

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 churches serving communities across the local area.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.

Sunday 08 January 2023



I remember as a child, we used to go to friends and family on New Year's Day to wish them "A Happy New Year". We had to go in person because we did not have the means of communication that we have today. This had to be done before noon. In exchange we would be given a coin or some fruit, such as a tangerine.

New Year is a time to reminisce about the past year, embrace the present, and look forward to the year ahead. Folks all over the world have New Year's traditions they enjoy each year alongside family and friends—whether it's watching the New Year's Eve ball drop in Times Square, coming up with New Year's resolutions, or watching the firework display in London.

A common New Year's expression is "out with the old, in with the new." The New Year is a great time to take stock, make changes, and resolve to do better in our lives.

New beginnings can mean a new job, a move to a new city, a new relationship, or even a new phase of life. Some of you thrive on starting fresh and the thrill of what unknown adventures await. Others love and crave familiarity and feel frustrated and stressed with all things new. Fear not! (as God would say.) He has support, encouragement, and strength for any new beginning you are contemplating.

Here are some words of encouragement from the Bible

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." Jeremiah 29:12

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Prayer

God, I give you all my cares and concerns.

I know you are my Heavenly Father who can provide me with everything I need. You know my needs before I even ask for them

Thank you, Lord, for your new beginnings and unwavering provision. I trust that your peace will watch over me as I step into a new beginning.

This year, I will rely on the riches of your love and grace to provide for my physical, emotional and spiritual needs. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 8 January and the Week

Horfield at 10.00 conducted by D. Head. All Age Worship.

Horfield at 12.30. Christian Believers Fellowship, led by William Carey.

Bishopston at 10.30 conducted by Rev Patrick Stonehewer, Covenant Service with Holy Communion.

Shirehampton at 11.00. Led by members of the congregation **4.45 . Songs of Praise cafe** at the Cotswold Centre.

St Peter's, Pilning and Easter Compton at 10.00 conducted by A. Biddlestone.

Easter Compton on Wednesday 11 January at 3 p.m. Quiet, reflective Space.

OTHER WORSHIP DETAILS for 8 January and the week

Sunday Worship. Radio 4 at 8.10. THE INDUSTRUCTABILITY OF HOPE. "As long as Ukraine celebrates Christmas we can neither be defeated nor destroyed." **Songs of Praise.** BBC 1 at 1.15. AMAZING GRACE.

Celebrating 250 years of Amazing Grace from Olney in Buckingham. **Daily Service** at 9.45. BBC Radio 4, Long Wave. 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>

St. Peter's Pilning Open Café Church, 9 December, 10.00-12.00 for coffee, tea, cake and chat.

WORSHIP DETAILS FOR 15 January and the week

Horfield at 10.00 conducted by D. Carter.

Horfield at 12.30. Christian Believers Fellowship, led by William Carey.

Bishopston at 10.30 conducted by J. Creech.

Shirehampton at 11.00 conducted by Rev. Patrick Stonehewer with Holy Communion and the Covenant Service.

St Peter's, Pilning and Easter Compton at 10.00 conducted by the Anglican Team.

Easter Compton on Wednesday 18 January at 3 p.m. Quiet, reflective Space.

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

The Methodist Centre. There will be a Supporter's Event on Saturday 7 January 2023 from 10.30 to 12 noon at the Centre. You can come and hear what is happening and how the churches and individuals can support the work over the next few months. We are looking to recruit new volunteers. Refreshments are provided. Please book a place through: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/Bristol-methodist-centre-supporters-event-tickets-472454944457> or phone Naomi Sharp on 0117 239 3875.

Pilning. A Memorial Service for **Brenda Ducker** will be held at St.Peter's, Pilning this Sunday 8 January at 4.30. We will be showing a recording of her funeral, along with singing the hymns chosen for that service ourselves. All are welcome.

Solidarity Circles Church is a place where we come together for worship, but sometimes, even surrounded by others, it can feel lonely. This might be for many reasons. Perhaps we don't feel able to share openly with other people who we think won't understand us or who may even be hostile to who we are? Maybe your Church isn't one where you feel your lived experience would be listened to or even be confident to ask for support?

In the New Year, Solidarity Circles are going to be established by the Methodist Church as part of the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (Methodist Conference 2021). They are online meetings which "will be a way of the Methodist Church supporting people in different diversities of the Church's life through offering regular opportunities to meet, to support one another, and to raise with relevant Church leaders the concerns that need to be addressed."

The first Solidarity Circles will be for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women. Each one will be a safe space for up to 15 members to share with the Church their life experience and to learn what the organisation needs to know and change in order to be a better place for all.

To roll the scheme out, we need to find volunteer co-ordinators for each of the characteristics. The Solidarity Circle Coordinator will support the establishment and running of the Solidarity Circles. The deadline for applications will be the 13 Jan 2023 (by 9am) and you can find more details here.

"So That You May Have Life", a series of eight studies in John's Gospel. Online via Zoom, Tuesday evenings, January 3 - February 21 led by Rev Sally Spencer and Rev Richard Sharples.

