

Christmas Connections 2024

Keep Christ in Christmas



A seasonal publication
produced by

St David's and

St John's Methodist
Churches, Llandudno.

Superintendent:

Revd Dr James Garnett

A SEASON FOR VISIONS

Advent, in the run-up to Christmas, is the season for visions.

In our Advent Circuit Bible Study, we will be dwelling on Elijah's vision of drought-busting rain when there was not a cloud in the sky. (See 1 Kings 18:41 – details of the Bible studies are on page 3) Yet, Elijah persuaded King Ahab to act on this vision by making a journey before the rain stopped him.

It is more usual in Advent, perhaps, to think of John the Baptist and his vision: 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me' (Mark 1:7). Again, he persuaded people to act *now* in the expectation of what was to come, by repenting and being baptised.

As we approach Christmas itself, no doubt



our thoughts will move to Mary and her vision of Gabriel (Luke 2:26), and also to Joseph's angelic vision (Matthew 2:18). Here too, a vision of the future – not just of birth, but of the significance of that birth – informed action in the present.

The irony of all these revelations that we call 'visions' is that they involve anticipating something that is not yet visible. Elijah was certain of rain before a single cloud had appeared. John knew that his role was to prepare the way before he had met Jesus. For Mary and Joseph, the vision was not the angel so much as the expectation generated by their encounters: their son was destined for greatness. In each case, the vision occurred in the eye of the imagination. Something unseen was grasped with confidence, as if it were already there.

It would be easy to be cynical and to point out that all of these visions were written down with the benefit of hindsight. Yet, this would be to miss something important in our experience of being human. People do imagine the future with the vividness of a present reality, whether that is a personal future to do with a job or family life (for example), a political future to do with the elimination of poverty, or a spiritual future to do with a commitment to peace.

Visions bring an imagined future into the present time. Not only do they motivate our actions towards achieving a future goal, but they also influence how we understand the present reality. For Mary and Joseph, for example, the vision of who their son would be radically changed the way in which they perceived Mary's unexpected pregnancy.

This Advent, all the churches in the Circuit are being asked to be open, in prayer, to a vision for their future. Who knows where the angels – the messengers from God – will come from. Perhaps we will be each other's angels. Perhaps a visitor to the church, or someone you meet on the street will say something that touches your heart. I pray that we will all recognise those voices-of-vision when we hear them. For it is through our

imagination of how the church is to be that we will come to see clearly not only who we currently are, but what we are being called to do.

REVD JAMES GARNETT

‘At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God’s own love and concern.’— Mother Teresa

CIRCUIT BIBLE STUDIES

Our ‘Year with Elijah’, that started in the Season of Creation, will continue through Advent. Each week, we will read together 1 Kings 18:41-46; and each week, we will do so bearing in mind a different aspect of Our Calling. Each week’s Bible Study will be available three times, as shown below. The

Zoom details are: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84967351356?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84967351356?pwd=NUgaH2eFa7kV1b2oJ5P68sqEJEra6u.1)

pwd=NUgaH2eFa7kV1b2oJ5P68sqEJEra6u.1

Meeting ID: 849 6735 1356, Passcode: 210095

Week 1: Learning & Caring	Wednesday 27 November, 11am-12noon, St David’s	Wednesday 4 December, 2-3pm, Trinity Prestatyn	Monday 2 December, 7- 8pm, on Zoom
Week 2: Service	Wednesday 4 December, 11am-12noon, St David’s	Wednesday 27 November, 2-3pm, Llanddulas	Monday 9 December, 7-8pm, on Zoom
Week 3: Evangelism	Wednesday 11 December, 11am-12noon, St David’s	Wednesday 18 December, 2-3pm, Trinity, Prestatyn	Monday 16 December, 7-8pm, on Zoom
Week 4: Worship	Wednesday 18 December, 11am-12noon, St David’s	Wednesday 11 December, 2-3pm, Llanddulas	Monday 23 December, 7-8pm, on Zoom.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD:

A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

Christmas is a time of joy, unity, and celebration for Christians all over the world. While the message of the birth of Christ remains central, the ways in which different cultures celebrate this event are as diverse and vibrant as the global Christian community itself. From the hymns sung to the food prepared, the customs of Methodist and Christian traditions worldwide reflect a beautiful tapestry of faith and festivity. Let's journey across continents and discover some of these unique traditions!

