



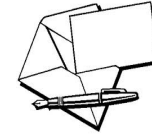
"Joy to the World"

**St. John's Methodist Church
Whitchurch**

December 2024 & January 2025

Newsletter

Message from the Manse



Hello friends,
Happy Christmas and a happy New Year to you all!

**On the hillsides,
hope was heard singing unexpected Hallelujahs.
In a Bethlehem backwater,
Hope hovered,
and love was born.**

**And now,
as the Wise journey and the powerful start to
pace the floor
and mumble into sleepless nights,
we gather -
the Light of the World is here.**

The job now is to keep it burning.

*Sally Foster-Fulton from 'Hope was Heard Singing',
the Iona Community*

Christmas is a time when "We hope":
We hope we might get what we want under the
Christmas tree as we unwrap our gifts
We hope others will like what we have brought for
them
We hope that the turkey fits in the oven and we have
a tasty meal
We hope that no one starts an argument
We hope that the children go to sleep and we really

do get a silent night's sleep
And then into the New Year, our hopes continue...
We hope that things might be better this year
We hope our good intentions last longer than 4pm on
January 1st .
We hope that a loved one's health improves or at
least not get worse
We hope for that pay rise, holiday, new house or car
etc that we have longed for.

I think for many of us, our hopes are around wanting
a better future for us and for our families. But
we also strive for hope in our world and for communi-
ties who are in places of war, social unrest and face
all sorts of difficulties. We are people who long for
peace and hope. So, in many ways we are no differ-
ent to those first people that Jesus came to, who too
were longing for peace, hope and liberation. Hope is
something that is a foundation stone at the heart of
the gospel message and one which we build our faith
on. We have a deep hope and a trust in God, that all
will ultimately be well. Despite the chaos and trou-
bles, we might go through in life and the despite the
storms that seem to batter us, our hope in God reas-
sures us that we are never alone, he is with us, and
order will come.

As the poem says, we gather once more around the
eternal story of God coming to earth to be one of us,
a tiny baby, who grew into a man, and therefore un-
derstands the depth of human experience and our
need for Hope. For me, the Light of the World, Jesus,
is my Hope – it 'shines in the darkness and the dark-

ness has not overcome it' John 1 verse 5.
So, this season, listen out for the 'unexpected Hallelujahs', look out for signs of Hope wherever they may be and however small they may seem. Furthermore, make signs of Hope for other people in acts of kindness and love. As Christmas and New Year fade away keep that Light burning in you, so that it illuminates the darkness of winter and shines a light of hope into the places that need it most in our world. Wishing you God's richest blessings this Christmas and deep Hope and many unexpected Hallelujahs for 2025.

With Christmas blessings from all at the manse
Rev. Donna

Churches Together

Advent Service

A service for Advent is being held at St. George's on Thursday 5th December at 7pm. This is being organised by Churches Together and all are welcome.

What do you drain your carrots with at Christmas?:

An advent colander!

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? A mince spy!

What do angry rodents send each other at Christmas time?

Cross mouse cards!

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinselitis!

STEWARD'S LETTER



Hello Friends,

I was very sad to hear of the departure of The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby earlier this month, although I guess it was inevitable once the finer details were made known. I was saddened because unlike some of his predecessors, to me he came across as a 'man of the people' who was able to connect to the ordinary man so well. Here are a few snippets from his earlier life that might interest you.

Justin Welby was the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury, the symbolic head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, although he did not always aspire to such a high-ranking position in the Church.

He was born in 1956 to an alcoholic father and secretary mother who worked for Winston Churchill. His parents divorced when he was three, giving him a difficult childhood.

After attending Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge he went on to study history and law. He then embarked on a successful career in the oil industry for 11 years working in Paris and London.

However, his life changed dramatically in 1983 when he lost his 7-month-old daughter in a road accident, as he and his wife Caroline turned to their faith for help.

