



January 2026

Minister: Rev. Hannah Chun
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Dear Friends,

I hope you were able to enjoy the Christmas and New Year celebrations in ways that felt joyful, peaceful, and restful for you. My family and I welcomed the New Year at midnight in front of the television, watching the countdown and the London fireworks display. Yes, even the children stayed up until midnight! It was truly a spectacular display, filled with highlights from the past year brought together through lighting, music, and animation.

One aspect that particularly struck me was the way the display championed what it means to be English and British, while also celebrating diversity. This was powerfully illustrated through images of flags representing the many countries of origin of people who live in the UK. As the fireworks came to an end and *Auld Lang Syne* played in the background, BBC News correspondent Greg McKenzie shared that this year's theme was 'Togetherness'. I felt this was a wonderful message of unity to take the nation into the New Year. Not only for the nation as a whole, but also as a fitting theme for our church, our wider churches, our communities, and our homes.

How might we, as a church, demonstrate this sense of togetherness? How might we see this theme woven through our meetings, gatherings, and conversations, whether in church, on the streets, in our communities, or in our homes?

At the beginning of each year in the Methodist Church, we share in the Covenant Service, where we renew our covenant with God and with one another. This service reminds us of

God's continuing and never-ending love for us, a love that promises to be with us throughout the coming year and beyond. It also reminds us of our bond, our unity, and our togetherness in Christ, who breaks through all differences and boundaries.

As we have celebrated at Christmas Christ's breaking through and coming to be with us as Emmanuel, 'God with us', may we hold this message close to our hearts throughout the year. The song of the angels, the faith of the shepherds, and the determination of the wise men all break into our ordinary, everyday lives. Christmas is not over, in fact, the work of Christmas begins now.

As I ended the year and began this new one, a fellow congregation member reminded me of the following poem by Howard Thurman, an African-American minister and civil rights leader. I would like to share it with you, as it speaks of how the work of God's love coming down to us never ends, because it continues to be made visible through you and me.

The Work of Christmas

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

God bless,

Hannah

Dear all,

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the stewards and to everyone who worked so hard to support, help, and prepare for the many additional services we held over Christmas, including the Circuit Service, which welcomed many people from across the Circuit. All the services, along with the school assembly, were a sheer joy and delight to be part of, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who played a part in making them so special. Thank you also for the wonderful Christmas cards and messages, which truly warmed our hearts.

*Many thanks, **Hannah***

NEWS FROM THE VESTRY

All the Stewards send our very best wishes for a very happy and healthy new year to you all! I don't think I can recall a Christmas where I have been so behind in almost everything possible! And this is whilst my shopping, wrapping up, etc. was mainly all done for me! I am fully aware of how very fortunate I am in so many ways in being blessed with the most loving and caring family. Wimpole Road Church is a big part of my life, and I pray that it will stay that way. What a remarkable run up to Advent / Christmas we have had.

At Wimpole Road we have teams of many caring people, who amongst other things, welcome our worshippers on a Sunday morning, and at any other time there is a service. Many of us watch out for any newcomers to our church, and have a chat with them in the hope of making them feel welcome. I think this is always appreciated, and hopefully makes a good impression. There are several people to give our warm thanks to, but so many deserve recognition - without many of them I don't think everything would run so smoothly. Thank you everyone who is involved - we really appreciate it.

On behalf of the Stewards, we would like to thank Hannah for all her preparation and support over Christmas, and we also are aware that additionally she led a carol service for Woodlands Day Care Centre in the church after a coffee morning, and also took an assembly at Kendal School. Thank you very much Hannah.

Thanks also to Christine Duthie and those who supported her in the Advent Thoughts at the beginning of worship, which were much appreciated, as well as Graham and Joan, our other two valued Worship Leaders.

Many thanks for the beautiful flowers that are always lovingly prepared for Sunday Services, and for many other occasions. The flowers on the window sills were particularly eye-catching and lovely, over this Christmas period.

