



**December 2021**

**Minister: Rev. Joe Adams**

***Dear Friends,***

*Can I thank everyone who has supported us in prayer and other ways this year when such a long debilitating abdominal illness has made life so very difficult.*

*The hospital took small intestine biopsies in November and we pray these are clear just like the earlier large intestine biopsies were, though I cannot speak to the consultant until early January. His previous diagnosis of Pancreatic Enzyme Insufficiency is being treated but the correct dose of meds has not yet been found.*

*I am very disappointed that I remain too unwell to return to work. It really has been very difficult to wait so long for help to come. We had hoped so much that treatment would have been found before now so that I could return to my calling before Christmas. We pray that in January the enzyme insufficiency can be treated properly and some emergency meds found to treat symptoms if and when they come back.*

*I am sorry to have missed so much life and ministry and God willing will be back in January.*

*May God bless us all with a healthy and safe Christmas and New Year.*

***Joe Adams***

## NOTES FROM THE VESTRY

The Advent season has begun, a time of reflection and preparation, of expectancy and joyful hope.

As Christmas fast approaches, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and details of all services and events are listed on pages 10 and 11.

Our Family Carol Service at Wimpole Road will be held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30 p.m. We are anticipating there will be large numbers attending and, due to limited ventilation in the church, attendees will be asked to wear a face covering. There will be masks available in the vestibule if required. In addition, refreshments will **not** be available after this year's service in order to maintain social distancing.

On Christmas Eve, there will be a Communion service at 4.00 p.m. led by Rev. Paul Howes. This will be a family service and all are welcome, especially children.

There is no 'in-person' worship planned at Wimpole Road on Boxing Day, but a pre-recorded Circuit service will be available from 10.00 a.m. on the Colchester Methodists YouTube channel. For those unable to access YouTube, DVDs of the service will be available beforehand. Please speak to a Steward if you would like a copy of the DVD.

Just to highlight a small change to our services - there will now be two offertory plates placed just inside the doors at the back of the church. These will be brought to the front for blessing during the service, so we would encourage the congregation to put their offering in the plate beforehand.

Also a reminder that the post boxes for Christmas cards will **not** be in the vestibule this year due to Covid restrictions.

Please continue to pray for Margaret Clubb and her family, our minister Joe and Dave and all those who are facing challenging times.

On behalf of all the stewards, we wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

God bless  
*Juliet Balls*

## THURSDAY CIRCLE

Our programme for November began with an amusing talk by Peter Mockford on 'The Fun Side of Being a Magistrate'. We look forward to Peter returning on 5<sup>th</sup> May to talk about 'Lost Trades and Skills'.

The next meeting being Armistice Day (11<sup>th</sup> November) I led the group in thinking about the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. We read a variety of poems and then looked to see what the humorous cartoons of Fergus Mackain ('Sketches of Tommy's Life'); Bruce Bairnsfather ('Old Bill', 'Well, if you knows of a better 'ole, go to it') and others revealed about the soldier's everyday life.

18<sup>th</sup> November saw a return visit by Sue Howlett, who gave us a very informative talk about the history of Mersea. Thanks to Edward for helping with the technology at this and the following meeting.

I am pleased to say that numbers attending have increased, with our final meeting in November seeing the highest number present since the end of lockdown (19 people). This was for a talk by Mark Wood about 'The Korban Project', an initiative by local Christians whereby youngsters who find themselves homeless are provided with accommodation and help to get their lives back on track. A donation from Thursday Circle funds was substantially increased by generous gifts from individual members – thanks to all who contributed.

In some adjustments to the originally advertised programme, December's events will be as follows:

**2 December** – 'A Christmas Anthology' - members will be reading literature and singing about the aspects of Christmas, which are not really part of the Bible Story (i.e. Father Christmas, Rudolph, etc.)

**9 December** - Christmas Carol Service.

**16 December** – 19 people have booked for a Christmas meal at the Birch Grove Golf Club.

Our programme for January to May will shortly be available. The first meeting of 2022 will be on **27<sup>th</sup> January** (Holocaust Day) when Jean Quinn will talk about Harwich and the Kindertransport.

The meetings at **2.30 p.m.** continue to be open to all – male or female, young or old, churchgoers or non-attendees. Come and join us!

*Joan Gomer (Secretary)*

## ADVENT

*Written by Rev. Dr. Leslie Griffiths in 2003.*

We're pitched into Advent. I've been seeing notices announcing Christmas parties, Christmas illuminations, Christmas shopping expeditions and the like since August!

The advertisers and the world of commerce have 'bought out' Christmas in a big way. So it's very hard to conjure up the season that leads up to Christmas, that Advent season I mentioned a moment ago, with any sense of realism. We've had a five month approach to Christmas, why on earth do we need a five week season now? I'll tell you why.

Christmas is an explosion of joy. A meaningless universe has been penetrated by a shaft of light which, with sudden clarity, puts things into perspective and gives us a reason for being on this planet.

That incursion of common sense and good news is to be prepared for in order to be appreciated. We need one step at a time, to peer into the darkness, fumbling our way forward as best we can, taking the advice of the prophets and sages of old.

