



**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch
Dec 2021/ Jan 2022
Newsletter**

Message from the Manse



Dear friends,

Are you ready? This is question I feel like I am constantly asked during December.

If, you are asking if my gifts are all bought, wrapped, and nestled under the tree;

If you are asking if my shopping is done, food prepared, napkins pressed and turkey ready to go in;

If you are asking if my decorations are up and the house is all clean and tidy;

Then the answer will be a very honest no.

The lead up to Christmas as a minister is one of the busiest times of the year, and now 5 years in I have come to accept that a 3am present wrapping session is very likely; the napkins will not be pressed – Kitchen roll works just as well, and having forgotten to get a box of mince pies isn't the end of the world and my jeans will thank me in January that I'm not trying to squeeze more into them.

But if you are asking if am I ready for Christ to come, well the answer to that is a firm YES!

They have spent so much time preparing for it, and waiting for it to come and yet clearly it's not something that they want to enjoy or hold on to...they are fed up with it.

In all this rushing about, we can forget the true magic of the season in the humble story of a baby that was born in a very stinky stable over 2000 years ago who grew up to remind us what it means to love and be loved. Christ comes

to bring us comfort and hope for the future. The perfect Christmas is about welcoming Christ into your hearts, and to share his love with those you are with.

Furthermore, are you ready for Christ to come again? I'm not a gambler but something tells me that Jesus won't turn up on the 25th December, or when our house is all clean and tidy, and we have our best clothes on and have prepared a 3 course meal to share. None of this matters to him.

I often wonder what Jesus would think of the church and how we as Christians share his message of love to others. What matters most is that when the day comes, we are ready in our hearts and our churches to celebrate his coming. That certainly doesn't mean that everything has to be perfect, but it means that we are doing the best we can to live out our lives with him at the centre. When we place Christ in the centre of everything we do, we are filled with something that all the Christmas trimmings and adverts promise – but come Boxing Day we won't be fed up, and we certainly won't be packing it away in a dusty, cold loft. The true joy and love found in a humble manger, offers us so much more.

This Christmas may you open your hearts to Christ; may you know of his love, and his blessings that this season brings.

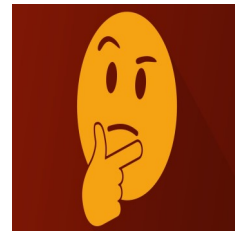
With love from us all at the manse,

Donna, Dave, Joseph, Hannah and William xx

Anagrams connected with Christmas

(one word answers unless numbers of letters supplied)

1. Tables
2. German
3. Spine Mice (5,4)
4. Silent
5. Led Scan
6. Harp Me
7. Serpent
8. Rats
9. The Cats Led (6,4)
10. Red Irene
11. Go Trot
12. Subs Potions (4,2,5)
13. Lone
14. Sub Able
15. Stole Time



Answers will be in February's Newsletter

Stewards' Letter



Dear Friends,

The last few weeks I have been preparing for the Christmas tree festival. After many phone calls and many visits to various market garden centres I finally found a Christmas tree farm near Keele.

The gentleman there asked which church I was representing and wanted to know how many we have in our congregation. Before covid I told him we had 45-50 and 60 on a good Sunday. He said he and his wife attend a church in Burslem in Stoke-on-Trent before covid their congregation was 400 strong and the children had to sit on the floor. He also said he and his wife served tea and coffee to them all every week. Today's attendance is only 100. It is not only ourselves that are suffering a drop in numbers.

During 2021 I have missed many meetings having to isolate in preparation for my various operations.

Sheila and I are living in Tilstock and it feels as if we are living on a building site. The school has maxed out of capacity so are building 2 new classrooms. We have a site over the garden fence with 26 new neighbours. 150 yards away by the village hall one of our neighbours is building 12 houses. He has knocked down the old folks home and there will be 4 more houses there!

Christmas and the new year is will soon be with us and already the Christmas Fare has been held in the Civic Centre.

