



December 2025

Minister: Rev. Hannah Chun
Mob: 07935 612 414

Dear Friends,

I am currently writing to you roughly 70 miles away from home at the Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City. I am here for an Early Years in Ministry Retreat. This retreat is offering me a valuable space to reflect, *be*, and ponder this journey of ministry. However, I don't always find it easy being away from home, and in some respects, I feel as though I am in an 'in-between' place where I don't feel quite so grounded.

The theme for this retreat is '*Encounters with the Divine*', and we are exploring this by looking at several encounters Jesus had in the gospels. One of the encounters we reflected on is when Jesus heals the ten lepers in Luke 17:11–19. Something that struck me about this story is that it specifically says the event took place in the "*region between Samaria and Galilee*." It doesn't describe an exact location, only that it happened somewhere *between*. And it is in this *somewhere between*, between two places, two identities, two worlds, that this remarkable encounter with Jesus and the ten lepers unfolds.

I wonder whether it is also in those places in our own lives that are somewhere *between*, those unsettled spaces, those times of transition, that encounters with our God who is divine can emerge. Where would you say you encounter God in your daily life? Where do you experience moments of noticing the divine or sacred around you in the ordinary? The spaces or moments where we feel closest to God, where we glimpse God's presence in the ordinary, are often called the *thin places*.

I spend quite a bit of time driving from one place to the next often in between churches. I have found that the time and space in my car driving between places has become somewhere I encounter and connect with God. I would even say my yellow car is one of those *thin places* for me! Where might your own thin place be?

I believe the seasons of Advent and Christmas can themselves be understood as a thin place, a time when heaven meets earth inexplicably. It can be a season that offers small moments and glimpses of the holy: those moments when Jesus comes close, quietly and tenderly, to stand beside you. It may even be in those times when you feel you have no strength left, yet encounter a small flicker of light reminding you that God is with you.

And so, my prayer for you this Advent is that you discover the thin places where God breathes and draws close. May you sense God in the quiet, the ordinary, the in-between. And as Christmas draws near, may the light of Christ that once slipped into the world slip gently into your own life, bringing hope, peace, and the soft assurance that you are never alone.

Wishing you every blessing this Advent and Christmas,

Hannah

NEWS FROM THE VESTRY

As we prepare for Christmas there is a lot being planned, but before that we should look back at some of the preparations we have been making at church, not just for Christmas but, for the longer term here at Wimpole Road. As we seek to move forward and further enhance our fellowship and missional work, we continue to develop our church building to keep it up to date and the best it can be to support the work we feel called to do.

Thanks once again especially to Edward for his project management and oversight of our 'Kitchenette Project', to create a kitchen area at the back of the church along with more multi-functional seating space; the creation of a new accessibility toilet (with a re-configuring of the vestry) and the refurbishment of the vestibule area. All of this was made possible with a very generous donation from Jean and David Ablewhite's family in their memory, along with grants from both the District and the Colchester Circuit. It was such a joy when Rev. Hannah dedicated these for us at our service in early November.

As is the case with all these types of projects, and especially when working with an old building such as ours, there are often 'bumps' along the way and on-going building related issues. The vestibule re-flooring turned out to be somewhat more complex than expected and we have new challenges with both our gas supply into the building and also one of our central heating boilers - all of which take up time and money and we ask for your prayers that solutions can be found to these new matters.

As we move forward and (as suggested at the General Church Meeting), acknowledging that increasingly people don't carry a lot of cash with them, we have introduced a new way of giving to church funds. You will have seen at the back of the church we have some new QR codes on display - these are designed to enable people who wish to give via their mobile phone to do so. We have also introduced a new card reader to take payments using credit / debit cards or smart phones. These are intended as a new way of giving but we would ask that those who give via standing order, the weekly envelopes or cash **do not** switch to the card / QR system please, as there is additional cost involved in receiving payments via these new systems.

If you have any questions about this or want to discuss the most cost-efficient way of giving, please do speak to Edward our Treasurer. The new QR code will also be published in the monthly Newsround.

And so, to the BIG event looming into sight - yes Christmas! Once again, we are delighted to say that we have a full programme of services and events planned for the festive season to suit all needs and preferences. Further details of these are set out later in the Newsround and there are postcards at the back of the church and in the hall with full details of the services and events. Please pick one up and take away with you. There are also sufficient if you want to take some of them to share with friends and family to invite them to come along.

And, let us not forget the underlying reasons for all this preparation and planning. Please remain focused on the fact that as Christians this is all being done to remember and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus and this wonderful opportunity that we have to share the Good News of his birth and his everlasting love for all with everybody.

Happy Christmas to you all.

Andrew Topple

JASTINE DIAZ

Please continue to pray for Jastine's work as our Anna Chaplain.