And we need to become aware that, at the heart of an otherwise meaningless universe, there is a guiding principle that draws us forward relentlessly.

When that guiding principle, that eternal word, is declared in a flesh-and-blood way, when an otherwise abstract notion wears a human face, when something we catch *tantalising* glimpses of (but not more) turns out to be a person with a name, then we can shout 'Hallelujah'.

Then, we can join the angelic chorus in their eternal hymn, '*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*'. Then we can raise our hosannas and delight in this new manifestation of the glory and goodness of God.

That's why we need Advent. That's why this five week period simply must displace the five month tattiness that we've had to work through, like swimming through treacle. It's the meaning of life we're talking about. And we Christians can have cause for joy. But we'll want to share our joy with the whole wide world.

### A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

*by Helen Steiner Rice*

God, make us aware that in thy name  
The holy Christ Child humbly came  
To live on earth and leave behind  
New faith and hope for all mankind.  
And make us aware that the Christmas story  
Is every man's promise of eternal glory.

**STAND BY ME**  
*(A letter of thanks received in November)*

Dear Friends at Wimpole Road Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for your kind donation towards the word of 'Stand by Me', raised from your Harvest Collections and Quiz Evening. Your generosity and thoughtfulness are greatly appreciated. One of our priorities at this time is our Myanmar Emergency Food Appeal, bringing life-saving food supplies to families on the brink of starvation and showing them they are not alone.

As our staff members have delivered the vital food supplies of rice, potatoes, vegetables, beans and oil, they have been met by relief, joy and grateful tears as families have been given hope that they can survive for another month.

Thank you so much for your support and generosity. Your involvement in the work of 'Stand by Me' is a great encouragement and is helping us to share the love of God with so many children and families in need.

**IT WAS A STAR**

It was a star,  
A very special star,  
That showed the way  
To where the newborn baby lay.  
And other stars stood back,  
To let it pass along its track.

It shone upon a place,  
And lit up the face,  
Of a chosen lady,  
And her royal baby.  
No other star was ever so bright,  
As was the star that shone that night.

Then, its work done, this star,  
This special one,  
Went who knows where.  
Perhaps shooting through the air,  
On to another galaxy,  
To spread God's word, for all eternity.

*Norma Peckston*

## BACK TO BOWLS

*by Pat Farrow*

Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October –  
Our first day back at bowls.  
So lovely back together,  
Amongst our happy souls.

Of course we were all ‘rusty’ –  
Forgetting rules and such,  
But, we soon got back to order  
And enjoyed our game so much.

Sometimes we hit the wooden roundel,  
Sometimes our bowls rolled out.  
Bending down (with creaking bones)  
Giving out an encouraging shout.

Sizing up the competition,  
Remembering the green mat’s length.  
Co-ordinating eyes and arms,  
Knowing how to use our strength!

In the end – it didn’t matter  
(although we love to win of course)  
With laughs and jolly banter –  
Then homeward tired, and a little hoarse!

***We remember our members who have sadly passed:  
Jill, Reg and Jackie – also most recently, Keith.***



## CHILD OF BETHLEHEM

We come before you, Christmas child, in silent amazement.  
May we welcome you among us.

As Mary welcomed you and rejoiced in God's holiness and mercy,  
We pray for the church as Christmas approaches.

As shepherds welcomed you, disturbing their work and lives,  
We pray for your disturbing presence in our world.

As Joseph welcomed you, giving you a home and a name,  
We pray for all who seek shelter in our community today.

As angels welcomed you, singing of glory and peace,  
We pray for all who seek healing and hope.

As Simeon welcomed you, recognising in you his journey's fulfilment,  
We pray for those who have died and for all who love them and miss them.

As wise men welcomed you, risking a journey and following a star,  
We pray that we may take risks in following you.

Child of Bethlehem,  
Hear our prayers.

The love of God is in us:  
The spirit of joy is with us,

Emmanuel, Jesus,  
Now and always. Amen

*{Taken from 'Hay and Stardust'- a Wild Goose Publication}*

## GOOD NEWS

Following the recent successful stationing visit we would like to let you know that we have offered an invitation to Rev. Chris Preece from the Tendring Circuit who will, subject to Methodist Conference 2022 ratification, be joining the Colchester Methodist Circuit as Superintendent Minister from September 2022.

*Circuit Stewards  
Colchester Methodist Circuit*

## **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE**

May I remind everybody of the Book of Remembrance and Brass Plaques in the Prayer Corner.

If you wish to have a dedication inserted, for 2 lines it is £15, + £5 for any extra lines. For the brass plaques, it is only £12.60 each.

Please see me if you wish to inspect the Book or need further details. I hope to commission some new entries in January, subject to demand.

*David Ablewhite*

### **FOR YOUR PRAYERS:**

*Margaret Clubb* and family – following the death of her husband Keith.

*Rev. Joe Adams* – Joe is grateful for prayers and support during this period while he remains on extended sick leave.

Any ministerial concerns please contact Rev. Alan Jenkins or a Steward.