The Christmas tree festival will begin on the 3rd December. With most of the trees sponsored all we need to do is for everybody to spread the word around to as many people as possible to make the event a success.

May I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New year 2022.

God bless you all

Maurice Latham

Lucy Hockenhull

It is with sadness that we inform you of the death of our oldest member aged 103, Lucy Hockenhull. Lucy, I would think has been a member at St. John's all her life and her death ends a long association of the Hockenhull family from Alkington with the Methodist Church in Whitchurch. I would guess Lucy was born in Alkington and farmed with her two sisters at The Vineyard, before retiring about 40 years ago to live in Alkington Road with her two sisters, who have predeceased her. She has managed to live at home with some help, until about two months ago. Although not able to attend church for a number of years, Lucy took a great interest in what was happening. Until she died last year, Mary Scott was a faithful visitor to her. We remember Lucy's family in our prayers.

St John's was represented at the quiet graveside funeral officiated by Rev Donna.

Cop 26—The Result

Cop 26 has just be concluded with the usual watered down version of the agreement. .

We in this country produce about 1% of the emissions the world produces. Unless Russia-China-India fully commit, temperatures will continue to rise.

Greta Thunberg has been saying that past generations influenced climate change which affects all parts of the world. However the current generation continues to contribute to world emissions.

Did you know that 25 billion pairs of trainers are produced every year. They are made of many different plastics so are not recyclable. Emissions from the trainer industry equates to approximately 50% of the aviation industry. Tee shirts and jeans, which are made by workers on starvation wages in sweatshops of the Far East, are often used once and thrown away because they are so cheap.

We are jeopardising the lives of those following us by allowing climate change to continue.

Maurice Latham

Editor (Mike) adds

Whether we look at the past or the present, the reality is that change is required urgently and waiting for the other fellow to take action is not an option.

There is a lot of material on the internet which we can respond to. One on clothes highlights the damaging effect producing clothes has on the environment. FAST FASHION is targeted. Masses of clothes produced and then (quickly) disposed of fall into this category. So learning to be mindful of which textiles are used and which companies are working to reduce their emissions could be a start.

Check out for example the GREEN WATCH website for more info.

God in Love Unites Us

The Methodist Church after much prayer and discernment has made the decision to allow same-sex couples to marry in Methodist premises if the local church feels that this something that they wish to offer.

As a family, there are many things that we won't agree on – that's part of being in a family! But just because we don't necessarily agree, doesn't mean we can't continue to love one another and remain as a family. We appreciate that there are a variety of views on this subject and it can be difficult to express how we feel, especially when those we love and respect think differently to us.

The overall decision will lie with the Church Council. This is because they are the ones who have been given authority by the congregation to discern the best way forward for the church.

During the Church council we had an indicative vote to see what the current feeling of those present were.

Do we want to register/ make available our premises for same-sex weddings?

Yes 17 votes No 5 votes Total 22 votes

The Church Council decided it was really important that as a church family we all had the opportunity to share and talk about our opinions on St John's registering for same-sex marriages to be conducted here. We felt it was important that we had idea of how the wider congregation felt too. Therefore, in January there will be some conversations happening about this which are yet to be organised but as soon as they are, you will be invited to be attend. Keep a look out in the pew notices.

Advent / Christmas

During Advent the Preachers will be using a character from the Knitted Nativity that will also feature in some of the shops in the town.



5th December MARY

12th December ANGELS

19th December SHEPHERDS

On the evening of the 19th December at 6.30pm, it will be our Candlelight Carol Service.

A Christmas Day service will take place at 10am, please bring a present to open. Collection other than envelopes will be given to Action for Children.

The KINGS will be covered on 9th January.

NOTE

No service at St. John's on Sunday 26th December.