We give thanks to God for:

- The visits to churches and the positive initial engagement
- Visits to care homes and the interest shown
- The Anna Chaplain Support Group
- The unexpected moments of people getting in touch who are keen to hear more

We pray for:

- The upcoming Carols in Care Homes that the joy and message of Christmas is shared in new places
- The ongoing relationship with Care Homes and the establishment of a regular programme
- Energy and wisdom for Jastine
- Guidance for the future direction of this work

Rev. Chris Preece

LETTER FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

The book by Charlie Mackesey, *'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse'*, is a wonderful book of short phrases of wisdom and pictures which help us to think and reflect. It is a book which follows the friendship of a boy, a mole, a fox and a horse. One of the pictures is of the four characters sitting in the night in a big, open space and the phrase "*Home isn't always a place, is it?*"

I wonder where we find our sense of home? Is it the building in which we live? Is it the town from which we come? Or is it a feeling of being at home, maybe with others, or a contentment from our own space?

As we come into December, we move into the season of Advent and then Christmas. We are looking ahead with anticipation in a season of waiting where we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Those who are preparing for a birth of a baby go to a lot of time and effort to make the welcome for the child as good as it can be. Nurseries are decorated, clothes bought, along with the various pieces of equipment which are needed. The child is either born at home or comes home at the relevant moment. In this sense, we often find home as being a specific place.

Jesus was born in a stable, not a palace. He was born in a borrowed room, not at home. He was wrapped in swaddling bands, and didn't have a huge wardrobe waiting for him. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, yet Mary and Joseph came from Nazareth. When Jesus was born, he came to the world as God in human form. For this time, his home was to show others that the Kingdom of God had come near in the person of Christ. For Jesus, home wasn't a specific place at all.

Jesus' home remained with God the Father and is active today through the Holy Spirit. Jesus sought to show others that home was a place of peace and contentment. Resting in the hands of God is to be at home. It is to know the wholeness and completeness which comes only through him.

As Jesus was laid in a manger, his love for the whole world shone out to it. The angels shared the message of his arrival. The shepherds and the magi came to worship him. They knew that home wasn't a physical place but they knew, through their encounters with him, that they had found an expression of home. As they encountered Jesus, they experienced salvation, and shared this with others.

As we come to Christmas this year, do we feel at home? Are we resting in the hands of God? Are we willing to recognize and share the encounter with Jesus we have so that others may know his love for themselves? Whether we are at home or travelling to friends and family this year, I hope that all goes well as we make the plans and prepare everything for the festive season. Let us also stop and recognize that Jesus invites us to be at home with him, wherever we are.

May I wish you a joy-filled Christmas season,
God bless, *Chris*

MONTHLY PRAYER

**Lord, in this festive season,
we thank you for your Son, our Saviour;
marked by your love
and the focus of your delight.
Amen**

Matthew 17:5b {based on the Message}

THURSDAY CIRCLE

The month of November began with Gunni Graygoose putting us through a series of seated activities. A usual this was good fun and enjoyed by all present.

It is some years since we last had a visit from the Colchester Handbell Society, and they gave us an excellent performance of well-known melodies. Members of Thursday Circle were then given the opportunity to play hand chimes to the tune of 'Frere Jacques', and they did very well.

The following week Steve Jones, a volunteer, gave a presentation on the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance, including a short film giving his own experience of the service when he needed their assistance following a gliding accident.

The month ended with Di Bignell giving a talk on Christmas Traditions. This included ones from the Georgian and Victorian periods, plus examples from all around the world.

Coming up:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 4 December | Christmas Fun – reading and singing things from the non-religious side of Christmas |
| 11 December | Our Christmas Party – 'The New Entertainers', an excellent group from Clacton, will sing to us. Everyone welcome, but please advise Joan or Debbie in advance and say what food you can provide. |
| 18 December | Our Carol Service with traditional carols and readings. Again, all welcome! |

Our programme for the first part of 2026 is now available.

Please see me if you want one!

Joan Gomer - Secretary

SOUP RUN APPEAL

Any donations of spare gloves, hats and scarves would be gratefully received by our friends on the Soup Run.

Our next rota is on 27 December, so any donations by 21 December would be greatly appreciated. Thank you

Juliet Balls

ADVENT RING

The request "Come and light the candles on the Advent Ring" is a call to begin the tradition of lighting candles on an Advent wreath, a practice that symbolizes the coming of Christ.

This involves lighting one new candle each Sunday of Advent, for a total of four candles, and a central white candle on Christmas Day.