In 1989 he felt a calling to the ministry, leaving a lucrative job to train for ordination. He served as a priest in several cities, including Durham where in

2011 he became the bishop.
In 2012 he became Archbishop of Canterbury where he sought to unite the Anglican Church worldwide.
Justin Welby is a man of faith, courage and compassion who has overcome many challenges in his life. He is a global leader, peacemaker, and the father of six children.
We pray that he may find peace and guidance as his life now takes on a new direction.

Andrew

Whitchurch Christmas Advent Calendar

This is a project, organised by Whitchurch Business Group, to make Whitchurch a magical celebration for everyone throughout the festive season.

The businesses in the streets, and also the churches, have been invited to choose a date and create a 3-dimensional door (ie it needs to open) on the theme Love, Joy, Hope and Peace. Somewhere in the display must be—a heart, a smile, a dove and an angel. There will be a simple A4 map for you to pick up and follow.

Ed: I think it would be nice if we did this in our own windows—choose your own date or dates and create a 'window' or 'windows' to open for others to see.

Avril used this prayer in her Zoom service and I thought it appropriate for the newsletter

A Prayer for the triumph of God's will

God of grace and hope,
Where the warmth of a smile eclipses the sinister sneer
Let hope stand triumphant.

Where an act of kindness
undermines an evil deed -
Let hope stand triumphant.

Where a word of peace
silences the terrorist's threat -
Let hope stand triumphant.

Where difference is diversity
in place of disunity -
Let hope stand triumphant.

Where youth is innocent
and age is wisdom -
Let hope stand triumphant.

Where love is real
and faith is kindled -
Let hope stand triumphant.

Praying that praise and protest
would be partners in our living and in our praying,
that your kingdom may come among us.
Amen.

Andy Fyall, District Chair, Nottingham and Derby District
Methodist Prayer Handbook

Lighting a Candle

Lighting a candle
is an act of defiance.
Lighting a candle
is a prayer for courage.
Lighting a candle
is a step towards God.
Out in the world,
where You are
and I live
help me today
to light a candle
a candle of love and life.

Ruth Burgess from 'Prayers for lighting Candles' and 'Big Book of Worship Resources'. Wild Goose.

Contributed by Avril Bradfield



PRAYERS

Pray for those known to us who are ill, housebound, in care, lonely, bereaved or in any other kind of need. Why not visit or give them a phone call.

In this fast changing world pray for all the difficult and dangerous situations. Pray for lasting peace between Israel and Lebanon. Pray that common sense holds sway with all leaders.

Help us to remember in this busy season the message of Christmas.

Nostalgia -
memories of a bank clerk from 60s and 70s

In 1965 after taking my O levels I decided to apply for a job with Lloyds Bank. My cousin who had a job with Barclays Bank was enjoying her work and the prospects of earning a good salary was very attractive - seven pounds one shilling and four pence a week, not bad for starters !

The interview by today's standards was strange - mental arithmetic, how many 'O' levels was I expecting to get but what clinched it was my connections with the Methodist Church. It turned out the assistant manager who interviewed me was a Methodist local preacher !!

I started work in the Shrewsbury branch and was assigned to a clerk who trained me to operate a comptometer - they were machines that would add, subtract, multiply and divide, invented in 1887 and phased out in the 70's. These machines were used to keep ledgers and statements up to date.

As a junior I was frequently sent on errands, the most important being to purchase Kit Kats for the more senior members of staff - mid-morning coffee was not the same without a chocolate fix. It was a good opportunity to have a peek in the shops on Pride Hill !!

Other jobs included making sure the blotting paper at the start of the day was clean as a lot of customers used fountain pens; that the ink wells were full for ledger entries using dip in pens and in another branch a friend told me her job was keeping the manager's coal bucket full ! In those days there were up to 80 members of staff so a couple of guards were employed and it was their job to make the tea and coffee and bring the trolley round - this job required them to put overalls over their smart uniforms!

In 1968 I had a transfer to the Whitchurch branch. Simple

computers were just starting to come in but the big event was decimalisation - 15th February 1971 known as D Day. Leading up to the launch we were trained to handle the new coinage. After banking hours we had dummy runs swapping the role of customer and cashier.