You will be most welcome at Brown Knowl at 10.45am or St. Andrews, Aston at 11am

Dates for the Diary for St Johns 2021 -2022

December



Wed 1st – Fri 17th Nativity Trail around Whitchurch

Fri 3rd/Sat 4th Sun 5th Mon 6th Xmas Tree Festival

Fri 3rd Carols amongst the trees 7.30pm

Mon 6th Bumps, Babes & Toddlers (BBT)
9.30-11.30am
MORE on a Monday 1pm-4pm

Mon 13th Dec Bumps, Babes & Toddlers (BBT)
9.30-11.30am

Sat 18th Dec Christmas Coffee Morning
Church Open 10am-12

Mon 20th Dec BBT 9.30-11.30am with Nativity at
10.30

January

Tues 18th January 7.30pm Worship Committee
Meeting On Zoom

Down Memory Lane

I know we all have our favourite carol and it was while I was thinking about mine that I remembered one we sang at Christmas as kids in Scotland. It was at least as popular as “Away in a Manger” This led me to going on the hunt amongst all the hymn books we have gathered over the years. I finally tracked my carol down in a combined Holy Bible (James Version\), Psalms & Paraphrases and Church Hymnary (Church of Scotland). The hymn had been originally written in Gaelic & translated into English early in the 20th Century. The inscription on the book front reads - Knoxland School, Dumbarton 1960/61, Awarded to Hazel Law for the Lang Memorial Prize for Religious Knowledge. I think the hymn has a clear message and here it is.

Child in the manger,
Infant of David;
Outcast and stranger,
Lord of all!
Child who inherits
All our transgressions
All our demerits
On him fall

Once the most holy
Child of salvation
Gently and lowly
Lived below;
Now, as our glorious
Mighty Redeemer,
See him victorious
O’er each foe.



Prophets foretold Him,
Infant of wonder
Angels behold Him
On his throne;
Worthy our Saviour
Of all their praises
Happy for ever
Are his own.

A Movie I Missed



The film *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is about an old hermit who lives in the mountains. He was so jealous of everyone in the village having a good time he decided to sabotage their Christmas, by adopting the role of a reverse Santa Claus and steal all their presents. But because of one little girl who goes on loving him - despite his unloveliness, his heart melts, and he ends up giving all the presents back. But not before the surprised residents of the village discover that just spending time with each other, without the benefit of the presents, is really more in keeping with the true spirit of Christmas

(From “Life, Love and Laughter” by Rev James Simpson
At one time Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland)

Prayers for Advent, Christmas and New Year



O God, by whose word all things are made holy, bless this time of Advent with its wreath and candles. May it remind us to slow down our hectic pace and make our hearts ready for the coming of Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Dear God, we thank you for loving us so much that you gave Jesus to be our friend. When we love him, a light shines in our hearts. Help us to give the light to others.

Dear God, bless our families — may they be like the Holy Family into which Jesus was born. Help us to make homes happy places, to do our work cheerfully and well; to share with others. May Christ be with us in all we do.

Lord Jesus, help us to pause in our feasting and merriment to remember the simplicity of the first Christmas, the sign of a child born in a stable to die for us. Help us to remember that Christmas is people; the family of Mary and Joseph and the joy of a new baby; like so many families the world over. May Christ be with our families in all we do together so that we learn to live each day in company with you.

We pray that 2022 will bring peace to ourselves, our town, our country and our world. Let us seek to make the world safe for ourselves and safer for future generations by taking up the challenge of climate change and poverty and hardship throughout the world

Food for thought in a poem by Joan Ellison.

God did not wear rosy glasses
That first Christmas morn
God knew it was a
chip on the shoulder,
beam in the eye,
dog eat dog,
no room at the inn kind of world
when Jesus was born.
Our dilemma may be NO TIME
instead of NO ROOM



A Child's unconscious wisdom

I rather like the four year old's version of the well known Christmas song "We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year"

Sound

5th Dec	Andrew Fawcett
12th Dec	Norman Gollins
19th Dec	Mike Nimmo
2nd Jan	Sarah Lunt
9th Jan	Andrew Fawcett
16th Jan	Brian Acty
23rd Jan	Norman Gollins
30th Jan	Mike Nimmo



Services & Preachers



December 5th Rev Jenny Arthurs

12th Rev Brian Acty

19th Graham Dimelow

6-30pm Rev Donna. Carol Service

Christmas day 10 am Rev Donna.