The alterations and the new kitchenette (now fully operational), has had a very positive response from both regular worshippers, and also visitors to our church.

Many thanks to everyone who has been involved in this, particularly to Edward, who has headed up this important project. A lovely sight are the many books which now have a home on the back wall of the vestibule, in book cases made of wood from the pews. This was particularly noticed on the evening of the Carol Service, when the well-known and loved Boxted Methodist Silver Band played so beautifully. This United Service with St. Stephen's and St. Margaret's, was enjoyed by many, with readers from all three churches, and £170 was raised for Action for Children.

The Christmas Eve Crib Service, followed by Holy Communion, was another memorable service led by Hannah. There were not very people there, however those who did attend really enjoyed the service. At the front of the church was an empty stable. At the back there were lots of animals, shepherds, wise men, etc. who were handed to the children as they arrived. After each reading about the nativity, the reader invited the children to bring up their respective named character/animal and place it in the stable.

On Sunday 28th December, a Circuit Service was held at our church, and we wanted to mark our thanks as a circuit, for the many times, Rev. Paul Howes has both preached on regular occasions, as well as leading special services, and undertaking extra duties when required - all this despite having retired and moved to Ipswich. The church was quite full, and Paul was clearly surprised that this had all been arranged without his knowledge, and very grateful for the kind words and prayers and of course the presentation. His wife Mel, and daughter Beth were both there as well. A lovely service, which was enjoyed by all present.

We at Wimpole Road have the only choir in the circuit, and for this we are duly proud. Grateful thanks to our Choir Leader, Beryl Leech for all her work.

In every period in church life there are always happy occasions as well as sad ones. Quite recently we had the funeral of Val Potter, (who sang with us in the choir) and is sadly missed. As is Derek Salmon, who with his wife Daphne, were faithful members of our church many years ago.

Please remember particularly these two families in our prayers - especially aware that this will have been the first Christmas without their loved one; as well as those known to us who need help or support in any way.

Also please remember Anna Chaplaincy in our prayers. Jastine Diaz is recently appointed as the first Anna Chaplain to the Methodist Circuit in Colchester. He and his wife have worked in the care industry for many years. He has commented that whilst he and his wife were working within the care industry, it became clear that although often physical needs were met, some older people were feeling isolated and fearful. They were looking for someone to recognise their spiritual needs, and to have prayers and worship available. He and his team are hopefully aiming to give older people the support they deserve. This is a ministry aimed at equipping churches to pastorally concentrate on older people both in and out of the church community.

Margaret Clubb

‘WISE MEN SEEKING JESUS’

by the Rev. James T. East

Wise men seeking Jesus travelled from afar,
Guided in their journey by a wond’rous star.
But if we desire Him, He is close at hand,
For our native country is our holy land.

Prayerful souls may find Him by our quiet lakes,
Meet Him on our hillsides when the dawning breaks
In our fertile wheat fields where the sheaves are bound,
In our busy markets Jesus may be found.

Fishermen talk with Him by the deep blue sea
As the first disciples did by Galilee.
Every peaceful village in our land might be
Made by Jesus’ Presence like sweet Bethany.

He is more near us if we love Him well,
For He seeketh ever in our hearts to dwell.

LETTER FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

The start of a new year is often a time of reflection and consideration. The world tells us that we have moved on from Christmas and the adverts go from promoting over-indulgence to that of diet plans and holidays. It becomes a time of looking forward rather than looking back. However, that isn't always easy and all too easily we can lose sight of the present moment.

Just prior to Christmas I was involved in a couple of conversations about the associations music can have for us. The sleigh bells which accompany so many songs in December immediately take us back to Christmas. For many of us through the rest of the year, a particular piece of music can evoke memories in many different ways, taking us back to the past.

At the same time, stepping out into the garden and seeing the bulbs starting to show often becomes associated with a sense of hope and new life. Once the snowdrops come into flower it seems the early Spring season has started and creation is bursting into life once again. Seeing the primroses in flower in December made me think about how we react when things seem to be slightly out of place in the year.