The meaning of the candles:

- **Hope**: The first candle lit often represents hope.
- **Faith**: The second candle represents faith.
- **Joy**: The third candle, lit on the third Sunday represents joy.
- **Peace**: The fourth candle can symbolize peace.
- **Christ Candle**: The central white candle is lit on Christmas Day to represent the birth of Jesus, the light of the world.

ADVENT

As a Christmas Tree begins with a seed,
And a Christmas Day begins with a dawn,
So a rescued world begins with a Child,
And Christmas begins with Christ.
Begin your Christmas with Christ,
And Christmas will never end.

Light the candle – Advent's here,
See the flame burn bright and clear,
Watch it flicker and burn away,
Waiting, waiting for Christmas Day.
Hear the message the Angels bring,
Welcome the Child, born to be King.

Peace to the world - God's only Son -
Light the candle, Christ will come.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF CRICKET

I have been reading a delightful book 'The Commonwealth of Cricket', written by Ramachandra Guha. The author is one of India's best-known historians, a cricket fan who has spent a lifetime both playing and watching the game of cricket in India.

The book, however, contains a couple of pieces that are worth sharing.

In his final year at school, he writes of a bearded white man whose defensive batting resulted in a drawn match.

As they walked off the field the author said to the white man,
"You play with a straight bat."

He replied,
"My friend, in cricket as much as in life, one must always play with a straight bat."

Wise words and a reminder to be always honest and trustworthy.

And from a lecture given by the legendary Sri Lankan player Kumar Sangakkara in 2011: in his lecture he referred to the violence against the Tamils in Colombo in 1983, noting that his own, proudly non- sectarian, family gave refuge to thirty-five Tamil friends on the run.

Towards the end of the lecture, he returned to the theme of inter-faith and inter- community harmony and said when he played cricket for Sri Lanka,

"With me are all my people. I am Tamil, Sinhalese, Muslim and Burgher. I am a Buddhist, a Hindu, a follower of Islam and Christianity."

Wise words.

Graham Duthie

CHRISTMAS STAMPS 2025

The following accompanied the Royal Mail First Day Cover of this year's Christmas stamps.

The stamps are reminders of gathering: the convergence of many different people around a shared moment of intensity.

The infant Jesus, swaddled in the arms of his young mother, Mary, is a still point in a changeable world.

The angel's trumpet promises peace on Earth and good will to all humankind.

The power of that promise is enough to gather from near and far, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the heavenly and the earthly.

{Stephen Tuthill has shared a prayer for persecuted Christians around the world}

A PRAYER FOR OUR PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Luke 21:12-13

Jesus said, "But before all these things, they will seize you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and rulers for My Name's sake. It will turn out as a testimony for you."

In a report by 'Open Doors', who monitor the World Watch List, shared by a British Government report, it was found that more than 365 million Christians worldwide 'faced high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith'. This represented one in seven Christians globally, one in five in Africa and two in five in Asia. In the top 50 countries covered by the world watch list, '317 million Christians face very high or extreme levels of persecution and discrimination'.

{There have been several debates and British Government Reports produced over the years, as the British Government has been well aware of Christian and Christian Community Persecution around the globe; the latest one being entitled 'Persecution of Christians' [House of Commons Library, Persecution of Christians, Debate Pack 28 March 2025 CDP-0076 (2025)]. In these documents they took a wide range of evidence, from the Catholic News Agency, Newsweek, ADF International, and Open Doors. Open Doors [www.opendoorsuk.org] being the organisation that looks after the World Watch List that highlights the top 50 countries with the most persecution, and other events against Christian people.}

As a Christian in the UK, we rarely experience anything as bad as many of our fellow Christian brothers and sisters around the world.

Dear Heavenly Father,

When we feel powerless, ignored or felt apathetic against, in this Christmas season where we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we pray that we may remember our fellow Christian brothers and sisters in countries where there are personal and property dispossession, forcible intolerance and actual genocide.

Living in a country where we are free to choose what we believe, how we express it, and why we believe it, we acknowledge that we are extremely fortunate and blessed to experience those freedoms.

We pray that we will not use that freedom of belief and expression to rest on our laurels, but instead use our Christian witness to stand up for those who don't have those same freedoms.

We pray that as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, we pray for endurance in our faiths so that we can gain our souls.

Help us to make our nation a beacon of light, where everyone has the freedom of choice to choose their own beliefs, meet freely together, and express themselves as they are.

Help us to be a people of grace, tolerance, and love, where we show by our own witness the Lord Jesus' Christ's love and grace to others, no matter who they are, where they come from, or how they identify.

We ask this prayer in the power of the name of Jesus, the love of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, in our lives. Amen.

{Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in 'Newsround' are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the expressed views of the Church.}

WIMPOLE ROAD CHURCH SERVICES FOR DECEMBER

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

7 December	Joe Navoka
14 December	Alan Beesley
21 December	Rev. Hannah Chun / Holy Communion
21 December 6.30 p.m.	Joint Carol Service with Boxted Methodist Silver Band
24 December 4.00 p.m.	Crib Service / Holy Communion Rev. Hannah Chun
28 December	Circuit Service @ Wimpole Road. Rev. Chris Preece & Rev. Hannah Chun

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS

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

DIARY DATES

Saturday 13 December at The Ark 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.

‘Serving the Present Age?’ - Circuit Prayer Group, led by Chris Firmin.

To support God’s mission for our churches in Colchester. All welcome

FOR YOUR PRAYERS:

*All those known to us who have ongoing health problems
and any who are in need of support at this time,*

*If you would like to make a donation towards our work here at Wimpole Road,
and within our wider community, you can do so by using the QR code below:*



CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

Please join us at either:

- West Mersea Methodist Church 10.00 a.m. Rev. Hannah Chun
- Castle Methodist Church 10.30 a.m. Rev. Chris Preece
- St. Margaret's C of E Church 10.15 a.m. Rev. Anna Davis

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Jeanette, Anthony and Graham would like to wish all their friends at Wimpole Road a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Pauline and Martin send best wishes to all friends at Wimpole Road for a Happy Christmas and healthy New Year. We will not be sending Christmas cards but will make a donation to St. Helena Hospice (all donations made in December will be doubled by matched funding).

We send love and Christmas greetings to all our friends at Wimpole Road, from **Dave and Joe**, and we thank everyone for their prayers for Dave.

Joan Tyler sends very best Christmas wishes to all her church friends at Wimpole Road.

Jon and Margaret convey very best wishes for a Happy and Blessed Christmas to all their friends at Wimpole Road. {We will not be sending cards this year and would be happy for others to avoid expensive postal charges; perhaps instead making a donation to the church.}

Christmas Greetings from **Stephen Tuthill and Felicity Moy**

*To all our dear friends at Wimpole Road,
We wish you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas
filled with the nearness and warmth of God's love.*

*Love,
Hannah, Yoon, Reyna, Laelle & Naythan*





WORKING TOGETHER



PRAYER MEETING Tuesday 10.00 - 10.30 a.m.

Please email: wimpoleroadmc@gmail.com for access details.

LINK TO OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/WimpoleRoadMethodists>

LINK TO ST. STEPHEN'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

<http://ststephens-colchester.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025-12-December-2025-Newsletter-Compressed-V01.00.pdf>

FUTURE NEWSROUNDS

If you have any items that you would like to contribute to a future monthly Newsround - please e-mail:

alison.ablewhite@btinternet.com

KEEP UP TO DATE ON OUR WEBSITE:

www.wimpoleroadchurch.org.uk

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**Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign is us for ever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.**



Pray for peace at your local churches this Christmas

Wishing you a very happy Christmas!

You are most welcome to join us at any of the events shown.

30th November

Messy Church | St Margaret's | 2:00 - 4:00 PM | *pre booking requested*,
children accompanied by an adult. £2 requested donation per family.

5th December

Colne Endeavour Carol Concert | St Margaret's | 7:30 PM

6th December

Christmas Hub | St Stephen's | 10:00 AM - 12:00 noon

7th December

Christmas Messy / Tree decorating service | St Stephen's | 10:15 AM

Silver Oyster Christmas Fayre | St Margaret's
1:00 - 4:00 PM | Open Church and Carol Singing from 3:00 PM

13th December

Christmas Hub | St Stephen's | 10:00 AM - 12:00 noon

New Town Carol Singing | St Stephen's
4:45 PM starting at St Stephen's, end at the Odd One Out Pub
around 7pm for soup and more singing

17th December

Abbeygate Concert Band Christmas Concert | St Stephen's 2:00 PM

19th December

St Leonard's Carol Service (with bell ringing from 7:00 PM)
St Leonard's | 7:30 PM

20th December

Christmas Hub | St Stephen's | 10:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Breakfast with Father Christmas; *pre booking requested*

A Christmas Carol by Candlelight
St Stephen's | £6.50 per adult | 6:30 PM | Doors open at 5:00 PM

21st December

Joint Carol Service with the Boxted Methodist Silver Band
Wimpole Road | 6:30 PM

24th December - Christmas Eve

Christingle Service | St Stephen's | 2:00 PM

Crib Service | Wimpole Road | 4:00 PM

Candlelight All Age Nativity Service | St Margaret's | 4:30 PM

Midnight Communion Service | St Stephen's | 11:00 PM

25th December - Christmas Day

Christmas Day Celebration with Holy Communion and Christmas
continental breakfast | St Margaret's | 10:15 AM

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