



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.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's table is open to all Sunday 9 January 2022



A new year is traditionally a time for new beginnings and change. The chance to shrug off bad habits and focus on self-improvement. To make resolutions and strive to be better. But this New Year maybe some of us are a little weary, overwhelmed, overburdened, especially as the Christmas festivities and distractions fade away. For all the new promises and fresh starts a new year offers, there is also work to be done, families to care for, lives to lead - all alongside the strains and stresses of daily life.

In Exodus 33, it seems that Moses is feeling a little overwhelmed too. God is asking him to lead the people to the promised land, but also says, "I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way" (Exodus 33:3), which at first glance seems somewhat of a rebuttal. However, Moses responds : "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you" (Exodus 33:12-13). And the LORD replies: "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).

At times life can be tough and the journey can seem long. God's presence is with us, and we can find rest as we remain in it. As we embark on another year, let us remain in God's presence, that place of rest, peace, hope, and sustenance for the journey. *Rev Patrick*

FORTHCOMING SERVICES on 9 January

Horfield at 10.00 in person and on Zoom conducted by J Gardner.

Bishopston at 10.30 led by Rev. Patrick Stonehewer with Holy Communion - Covenant Service.

Shirehampton at 11.00. Local Arrangement with All Age Worship.

St Peter's, Pilning with Easter Compton at 10.00 conducted by K. Luxon.

Circuit Evening Service at Horfield at 6.00 in person or on Zoom led by S. Holliday.

Current guidance at Horfield about Covid-19.

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.

OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 9 January and the week

Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10. The Rev Canon Ann Easter reflects on the theme of Wonder. (Deferred from last week).

Songs of Praise. BBC 1 at 1.15. Sean Fletcher visits Liverpool to discover the importance of baptism for Christians.

Daily Service at 09.45. BBC Radio 4 Long Wave.

Open Café Church on 10 January from 10.00 onwards hosted by St Peter's, Pilning. Please contact 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/joinusservice-daily-prayer>

Weekly bible study - open to all - each Wednesday, 7.45-9.15 on Zoom (details on the final page of the notices). Please do join an informal chance each week to look at a particular book of the Bible and share in fellowship and prayer.

WORSHIP DETAILS for 16 January

Horfield at 10.00 in person and on Zoom conducted by Rev P Stonehewer - Church Anniversary, Covenant and Holy Communion.

Bishopston at 10.30 led J. Creech.

Shirehampton at 11.00 led by C. Stones.

St Peter's, Pilning with Easter Compton at 10.00 conducted by the Anglican team.

Circuit Evening Service at Horfield at 6.00 in person and on Zoom led by Rev. Aboseh.Ngwana.

WEEKLY NOTICES. Please send items to Eurfron by Tuesday, eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk or 0117 969 1908.

GENERAL NOTICES

Cotswold Christian Community. Our next meeting will be on Sunday 9 January, 4.45-5.30 in the Cotswold Community Centre, Dursley Road, Shirehampton. We will be watching the last of the videos on the prayer course by Pete Grieg.

The Quiet Garden at Fulligrove House is available by arrangement for personal or group use and we can offer accommodation if one or two people would like to spend a little longer away for peace and reflection/prayer. (We cannot offer 24/7 peace and quiet but do contact us to discuss if you are interested). Tel: 0117 9826455 or email info@alfacc.org.uk . Drop-in sessions for a cuppa and chat resume on 17th January and will be each Monday 2.30-4.30pm at Fulligrove House, Woodwell Road, Shirehampton BS11 9UG.

Pop-up Fitness

Kick-start 2022 with a FREE and FUN GROUP fitness session, every Wednesday throughout January at different venues around Horfield! At 5.00-6.00.

Everyone is welcome, whatever age or ability you are 😊 just turn up!

- Wed 5 at Horfield Leisure Centre.
- Wed 12 at Horfield Methodist Church, Churchways Avenue.
- Wed 19 at Upper Horfield Community Trust at Eden Grove.
- Wed 26 at Ebenezer Church, Bristol.

Thanks to local personal trainer, Gary, from Ascension Strength and Conditioning for hosting these as part of the Love Horfield Winter Programme.

Oasis Academy Brightstowe (Shirehampton). There is a small chaplaincy team that has been supporting Oasis Academy Brightstowe for the last five years or so. A few of the youth workers from the local churches currently go into the school weekly, to help in the school's wellbeing unit. They help to facilitate small groups supporting students who are referred to the unit. Alongside this, Highgrove's youth pastor, Robyn, has also pioneered reading support for some year 7s, together with the school's librarian. Before summer 2021 some volunteers were also giving one-to-one reading support to the children. Our friends at Highgrove Church are hoping to widen the volunteer pool from other churches in the area. Volunteers will go to the school between 11.00 and 12.00 each Thursday to sit one-to-one with the year 7 students, to listen to them read, give encouragement and help when they get stuck. There's a short training video to watch for anyone who volunteers (who would also need a DBS checks). Contact robyn.coleman@highgrove.church for more details.