We are reminded in Hebrews that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.' We mustn't forget the past and all that means to us and we should look ahead to the coming year with an openness to all that God is doing, and will continue to do. We should also remember that Jesus is the same today and not forget the present.

Where do we find a sense of God in our lives today? Is it in a piece of music where we feel a sense of closeness to God, either through the words or the notes being played? Maybe it's in creation where we step outside and see things differently, by going for a walk, or just looking out into the garden. Maybe it is in a book, through a poem, our hobbies or wherever it might be. We can find Jesus through the peace of the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts and minds in a new way, or through time seemingly standing still for a period. Maybe it's in the midst of daily life, or when we stop. Wherever it might be, let us give thanks and praise to God who, in Jesus, came to the world to bring us salvation and to draw us close to him.

Wherever we encounter Jesus, let's give thanks to God that he has revealed himself to us. Let's also be open to the new ways in which God may meet us through the Holy Spirit. We may be pleasantly surprised!

During January, we will celebrate our Covenant Service. It is where we reflect on our relationship with God and to recommit ourselves to him. We do this by bringing the past year before God, looking ahead to the future, by acknowledging where we are now and how God is meeting us. It is an important service in our Methodist tradition and one we should come to with open hearts and minds as we look to the time ahead.

May God bless you and your families richly this coming year,

Chris

THANK YOU

The period of Advent and Christmas are one of the busiest in the year for the Stewards. I would like to thank the Team for all their hard work over the past few weeks; without them this season would look very different in our Church calendar, so my grateful thanks to each of you.

Beryl Pentney also deserves a thank you for organising, buying and wrapping the gifts sent out on behalf of the Church to those who are no longer able to worship in person. This thoughtful gesture, along with additional visits from pastoral leaders is much appreciated by the recipients and helps us keep the message of God's love in companionship strong in our Church family. Thank you all.

On a personal note, thank you to all who sent me cards and good wishes for Christmas. As usual I have made a donation in lieu of sending cards to the 'Stand By Me' Christmas appeal.

Your support and prayers over the last few weeks have been invaluable, thank you All for your concern and love shown, it means a great deal.

I wish you a very blessed and peaceful 2026 and trust that God will move us forward as a loving family in this community.

Every blessing,

Christine (F)

CHRISTMAS GIFTS – THANKS

Could you please put in the Newsround my thanks for the Christmas gift from friends at Wimpole Road Church.

Ken Young

I would like to say 'Thank You' for the Christmas gift from the Church of a tin of biscuits. It was completely unexpected and a lovely surprise.

John Gomer

I would like to thank my friends at Wimpole Road for the lovely tin of shortbread biscuits.

Joan Tyler

SOUP RUN APPEAL - THANKS

Just to say thank you so much for all the donations of hats, gloves, scarves and warm socks. These were very much appreciated by those who came along to the Soup Run on 27 December, and we still have some to distribute next time. Many thanks.

Juliet Balls

MONTHLY PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
help us to listen to your voice in everything we do,
guide us wherever we go to keep us in your way.
Amen

{Proverbs 3:6}

THURSDAY CIRCLE

Our Thursday afternoons for December have been getting us in the mood for Christmas.

Firstly, we had an afternoon of Christmas Fun, reading and singing things from the non-religious side of Christmas.

The following week we had our Christmas Party, with 'The Performers' from Clacton. As usual this was excellent, with songs ranging from Abba to Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (sung in German!) We had a visit from a fairy singing, '*No-one loves a fairy when she's forty*' and a turkey was chased round the hall by a cook!

Our final week was our Carol Service, where members took part reading the familiar Christmas story and we sang all the well-known carols. Thanks to the readers and for Beryl who came to play the piano.

We will not be meeting in January but you are welcome to join us when we resume again on 5th February.

