

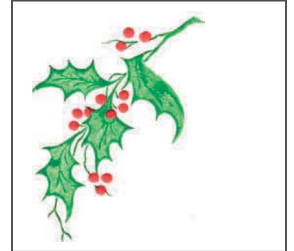
# The Methodist Church

Bishopston, Horfield, Shirehampton Methodist Churches & St Peter's, Pilning.

Email: [martin.slocombe@methodist.org.uk](mailto:martin.slocombe@methodist.org.uk)

We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit ([www.bsgc.org.uk](http://www.bsgc.org.uk)) a family of churches serving communities across the local area.

**Sunday 24 December 2023**



## A Christmas Blessing

May the grace of Christ bring you hope and joy,  
and may the peace of Christ be yours.  
May Jesus, the Lord, the miracle of God,  
fill your heart with Christmas love.

May you hear the songs of the angels this morn'.  
May you feel the joy that Jesus Christ is born.  
May the beauty of Christmas surround you today.  
May you find joy this Christmas Day.

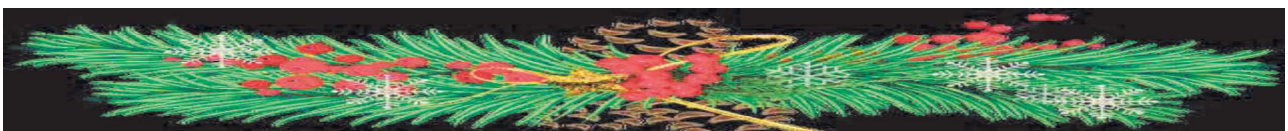
May you thank the Lord for the hope that He brings.  
May you know the love of Jesus Christ, the King.  
May you always believe that Christ came to save.  
May you find hope this Christmas Day.

May the peace of Christmas bring joy with no end.  
May you feel the love of family and friends.  
May the wonder of Christmas surround you today.  
May you feel peace this Christmas Day.

May you share this day with our Jesus in prayer.  
May you share this day and show all you care.  
May you gather together with loved ones this day.  
May you find Christ this Christmas Day.

By Marcia. A. Newton.

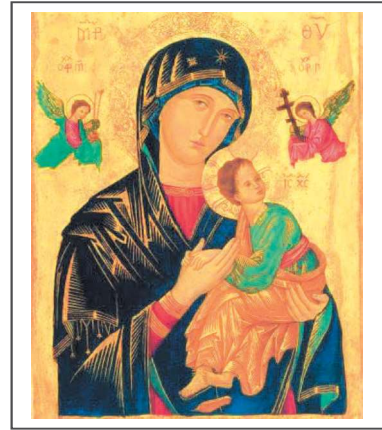
**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PEACEFUL, HEALTHY NEW YEAR  
TO YOU ALL**



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

**23 December** 11.00am. Bishopston - Carols on the steps.

**24 December** 10.00am. Horfield. United service with Bishopston conducted by Revd Dilwyn Edwards.  
4.00pm. Horfield. Messy Christmas  
7.00pm. Shirehampton. Carols on the Green  
9.30pm. St Peter's. Christmas Communion  
11.30pm. Bishopston. Midnight Communion



**25 December** 10.00am. Horfield. A collection will be taken for "All we Can".

10.30am. Bishopston  
10.30am. Shirehampton  
10.30am. St Peter's

**OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 24 December** and the week.

**Sunday Worship.** Radio 4 at 8.10. THE COMPASSION OF THE CHRIST CHILD with the Chapel Choir of the Methodist College, Belfast.

**Daily Service** at 9.45. BBC Radio 4, Long Wave.

**Songs of Praise.** Sunday BBC1 at 1.15. CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE from Sheffield.

You will also find an online service of Morning Prayer to cover each day of the week, available from first thing each Monday at <https://westburyparkchurch.org.uk/worship-service>.

**WORSHIP DETAILS for 31 December**

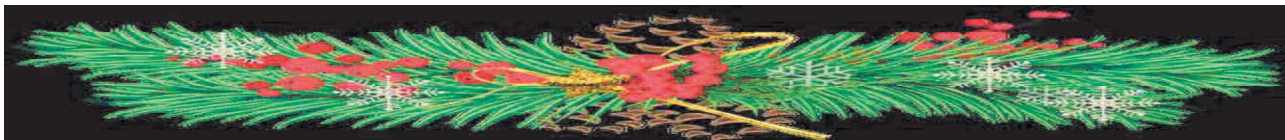
**Horfield** at 10.00 conducted by A. Smith.

**Bishopston** at 10.00 conducted by P.Culshaw.

**Shirehampton** at Horfield.

**St Peter's, Pilning** at 10.00 conducted by Rev. M. Slocombe with Holy Communion.

**ALFA Christian Community.** We will be having our **New Year's Day** gathering on **Monday 1st January**. We will meet at Fulligrove House at 2.00pm for a walk, returning for tea and cakes at 4pm and prayer at 5pm. There will be a meal at 6.30pm. Please let us know if you would like to join us for the walk and/or meal but feel free to just turn up for the tea and cakes and/or prayer. Email [info@alfacc.org.uk](mailto:info@alfacc.org.uk). Tel. 0117 9826455. Drop-ins continue on **Wednesday afternoons** 2.30-4.30pm apart from 27 December, and there is no coffee morning in December.