Horfield. Help required. We are looking for volunteers to come and be the '2nd adult' in Junior Church to enable one of us to sometimes stay in church for the service. It won't involve any preparation or leading of sessions, it's just that we need to have a 2nd adult in the JC sessions. Ideally, we would be looking for this to happen once (or twice!) a month, with volunteers being on the rota approximately once every two months. Please let us know if you'd be willing to do this. Thank you. Helen and Shirin.

Horfield. Afternoon tea is served on Tuesday 11 January, from 2.30 to 3.30. It is open for anyone who wishes to come. Cost £2.50. Please contact Eurfron on 01179691908 or eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk

Horfield. The next **film club**, subject to data, will be on Thursday, 13 January, at a much earlier start of 6:00. It is an epic film with an intermission halfway through and it is well over two hours long. In this film the star has left active service and is enjoying a tranquil life in Jamaica. His peace is short-lived when his old friend from the CIA turns up asking for help. The mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist turns out to be far more treacherous than expected, leading on to the trail of a mysterious villain armed with dangerous new technology. Get ready for an all-action film! RSVP with your name horfieldlockleazechurches@yahoo.co.uk

Horfield & 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 :- Joan Davis, Libby Deeks, Disabled Christian Fellowship, Jane Duffy and Sue Dyer.

Dates for your diary.

Horfield Sunday 16 January, Covenant Service, following which there will be a Church Meeting to talk about potential work on the church premises.

Horfield. Thursday 27 January at 7.30 on Zoom, Eco Church.

Horfield and Bishopston. Thursday 3 February at 7.30. Church Council (Reports in by 21 January)

Horfield. Wednesday 9 February at 7.30. Property Meeting.

Horfield. Thursday 10 February at 7.30 p.m. at Church. Stewards +

Special days in the next week

Tuesday 11 January. National human Trafficking Awareness Day;

Wednesday 12 January. National Pharmacist Day.

Reflection on the Lectionary Sunday 9 January (Ordinary 1)

Psalm 29; Isaiah 43: 1 - 7; 1 Acts 8 : 14 - 17; Luke 3 : 15 - 17, 21 - 22

This reflection is provided by Adam Biddlestone.

Luke's gospel tells us more than any gospel about John, the opening stories tells us of the Angel Gabriel's visit to Zechariah (1 : 5 - 25), his birth (1 : 57 - 66) and includes Zechariah's song (1 : 67 - 79). At the end of the song we are told, *'the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.'* (1 : 80)

When introducing John the Baptist into his gospel and to his readers, Luke tells us whilst in the wilderness, he hears God calling him to preach a message of repentance and forgiveness (3 : 3). Luke then takes us back to the Prophet Isaiah to give some context to this. Here, in John, is the one Isaiah foretells will come calling, *'Prepare the way for the Lord.'* John is first to publicly preach and issue a challenging call. As John's voice is heard before Jesus', it is perhaps natural that people jump to the wrong conclusion. There is great anticipation of the arrival of the Messiah so people quickly speculate that John is He. John is quick to put them right, in verses 15 - 17, focussing their minds on *'the one who is more powerful than I'* that he is only baptising with water but the more powerful one (Jesus, the Messiah) will *'baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'* John's preaching, call and challenge is receiving much attention. Although not told this by Luke, Matthew and Mark tell us the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Once John is happy that he has set the record straight the baptisms begin. Among those wanting to be baptised is Jesus. We assume he appears like any other person, responding to the call and offering himself to receive the gift of baptism. Quickly and dramatically things change, the heavens open, the Spirit descends in the form of a dove and a voice says, *'you are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased.'*

As God makes his presence known there is a sense of peace and gentleness, the tranquil, refreshing and restful waters, the gentle Spirit represented by a dove and God's gentle, affirming voice speaking of love and pleasure. If reading the set Psalm, Psalm 29, God makes himself known in a very different way, rather than resting above the waters peacefully as a dove, he *'thunders over the mighty waters'* (29 : 3) with a voice rather than being gentle and affirming is so powerful that it *'break the cedars, strikes like lightning, strips the forest bare and shakes the desert.'*

The desert, or wilderness, is significant. It is from there that John comes to baptize and it is to the wilderness that Jesus retreats after his Baptism to be tempted, tested and prepared for what lies ahead. I wonder what that experience was like? For many the last two years may have felt like a wilderness experience, unsettling and uncertain, confined to our home and feeling isolated and alone in a way we may have never experienced before. I wonder whether the God you have encountered in this time has presented himself like the God of Psalm 29 or the God of Luke's gospel? It may be more realistic to say that as we encounter God in our lives or observe his work and activity in the world around us we encounter, find and need a place for both.

Our thanks to Adam for this week's reflection