On 22 April 2023, it will be 30 years since 18 year old Stephen Lawrence was fatally stabbed at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London. For being black. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) reflect on this event for the 2023 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* (18-25 January), which uses materials prepared by the churches in Minneapolis, the American city in which George Floyd was murdered in 2020.

Bishopston. It was with sadness that we heard of the death of Peter Hamilton, a member at Bishopston, on 16 December. Peter had been living with Huntingdon's Disease for some time but remained active until the last year or so when he moved to a care home in South Bristol. All are invited to his funeral which will be on Tuesday 17 January 2023 at South Bristol Crematorium, starting at 11.15. *Travel on Peter from this world, in the name of God the Father, who created you in love; in the name of Jesus Christ who sets you free from sin; in the name of the Holy Spirit who brings us all into new life. Rest in peace, in God's love, now and forever. Amen.*

Bishopston: Before Christmas local charity Sixty-One delivered over 1,400 bags of Christmas gifts to three local prisons ready to be handed out to prisoners. Each of the gift bags contain useful things (a toothbrush and diary), delicious things (sweets, biscuits and chocolate bar and coffee), practical things (a pair of socks and a MentorMe water bottle) and Christmassy things (a Christmas decoration and a handwritten Christmas card). So many of you have partnered with us to make this year's Christmas Gift Project a reality. From the sourcing, funding, co-ordinating, packing and delivery of the gifts, this has been an incredible team effort. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who has made this year's Christmas Gift Bag Project possible. It's not just what the bags contain, it's also what they convey that makes them so important; a message of hope that change is possible, a message of support that a community cares and a message of value that sees a future that's different from the past.

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: Kingsley White, Heather Wilcox, Pam Williams

Horfield. Congratulations to Margaret Postlethwaite who received an award for working for 50 years with the uniformed organisations. Well done! May we also take this opportunity of thanking Margaret for all the tasks she completes on behalf of the church.

Horfield. Sheila Lomas is collecting used stamps for the Leprosy appeal. Please bring stamps from your Christmas mail to church.

ALFA Christian Community. Drop-ins continue on Wednesday afternoons 2.30-4.30p, returning on 11 January

Give thanks that one third of the 60 'WARM SPACES' in Bristol have been opened in churches, one of which is based in the JTE Hub at Shirehampton Methodist Church. Please continue to pray for this key social outreach project.

Dates for your diary. January 12 at 7.30 on Zoom, Horfield and Bishopston Eco Meeting; January 19 at 7.30 on Zoom,- Horfield and Bishopston, Leadership Meeting.

'The Noise 2023' The Noise event will be taking place from the 29 April - 1 May. Put it in your diary

Reflection on the Lectionary Sunday 8 January (Ordinary 1)

Psalm 29; Isaiah 42 : 1 - 9; Acts 10 : 34 - 43; Matthew 3 : 13 - 17

The reflection for this week is by Local Preacher, Adam Biddlestone (Zion).

The passage from Isaiah ends, *'see, the former things have taken place and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.'*

In contrast to our modern world with all its technology, God had to rely on the spoken word, speaking to the world through those he chose to be prophets and messengers. The Psalmist reminds us of the power and majesty of the voice of the Lord. All that we have celebrated over the past weeks is about making way for new things, things which have been declared by the voice of the Lord, spoken by Prophets such as Isaiah, Hosea, Micah and echoed by the voices of Christian people across the world.

The opening verses of Matthew 3 remind us of the voice of John the Baptist, calling people to repent and be baptized with Matthew reminding us of Isaiah's voice, speaking of the one calling in the wilderness, *'prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'* (Matthew 3: 3 and Isaiah 40 : 3). In Matthew's account there is a conversation between Jesus and John about who should baptize who, Jesus wins the right to be baptized by John, *'to fulfil all righteousness,'* Jesus insists. In the context of his Baptism, a voice from heaven is heard saying, *'this is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'* (Verse 17). And so, the Spirit is poured out on the Lord's servant, God's chosen one, the one in whom he delights (Isaiah 42: 1). The preparation of birth, childhood and Baptism have taken place, the new things that Isaiah goes on to speak of in the opening verses of chapter 42 can now take place, the light for the Gentiles can begin his work to establish justice, open eyes of those who are blind to God's word and free the captives from prison.

At this time of year, we, like Methodists of every generation, will use our voices as we renew our Covenant, *'I am no longer my own but yours....'* As we commit to *'willingly offer all I have and am to serve you, as and where you choose,'* we commit to use our voices to re-tell the stories of God's love, of Jesus' life, to announce the new things of justice, love and peace. Where beyond the walls of the church do we need to have a voice? Where will opportunities arise for us this year to be God's voice, to prepare a way for the Lord in the lives of others, to be voices for justice, peace, equality, and inclusion in the communities God chooses for us to serve in?

Prayer

*Loving God, we thank you that you call us to renew our Covenant again with you,
to hear of the former things and make way for the new things Christ came to bring.*

*Our world still needs to hear that same message and hope,
help us to play our part, to offer ourselves, all that we are and all that we can be as we speak and act for
justice, peace and love for all, by all and to all. Amen.*

Our thanks to Adam for this reflection.