Two unfortunate memorable events at Whitchurch were a burst pipe in the flat above allowing water to come down through the office above (then E.T. Leach and partners) ending up in the bank. Fortunately it did not get into the strong room where the money and important documents were held. I believe the same happened again not long ago.

The second event was an irate customer with a shot gun. We hid behind our desks, there were no buttons to press but the manager calmly persuaded him to see reason.

Another event was when it was found, on the staff arriving one morning, that they couldn't open the strong room door. Overnight the stream running under the bank had shifted the foundations. Chubb were called in and they summoned a structural engineer to tackle the situation. In the meantime, the manager, in a panic, rang round businesses in town asking them to pay in the takings from the day before so that they had some cash to provide customers! The problem of the foundations was solved by pouring tons of cement into them, all while the bank continued to operate!

In 1976 I went to work at the Ellesmere branch which had a sub-branch in Overton on Dee. As I had applied to work part time the roll of manning the Overton branch fitted well. Every Tuesday and Friday, with my guard, I motored to Overton and set up shop in a pop- up bank in the corner of the Cocoa Rooms. It was very enjoyable; I met such interesting characters that would come to do their banking and socialising. One customer would arrive on her horse and ask my guard to hold the reigns while she came in. I can't imagine that happening today!!! The village blacksmith would drop in and take my scissors and kitchen knives from home

and sharpen them and my guard would sit and polish any brasses that I had also brought in!

What a different world we live in now, you felt so part of the community then.

Elaine G.

**Whitchurch Community Choir presents:
'Something for Christmas'**

An evening of Christmas Music, readings and poems.

**Tilstock Village Hall
Saturday 7th December, 7.30pm**

Tickets on the door (cash only), or in advance from Donna Teague or choir members.

£15 to include mulled wine (non alcoholic available),
mince pies, nibbles and a book sale

Proceeds in aid of:

Time Together Dementia Group

Zoom Services

The next Zoom services will be on Sundays 15th Dec; 19th Jan & 23rd Feb- all at 4pm. These services are now also listed on our Circuit Plan. Everyone is welcome for a short service and time of fellowship.

Contact Avril for the link.

BBT @ St. John's

Bumps, Babies and Toddlers provides a friendly welcome to children and their carers. Between 15 and 20 attend each week for craft, toys and coffee with singing, stories and prayers in the church when it's warm enough!

BBT Rota for Dec & Jan

Date /Leader	Open up	Gen & Craft	Kitchen
December	Briony	Brenda/ Elaine	Sarah
2nd Briony			
9th Kathryn/ Rev Donna	Mike	Dot/Chris	Hazel
16th Kathryn	Briony	Dot/Brenda	Sarah
2025 January			
13th Kathryn	Briony	Dot/Brenda	Sarah
20th Kathryn	Mike	Elaine/ Brenda	Hazel
27th Kathryn	Briony	Elaine/Dot	Chris

BBT@St Johns



Bumps Babies and Toddlers will be looking at the Christmas Story in December. Please join us from 9.30-11.30am for craft, toys, singing, stories coffee chat.



Rev Donna will be leading a Christmas Celebration in the church on Monday 9th December at 10am. Please come and join in the singing!

Our final session before Christmas will be 16th December and then we will be having a break and starting again on Monday 13th January.

We are keen for more people to join our rota of helpers so if you would like to help or just want to come and say hello, please speak to someone on the rota.

Hope Journey Friday 6th December



We will be hosting the Hope Journey again this year for the Year 3 children from Whitchurch Junior Academy to come to St John's to meet the Nativity Characters.

If you would like to be involved by escorting groups of children around our church, serving refreshments, helping with a craft or dressing up as a character in the Christmas Story please speak to someone on the BBT Rota.



Christian Aid Christmas Appeal

Christian Aid was formed over 75 years ago to help refugees in need at the end of the Second World War.



This year the money raised through Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal will help provide food, clothing and shelter for those in refugee camps who have fled deadly conflict in Sudan.

There will be envelopes in Church if you would like to make a donation over the Christmas period.

Sudanese Cinnamon Tea

*1 tbsp black tea (approx. 5 tea bags)
3 cinnamon sticks
3 cups of boiling water*



Steep in a teapot for 5 mins.