1. United Kingdom: The Origins of Christmas Carols

In the UK, Christmas is a time steeped in music and tradition. Methodist churches often hold special carol services throughout Advent, culminating in festive celebrations on Christmas Eve. The tradition of singing carols dates back to the Middle Ages, but it was the Methodist movement, particularly under the influence of Charles Wesley, that helped shape and popularize many of the hymns still sung today. 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing' is a well-loved example of a Wesleyan hymn that has become a staple of Christmas worship services.

Aside from carol services, Methodist churches often hold Christingle services, where children carry oranges decorated with candles, red ribbon, and dried fruits, symbolizing the light of Christ and His love for the world.

2. United States: A Festival of Lights and Service

In the United States, Christmas traditions vary widely, but Methodist and Christian communities emphasize service and generosity during the season. Many churches organize Advent candle lighting services, where each week focuses on hope, peace, joy, and love. These moments of reflection culminate in the lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve, representing the birth of Jesus as the light of the world.

Another key feature is the tradition of ‘White Gifts’, where congregants bring wrapped gifts—usually in white paper or plain packaging—to symbolize a pure offering for those in need. These gifts are then distributed to local shelters, food banks, and children’s charities, reflecting the Methodist emphasis on social justice and charity.

3. Philippines: Simbang Gabi and Feasts of Faith

In the predominantly Christian Philippines, Christmas is the longest and most festive season, beginning as early as September! For Methodists and other Christians, Simbang Gabi (Night Mass) is a cherished tradition. This series of nine early morning masses starts on December 16 and culminates on Christmas Eve with the ‘Misa de Gallo.’ The masses are often followed by festive gatherings where families and friends share puto bumbong (purple rice cakes) and bibingka (rice cakes with butter and coconut), highlighting the communal and celebratory nature of Filipino Christian culture.

Methodist churches in the Philippines integrate the joy of the season with their emphasis on community service, holding outreach programs for the underprivileged, mirroring the humble birth of Christ by extending love and generosity to those in need.

4. Africa: Drumming, Dancing, and Joyful Praise

Across many African countries, Methodist and Christian communities celebrate Christmas with vibrant energy and joy. In Ghana, for example, Christmas services often feature drumming, dancing, and singing, transforming the church into a place of jubilant praise. The congregation dresses in colourful traditional clothing, and families gather for meals featuring local dishes like fufu (pounded yam) and jollof rice.

Kenyan Methodist churches have a similar emphasis on music and dance, with choirs preparing elaborate performances that tell the story of the Nativity. After services, communities often come together for a festive

meal, highlighting the importance of unity and fellowship.

5. Mexico: Las Posadas and Family Gatherings

In Mexico, Christmas is a time for community and family, deeply rooted in faith. One of the most cherished traditions is Las Posadas, which takes place from December 16 to 24. Las Posadas reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Neighbours and friends take part in processions, moving from house to house, carrying candles and singing hymns. At each stop, they are symbolically turned away until they find one home where they are welcomed, representing the humble circumstances of Christ's birth.

In Methodist churches, Las Posadas is often accompanied by special services and gatherings that bring the community together. The celebration usually ends with a shared meal and the breaking of piñatas, highlighting both the festive and spiritual dimensions of the holiday.

6. Sweden: St. Lucia Day and Candlelit Services

In Sweden, the Christmas season begins with St. Lucia Day on December 13, a celebration of light in the darkness of winter. While this tradition originates in Catholicism, many Protestant and Methodist churches have adopted it as part of their Advent observances. Young girls dress as St. Lucia, wearing white robes and crowns of candles, symbolizing the light of Christ.

Methodist congregations in Sweden also hold candlelit services, reflecting the serenity and anticipation of Advent. These services are often followed by the sharing of traditional pepparkakor (gingerbread cookies) and glögg (mulled wine or juice), fostering a sense of warmth and community.

7. Australia: Christmas Under the Sun

In Australia, Christmas takes place during the summer, leading to unique outdoor celebrations. Methodist churches often gather for 'Carols by

Candlelight', a tradition where families come together in parks and open spaces to sing carols under the stars. This event brings the community together in a spirit of joy and celebration, merging the warm weather with the warmth of Christian fellowship.

Christmas Day services in Australian Methodist churches are similar to those in the UK and US, focusing on the Nativity story. However, post-service celebrations often include barbecues and beach outings, combining the festive and spiritual dimensions of Christmas in a distinctly Australian way.

