



January 2023

Minister: Rev. Joe Adams
Mob: 0798 541 7000

Here in the midst of the Christmas season and the dawn of the New Year my mind is still full of the stories of Christmas.

Just before Christmas I shared with the people at St. Leonard's on Hythe Hill - it was so cold! The church has no facilities or heating. It was closed in 1982. It is an ancient 13th Century building that was extended in the 15th Century. It's impressive and quite sad really. It was great to see so many people there wanting to have a Carol Service as they always have. It's kept going by Friends of St. Leonard's and the Churches Conservation Trust.

I shared with them this simple message about what I thought the most important message of Christmas is, saying that everything is all summed up in one word, 'love'.

Christmas and Christian's are all about love - always love.

Gods desire was always love, raising Israel up to be a light for the nations, with a covenant of peace and love. They like all of us hungered after other words.

Self serving
Greedy
Power grabbing
and hungry for more and more

They liked being the 'in crowd' especially if that meant others were kept out.

They excluded people because of their origins or disability or sexuality or ethnicity.

God said love but that's seemed too easy too simple too inclusive.

'We don't want everyone in if we don't like them' people said.

Human beings everywhere since the dawn of time have liked difference and saying who's in and out.

Yet God's responding cry at Christmas was love for all for ever.

Human beings still these last 2000 years protest the inclusive all enfolding message of Christmas and prefer select groups and love saying still you can come in if

If you do this, aren't like that,
If you don't make us feel uncomfortable,
If you dress right and don't change anything,
or say anything difficult

and definitely if you aren't - then God forbid.

Love for our tribe but not theirs.

You can come in but . . . women must know their place, children must be seen and not heard, LGBTQ+ people need to be quiet and not seen or lead. We still do it.

God said love. Just love. No conditions or exceptions.

Anything else is out of step with the Christmas message of lowly shepherds and other faithfuls wise men validating Jesus holy calling.

This New Year let's make sure we are following God's agenda and mission and standing for love, acceptance and inclusion.

If anyone ever tells you anything else is more important than that I'm certain they are not speaking for our God who said,

John 3:16-17 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him'.

LOVE

God bless you in 2023 with peace in our mourning and hope in our living.

Rev'd Joe

NOTES FROM THE VESTRY

Happy new year to you All! On behalf of the Stewards I wish you God's peace and blessing in 2023.

As a church community we have had a busy December. The school advent services led by Rev. Paul Howes were well received and the church was full of excitement and expectation as the children joined in singing, pulling crackers and learning about the real meaning of Christmas. Special thanks to Paul for his enthusiastic delivery and fabulous PowerPoints.

The 'warm space' initiative has begun by extending our Wednesday Coffee Morning opening hours from 8am to 1pm. Please pass the word around that we are open and if you have had time to look out some unused table games we will be pleased to receive them. A warm welcome is extended to all. On the subject of warm spaces we had a couple of really cold Sundays in church because the temperatures were so low outside. The heating hours have been increased, but please, if we have another cold snap remember to wear your thermals, coat and gloves as well. Some of our more adventurous folk did brave the cold on Friday 16th to join with those of St. Stephen's to go carol singing around the streets in New Town. Well done all of you for that musical witness.

How good to see the church so full for the Carol Service on the 18th. What a joy to be able to share once again with St. Stephen's and to meet with people we haven't seen for a while. Joe, the service was a real blessing and an excellent way to set the scene for the last week in Advent. A massive thank you to Boxted Methodist Silver Band who came straight from playing at the carol service in Boxted to lead our singing in their usual professional and enjoyable way.

Four families joined us for the Make Lunch Christmas Dinner on 22nd and it was clear from the children that the anticipated 'special' event was drawing ever closer. We enjoyed a good meal in a lovely atmosphere and we will meet again in the February half term.

The church looked lovely with all the candles lit and lights dimmed for the Communion service on Christmas Eve led by Joe. A meaningful act of worship when we were delighted to welcome families we did not know, including two week old twin boys who are so tiny, reminding us how fragile and beautiful new babies are. Everyone was very welcome and we hope the service was a blessing to all who were there.

Paul, (with some assistance from Mel and Bethany) led our Christmas Day celebration. With the aid of a scratch nativity and a box of Quality Street, we were led to ponder on how we can be good vessels for God, to hold and share his love. Two different but hopeful, thoughtful and happy services to share in.

As we look forward to 2023 there is much to be done and even more to be thankful for. We ask for your prayerful consideration so this Church can, with one another, continue to spread the Good News of Jesus' love in this community.

Love and Joy for the New Year,

Chris tine Firmin

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT OF THE DAY

*Glory to God in highest heaven, Who unto man His Son hath given;
While angels sing with tender mirth, A glad New Year to all the earth.*

OVER 60'S LUNCH CLUB AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

**Monday 9 January
from midday for 12:30 lunch**

If you are interested in coming along please give Jill a ring on (01206) **572605**.
Booking is essential for catering purposes.

Two courses will be served with tea or coffee to follow for a charge of **£5**.
Dietary needs can be catered for if known in advance.

Many thanks from The Lunch Club Team

THURSDAY CIRCLE

Our first meeting in December was an afternoon of Christmas related items. This included Pat posing Christmas Cracker jokes; Ann reading children's letters to Santa; and Norma, Margaret and Debbie reading a play 'A Politically Incorrect Snow White'. Others also read things and we sang seasonal songs. Thank you to everyone who participated. We enjoyed it!

Our second meeting was a traditional Carol Service, where we read the familiar passages from the Bible and sung well known carols. Again thanks to all our readers and, again, we enjoyed it!

For our final meeting in December, 17 members attended 'The Gardeners Retreat' at Stanway for a Christmas meal. We all agreed that the food was good but the temperature of the room left a lot to be desired. However Debbie had helpfully brought along some rugs, which we were able to put across our laps when it became a bit chilly!

There will be no further meetings until **2nd February**, when our Minister will be the speaker.

It has been a good year for the Thursday Circle, for which we thank God and we look forward to 2023 being an even better one! On behalf of all our members I wish readers 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year'.

Joan Gomer - Secretary

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

The families and friends of David Ablewhite, whose funeral is Friday 6 January.

All those known to us who have ongoing health problems.

THANKS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Ken Young wishes to thank members and friends at Wimpole Road for the kind gift of a lovely plant.

Alison and Peter Boston also wish to express their thanks for the plant and also the cards and good wishes they received.

WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR JANUARY

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

1 January	Joanne Eckersley
8 January	Rev. Joe Adams – Covenant Holy Communion
15 January	Naomi Snelling (pulpit swap)
22 January	Joe Navoka
29 January	Rev. Joe Adams

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS

Join us after the service for coffee/tea and biscuits in the church parlour for a time of refreshments and fellowship.





WORKING TOGETHER



PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.

Meeting number: 195 594 506 password 011904

JOINT BIBLE STUDY GROUP – please speak to Andrew Topples for more details

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

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

**‘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.

FUTURE NEWSROUNDS

Please don't forget, if you have stories, items or prayer requests 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

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