Strain and add sugar to taste. Serve with additional sugar cubes.

Traditionally this is drunk without milk but it can be added if desired.

Try adding ginger, cardamom and cloves for an alternative taste.

Enjoy your tea on your own or share with friends and say a prayer for refugees around the world.

2024

Preachers for December

1st	10.30am	Rev Jenny Arthurs
8th	6.30pm	Rev Donna : Carols
15th	10.30am	LA
22nd	10.30am	Rev Donna HC
29th		Mr. Malcolm Crook

Stewards for December

1st	Dot Charlesworth
8th	6.30pm all stewards
15th	Mike Nimmo
22nd	Andrew Fawcett
29th	Dot Charlesworth

Tea & Coffee Rota for December

1st	Elizabeth & Pete Shingler
8th	Hazel Nimmo & Linda Jenkins
15th	Avril Bradfield & Nancy
22nd	Brenda Aumeer & Sarah Lunt
29th	Briony M-H & Linda Weston



Please could you provide milk and biscuits, taking the biscuits home if they are not needed. Tea and coffee are provided

Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return. If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know.

Hazel

2025

Preachers for January

5th 10.30am Mr. George Ravenscroft
12th 10.30am Mrs. Sue Tyson
19th 10.30am Rev Rob Hilton
26th 10.30am Rev Donna

Stewards for January

5th Mike Nimmo
12th Andrew Fawcett
19th Hazel Nimmo
26th Dot Charlesworth

Tea & Coffee Rota for January

5th
12th
19th
26th



Please could you provide milk and biscuits, taking the biscuits home if they are not needed. Tea and coffee are provided.

Please also take the tea towels and towel home, wash and return. If the dates above are not convenient, please let me know.

Hazel

**Christmas Fair
At St. John's
Saturday 7th December
10am - 2pm**

Stalls include:

**Cakes
Tombola
Raffle
Bric-a-brac
Christmas Stall
Craft Stall**

Also tea/coffee, cake and warm mince pies

**There will be a Christmas "Sing-a-long" at
1pm and maybe a visit from
Father Christmas!**

Come along and get ready for Christmas

We do need help and also contributions for all the stalls

Forget- me - not Service of Remembrance

For those who have died but are not
forgotten.

St John's Methodist Church
St Johns Street, Whitchurch

Wednesday 11th December 2024 6.30pm

Please come along and light a candle in
memory of your loved one.

If you are unable to come to the service but
wish for your loved one's name
to be read out and a candle lit on your behalf,
please let Donna know.



Dates for your Diary

December 2024

Thurs. 5th Advent Service St. George's 7pm
Fri. 6th Hope Journey 9-12 Primary classes
Sat. 7th Christmas Fair 10am—2pm
Sun 8th Candlelit Carols 6.30pm (*none at 10.30am*)
2.30pm Bradley Carols
Weds. 11th 'Forget Me Not' Remembering Service 6.30pm
Thurs. 12th Blue Christmas Service St. Alkmund's
Tues. 24th 6.30pm Service @Tallarn Green
Weds. 25th Christmas Day 9.30am Rev Donna

January 2025

Thurs. 23rd 7pm Christian Unity Service @ St. John's
Sat. 25th 12-4.00 Sewing Bee
Fri. 31st 10.30 –11.30am ladies Coffee

Regular Activities

Mon. 9.30—11.30am term time BBT
Mondays 12 –4.00pm MORE
Thursdays 1-4pm MORE

Other weekly/monthly activities held in our church: -

Mondays 7-8.30pm Whitchurch Choir
Tuesdays 9.45-11.30am Yoga
Wednesdays 12 noon—2.30pm AA Meeting
Thursdays: 10am—12.30pm Art Group
Sat. (third) 11—12 noon Library Book Club
Social Services *by arrangement*



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Taxi! for December & January

Taxi service **may be** available. Phone either Hazel on **OR** Pete before 9.30am and if they are able to one of them will give bring you to church.

February 2025 Newsletter

Please let Dot Charlesworth have all your submissions for the next Newsletter by 21st January.

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