Conclusion: A Global Celebration of Faith

No matter where in the world Christmas is celebrated, Methodist and Christian communities find ways to honour the birth of Jesus through song, service, and fellowship. These diverse customs remind us that the heart of Christmas transcends geography and culture, uniting us as one global family in Christ. Whether it's the candlelit churches of Sweden, the lively drumming in Ghana, or the joyful processions in Mexico, each tradition adds a unique and beautiful thread to the tapestry of global Christianity.

Graham Morgan, St David's

LLANDUDNO TOWN CAROL SERVICE

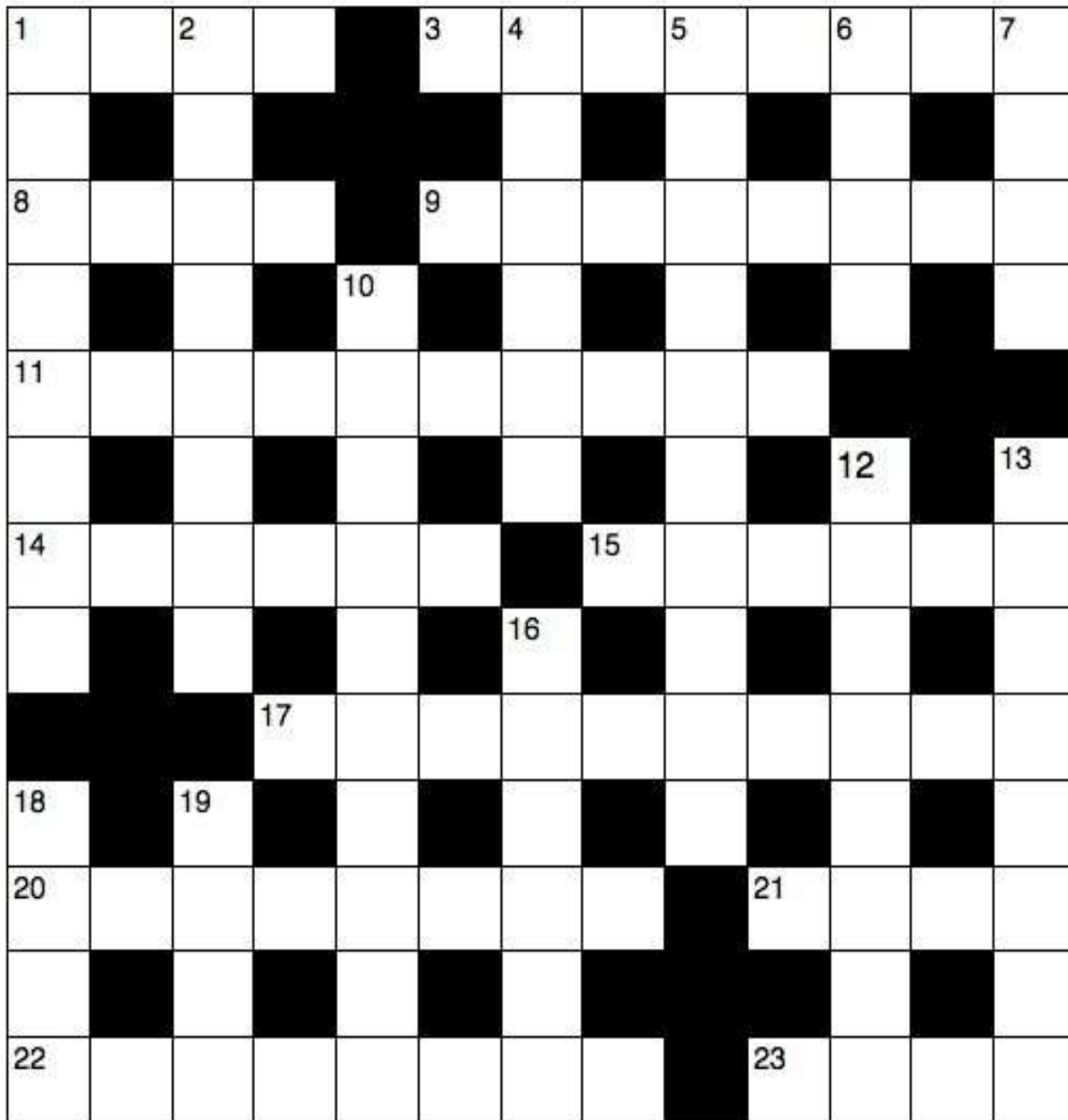
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

