. Those who are able to gather often feel very conscious of their circumstances, feeling they will be judged or seen to be not good enough.

The President and Vice President's theme for the year is, 'God's table : an invitation to all,' how can we ensure that any tables around which we gather are places of hospitality, welcome and safety. How can we offer that same reassurance, 'do not be afraid'?

Our thanks to Adam for this reflection.