## **CHRISTMAS IS A SEASON OF KINDNESS**

May the kindly spirit of Christmas  
Spread its radiance far and wide  
So all the world may feel the glow  
Of this holy Christmastide...

And then may every heart and home  
Continue through the year  
To feel the warmth and wonderment  
Of this season of good cheer...

And may it bring us closer  
To God and to each other  
'Til every stranger is a friend,  
And every man a brother.

*Helen Steiner-Rice*



## CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

I wish everybody at Wimpole Road a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. **David Ablewhite**

We want to wish all our church family and friends a very Happy Christmas. **Jeanette, Anthony Gutteridge & family and Graham Chapman**

**Michael and Jackie Topple** send their Christmas prayers and best wishes to friends at Wimpole Road Methodist Church, and look forward to keeping in touch with you all in the New Year. Prayers requested please for Jackie and me as we house-hunt in Glasgow.

Just in case I miss anyone with my cards please can I wish all my friends at Wimpole Road - a very Happy Christmas and every blessing in the New Year. **Debbie Floy**

**Pauline and Martin Broom** send Christmas greetings to all church friends. They will not be sending cards but will make a donation to Action for Children.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas full of laughter and joy.  
**Jonathan, Anna, Daniel, Ben & Jack Sparkes**

Wishing all our friends at Wimpole Road a peaceful and happy Christmas, and a New Year full of hope. With Love, **Jon and Margaret Bloom**

My Christmas greeting to all at Wimpole Road Church is - All good wishes at this blessed time. May you feel the joy and love of our Lord.  
**Sylvia Goff**

I extend Christmas greetings to all my church friends and have donated to 'Stand by Me' in lieu of many Christmas cards. Best wishes, **Alison Ablewhite**



## WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

- 5 December                      **Rev. Paul Howes – Holy Communion**
- 12 December                    **Ron Firmin**
- 19 December                    **Joanne Eckersley**
- 19 December 6.30 p.m. **Family Carol Service with Boxted Band**
- 24 December 4.00 p.m. **Christmas Eve Communion  
for families and children. Rev. Paul Howes**
- 26 December                    **No service but a pre-recorded Circuit service  
will be available from 10.00 a.m. on the  
Colchester Methodists YouTube channel or by  
requested DVD.**

**A WARM WELCOME AWAITS**

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**KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:**

**[www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk](http://www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk)**

Please don't forget, if you have stories or items that you would like to contribute to a future monthly Newsround please contact me by telephone, e-mail or post.

Tel: (01206) 869505 or e-mail: **[alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com](mailto:alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com)**

Little Lord Jesus, Our Saviour and King,  
What are the gifts you would wish us to bring?  
Christmas is yours, ever holy and sweet,  
We long to bring you something to lay at Your feet.

One little deed that is kindly and loving,  
One little word that is gentle and good,  
One little prayer from a heart that is holy.  
Be near us and guide us to live as we should.



## Christmas Services

Sunday 19 December - 18:30

**Family Carol Service at Wimpole Road Methodist Church**

with the Boxted Methodist Silver Band

Sunday 19 December - 18:30

**Three Together on Facebook**

Tuesday 21 December - 19:00 to 21:00

**A Celebration of Christmas at St Leonards Church**

Thursday 23 December - 17:45

**Community Carol Singing meet at St Stephen's Church**

Friday 24 December Christmas Eve - 16:00

**Evening Prayer Service at St Stephen's Church**

Friday 24 December Christmas Eve - 16:00

**Family Holy Communion at Wimpole Road Methodist Church**

Friday 24 December Christmas Eve - 18:00

**Family Carol Service at St Margaret's Church**

Friday 24 December Christmas Eve - 23:30

**Holy Communion at St Margaret's Church**

Saturday 25 December Christmas Day - 10:00

**Family Holy Communion at St Stephen's Church**

Saturday 25 December Christmas Day - 10:00

**Morning Worship at St Margaret's Church**

Sunday 26 December - 11:00

**St Stephen's Day Holy Communion at St Stephen's Church**

Sunday 26 December - 18:30

**Three Together On Facebook**



**WORKING TOGETHER**



**PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.**

Meeting number: 195 594 506 password 011904

**BIBLE STUDY Thursday 7.30 - 8.30 p.m.**

Meeting number: 780 700 295 password 011904

**Join online via Zoom or Dial in from your phone on:**

0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0131 460 1196

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**‘THREE TOGETHER’  
ONLINE FACEBOOK SERVICE  
EVERY SUNDAY  
at 6.30 p.m.**

Ecumenical worship led by and shared with all three churches, Wimpole Road, St. Stephen's and St. Margaret's.

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### **SUNDAY SERVICE REPLAY**

This is available for anyone and it would be lovely if you were able to join us.

It is hosted via Zoom and allows people to simply dial into the call from their telephones.

We run this at **2.30 p.m.** every Sunday afternoon.

**Phone numbers to use to dial in:**

0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240 or 0131 460 1196

Meeting ID: 458 171 4255 {Password if needed is 011904}