Joan Gomer - Secretary

OUR COVENANT SERVICE REMINDS US THAT:

*'Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.*

*Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,
who strengthens us.'*

Never let us forget that God's grace is sufficient and that his power is made perfect in our weakness.

So let us give ourselves to the New Year in the strength of that promise.

May God's grace be rich in you.

Rev. John Allison {2007}

FIRST COMING

by Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

{This poem was read out by Rev. Hannah at the Carol Service}

HYMNS FOR VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS

BUILDING CONTRACTORS:	The Church's one foundation
CENSUS TAKERS:	All people that on earth do dwell
CREDIT CARD USERS:	A charge to keep I have
DENTIST:	Crown Him with many crowns
DRY CLEANERS:	O for a faith that will not shrink
GOLFERS:	There is a green hill far away
INLAND REVENUE OFFICERS:	We give thee but thine own
LAWYERS:	In the hour of trial
LIBRARIANS:	Let all mortal flesh keep silence
OSTETRICIANS:	Come, labour on
POLITICIANS:	Standing on the promises
TRAFFIC POLICEMEN:	Where cross the crowded ways of life

WHAT CAN WE DO, BUT PRAY...?

Ever since I started taking an interest in the treatment of our fellow brethren around the world, it has seemed to me that there seems to be a link between those believers who live in areas where there is great persecution and the news that then comes out - that very often those areas are the areas of the world where there are more conversions subsequently.

We recently had an Iranian family come to our church. I hope that they come again, but the short version of their story is that they left Iran because it was getting harder to be a Christian. News coming out of Iran recently shows that there are many mosques being closed as Iranians in their multitudes come to Christ in faith, and become new Christians.

'Open Doors' produces a report called 'The World Watch List', focusing on the top 50 countries where people are most persecuted for being Christ followers. This can affect believers from being driven underground, being forced to flee, to actually being attacked and killed. However, despite all this, believers still are witnesses to the truth, and in many places God's Church is actually growing.

But, what can we do in the West where we live in relative safety?

As 'Open Doors' phrases it in their recent publication, 'World Watch List 2025', "In the end we are all witnesses. We witness to the light and life that is found in Jesus. And, we are witnesses to what is happening to his followers around the world. *We have the privilege of standing alongside them – through prayer, through giving and through speaking out on their behalf.*" [p3, par6].

So, what we can do is to first witness the fact that there are millions of Christians being persecuted around the world. Pray for our fellow believers who are being persecuted, speak out on their behalf, and be their voices, and finally, but as importantly, support charities like 'Open Doors' that provide support for those followers that face persecution every day.

Dear Heavenly Father,

We pray for our international brethren, brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for them choosing to become believers.

As we start a new year in 2026, we pray that many more people will be witnessed to in a way that is safer to both the witness and the witnessed, that Jesus' Church may grow despite the world's attempts to stop the work of the great commission.

Help us to remember that we don't battle against human flesh, but against princes of darkness (Ephesians 6:12), help us to rely on your holy strength, wisdom, and guidance, and not on our own strength and understanding.

Help us to know that it is your plan that we are following, not one of our own, and, that nothing can stop the will of our Heavenly Father, as if God is for us, no-one can be against us.

We ask this prayer in the power that is in the Name of Jesus the Christ, our loving Heavenly Father, and the eternal presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Amen.

Stephen Tuthill

{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 JANUARY

Sunday mornings at 11.00 a.m.

4 January	Rev. Dr David Chapman Covenant Service/Holy Communion
11 January	Ron Firmin
18 January	Local Arrangement
25 January	Rev. Hannah Chun

A WARM WELCOME AWAITS

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

DIARY DATES

Saturday 10 January at The Well 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.

‘Serving the Present Age?’ - Circuit Prayer Group.

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:**





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/2025/12/2026-01-January-2026-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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**The new year has begun for us.
Now must God grant us with love,
that we may be able so to begin it
that it may be of value for Love.
And now we welcome the new year,
full of things that have never been.**