**GENERAL NOTICES.** Please send items to Eurfron by Tuesday, [eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:eurfron@blueyonder.co.uk) or 0117 969 1908

**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: Margaret Angell-Alpass, Kim Adams, Jennifer Addo, Marion Andrews, Richard Angell, Cherry Arnal.

**Foster caring event.** Could you change a child's life with foster care?

Myself and Bristol City Council foster team are inviting local people to find out more about being a foster carer. 6:30-7:30pm, 23rd of January, The Cameron Centre, Cameron Walk.

Foster carers in Bristol transform the lives of our children in care. Nearly 500 children live with foster parents in Bristol, and this is usually the very best place for children unable to be with their own families.

'As a recent foster carer myself, I know how much we need more foster carers to prevent children being moved out of the city. That's why I'm running an event, to help local people find out more, including the fact that the council has recently reviewed the fees paid to carers, to help foster carers during this cost of living crisis.'

For more information, email [cllr.heather.mack@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.heather.mack@bristol.gov.uk) or visit

[www.bristol.gov.uk/foster-with-bristol-city-council](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/foster-with-bristol-city-council).

**The Bristol Methodist Centre.** From Epiphany to Candlemas, Bristol Methodist Centre together with our colleagues at inHope invite you to join in a month of prayer seeking to bring light to homeless, marginalised and vulnerable people in Bristol. We have put together a prayer diary with a short prayer for each day. Please use this as you are able at home, in fellowship groups and worship settings.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this. [Prayer Diary](#)

A big thank you to everyone who has already contributed to the BMC Christmas appeal, which has already reached over £2,800. It will remain open until January 31st:

[https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/BMC\\_Christmas\\_2023](https://www.stewardship.org.uk/pages/BMC_Christmas_2023)

**The Stay in Touch project with Bristol Churches Shelter**, is supporting, and befriending the guests as they leave the shelter and move on to the next stage of their lives. The idea is for volunteers to provide friendship, support, and encouragement at this crucial time, so the guests can gain confidence to move forward in their lives successfully. This could be in the form of a reassuring chat over coffee, signposting to other support networks who can give specific advice or practical support completing forms and help applying for jobs.

The aim is to have two volunteer support workers per guest to come alongside them and meet with them on a regular basis as agreed by both volunteer and guest in a public place, or on the phone; to listen, talk and provide support where needed.

We ask that volunteers commit to 3-6 months (depending on what is required, in some cases it could be less), in which the volunteers would arrange to meet on average twice per month.

Training will be giving, and DBS checks, also help and assistance will be offered to volunteers by staff.

If you are interested in being part of this project, please get in touch with Jane at [Jane.jones@inhope.uk](mailto:Jane.jones@inhope.uk)  
As always, thanks so much for your support for Bristol Churches Shelter.

**All We Can.** This Christmas at Horfield we shall be taking a collection for "All We Can".

It's the Methodist Church's international relief and development movement, rooted in the Christian faith. "All We Can", works through partnership alongside their global neighbours most impacted by disasters, poverty and injustice to enable flourishing and resilient communities. Our partners represent years of relationship.

Together, they are finding solutions to poverty. Last year they transformed the lives of 634,752 people. All We Can has served some of the most marginalised communities on earth for the last eight decades - since a group of Methodists answered the call of refugees in Europe, in the 1930s.

Our story is about the inherent value and potential in all people. Whether children fleeing tyranny, communities facing extreme poverty, or families hit by disaster, we answer through partnering with local innovators, projects and churches to unleash inherent potential.

Lectionary Readings: 2 Samuel 7; 1-11, 16.

Romans 16; 25-27.

Luke 1; 26-38.

### Where does God live?

The writer of today's Old Testament passage tells us of a vision given to the prophet Nathan, to be relayed to King David, who had been thinking of building a cedar temple for God.

God asks, *"Why should you build a temple for me? I didn't live in a temple when I brought my people out of Egypt and I don't live in one now".* (v 5b, 6a)

Moses met with God in the sacred tent, but God did not live there. (Exodus 53v7-11).

The Samuel reading continues with God saying *"I chose leaders and told them to be like shepherds for my people Israel. But did I ever say anything to even one of them about building a cedar temple for me?"* (v7).

Strange then, that King David's son Solomon should build a temple for God. Nevertheless, God tells Solomon that he will watch over the Temple as a place of worship. (1 Kings 9 v3).

Many years later, after the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians; the prophet Isaiah talks of the future glory of Jerusalem and of a rebuilt temple as a place where God will rest his feet. (Isaiah 60 v13).

God says *"Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house could you build me?"* (Isaiah 66 v1).

Jesus answers that question for us. *"If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live in them".* (John 14 v23).

God dwells in the hearts and minds of the faithful, as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah.

God says *"I will write my laws on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people".* (Jeremiah 31 v33).

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he writes *"All of you know that you are God's temple and that his spirit lives in you"* (1 Cor. 3 v16).

This indwelling spirit enables Jesus to keep his promise to his followers, *"I will be with you always".* (Matthew 28 v20).

But what about the Lord's Prayer? I hear you say. 'Our Father who art in heaven'

Does this mean that we carry a portion of heaven inside us?

If this leaves you asking, how can this be? Then you are in good company.

As the angel Gabriel explains to Mary, *"Nothing is impossible for God".* (Luke 1 v37).

We, like Mary, must trust in the wisdom of God; and as Paul writes, *"Praise the only wise God for ever! Amen".* (Romans 16 v25).

*Bible quotations are taken from the Contemporary English Version.*

*From Ipswich Lectionary Reflections*