January 2nd Rev Donna H/C Covenant Service

9th Mr Robert Williams

16th Rev Brian Acty

23rd Rev Francis Biseker

30th Rev Helen Kirk (Chair of the District)

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

St. John's Christmas Party is on **Sunday 12th December** after the service.



There will be food and Vic will be doing a Quiz for us at the Christmas party for the last time.

Maurice Posniak will also be entertaining us on the piano with songs and carols.

We are planning to be as Covid safe as possible, whilst enjoying ourselves.

Come and join in the fellowship.

There is a list on the table for you to put your name on if you intend coming.

Stewards

December	5th	Brian Faulkner
	12th	Maurice Latham
	19th	Robert Hewson
Carol Service		All Stewards
	25th	Peter Shingler
January	2nd	Andrew Fawcett
	9th	Maurice Latham
	16th	Robert Hewson
	23rd	Peter Shingler
	30th	Brian Faulkner



TEA & COFFEE ROTA

Dec Kelly	5th	Ruth Dawson & Einwen
	12th	Christmas Party - No Coffee
	19th	Hazel & Mike Nimmo
Jan	2nd	Linda Jenkins & Sarah Lunt
	9th	Brenda Aumeer & Nancy Millington
	16th	Elizabeth & Pete Shingler
	23rd	Lynn Fowler & Helen Thompson
	30th	Rachel Dimelow & Linda Weston



Taxi



The following drivers are willing to provide a lift to church. Please telephone before 9.30am on that day.

Please note also that trying to predict in advance is not easy, so some changes may be necessary.

December	5th	Sheila
	12th	Hazel
	19th	Pete
January	2nd	Brian
	9th	Sheila
	16th	Hazel
	23rd	Brian
	30th	Pete

SPICK & SPANNERS



December	2nd Charlesworth	Chris Crowther, Dot & Lynn Fowler
	16th	Helen Trigg, Brenda Aumeer & Rachel Dimelow
January	6th	Einwen Kelly, Ruth Dawson & Sheila Latham
	20th	Nancy Millington & Gwen Reeves

**BENJAMIN'S CAFÉ &
DELI**



Delicious Breakfasts, Lunches & Brunches at good prices.

We offer freshly prepared food from our deli, to eat in our café or to take out.

3 High Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1AW

Tel: 01948 664726



WHITCHURCH
PHOTOGRAPHY

**FOR ALL YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHIC NEEDS!**

01948 664 664

**Weddings, Passports,
Studio Photoshoots,
Printing, Framing and
Canvases**

whitchurchphoto@gmail.com

February 2022 Newsletter

Please let Dot Charlesworth have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by Sunday 23rd January

BARLOWS

**Your local electrical
store**



**High Street
Whitchurch**

Call in and talk to one of
the team.

Galaxy Computer Services

**Your local computer
experts**

Computer sales, support
and repair



Call Will or Matt 01948 665855

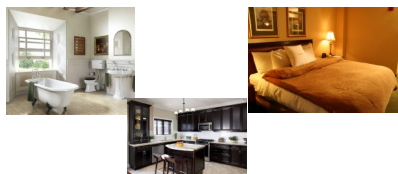
Top of the High Street
Whitchurch

SPLISH SPLASH

“Olde Worlde Charm”

A Family run
Bathrooms Bedrooms &
Kitchens Business based at 46a
High Street Whitchurch

Speak to Vincent about your new
project! Or re-vamp your existing
kitchen, bathroom or bedroom



**The Most Famous
Bread & Cake Makers
in Whitchurch!**

WALKERS