FRIDAY 13 DECEMBER

6:30PM

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Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)

3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)

8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)

9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)

11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)

14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the

Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)

15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)

17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)

20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)

21 Rite (anag.) (4)

22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)

23 'The eye cannot say to the — , 'I don't need you'' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

CLUES DOWN

1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)

2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)

4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, 'God have mercy on me, a sinner'' (Luke 18:13) (6)

5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)

6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)

7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)

10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)

12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)

13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)

16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)

18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully

committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)

19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)



"Does anyone have a light, please?"

ST. DAVID'S CENTENARY BANNER

Our Centenary banner was unveiled at the Harvest of Gifts Weekend in late September and hangs on the wall by the entrance to the hall.

At the beginning of the year, we had a brainstorming session of how we might celebrate our centenary.

I had just seen a photograph of a banner representing social justice in the Art Serve magazine. Art Serve is an ecumenical group, which celebrates creativity in worship and Chris and I have been members for many years.

I suggested we might make a banner, celebrating the life and mission of St. Davids over the hundred years. The idea was approved, which left me with a problem as I did not have the expertise! Fortunately, Janet and Denise Creed readily agreed to help and a few weeks later I read in the Connections magazine that Liz Morgan loved stitching. Our banner group was complete!

We had a workshop early in April and, during the year, over twenty of our church family have been beavering away making the individual squares.



We hope this banner will provide a talking point and be a witness to the many people who use our premises. It is also a permanent tribute to all who have served at St. Davids throughout the years.

My thanks go to everyone who helped in the making and hanging of this banner.

ST DAVID'S HARVEST OF GIFTS WEEKEND.

In this, our centenary year, it was agreed that Harvest should celebrate not only God's gifts of food, but all the other gifts and talents he has given to each one of us.

On Saturday, 28 September, we held a Festival of Talents, showing the creative gifts of our church family. It was amazing to see how creative people are. Displays included knitting, sewing, craftwork, photography, art and writing. There was also space for specialised bike building, guinea pig breeding and photographs of various performances which people have been involved in over the years. It also provided the chance to see all the entries for our 100th logo from the local schools.

There were opportunities for people to get hands on with various craftwork and making corn dollies!

Throughout the day, our musicians provided background music.

Our bakers and cooks were not forgotten as we celebrated their gifts by providing soup, cakes and drinks.

The day was advertised widely on Facebook and flyers were provided to give out as invitations to family, friends and neighbours. There was a steady flow of people throughout the day and we had many conversations with people who had not been inside a church for a long time!

'All Good Gifts around us' was the theme for our Sunday worship. We gave thanks for God's provision to us and responded by donating to our local food bank. The exhibition of crafts was kept for the worship and so it really was a thanksgiving for all good gifts around us!

It was important to celebrate all of our talents, some of which are less tangible and cannot be displayed on a table. In our creative prayers, people were given the opportunity to think of their own personal gifts.

Everyone was given a cardboard ear of corn and invited to write their gifts on it. Then these were made into sheaves of corn. These are just some of the gifts which people recognised God has given to them:

Perseverance, compassion, encouragement, friendship, hospitality, forgiveness, listening, patience, the ability to make people laugh and a smile! We also celebrated gifts which we are able to bring into our worship.

A music group led our singing, which included a tune composed by one of our members. The song 'Jesus be the centre' was interpreted in dance and we had a monologue about the story of Ruth, written by another member of our church family. The gift of signing was used as we joined together in the Lord's prayer. This was especially powerful as some in the congregation used signing as their means of communication.

It was a weekend to give thanks for all that God has given to us.

It was truly a Harvest of Gifts!

Helen Cooper, St David's

It was just a few days before Christmas, when two men went sailing while their wives went Christmas shopping. While the men were sailing a storm came up - a mighty storm - that tossed the boat back and forth across the water. Finally, the tiny sail boat was forced upon the shore of a small island.



The men jumped out of the boat and tried to push it back into the water. Suddenly, they realized that they were being fired upon by the island's hostile natives and as they dodged the poisonous darts, standing waist deep in freezing water in the middle of a storm, one said to the other, 'I realize that today hasn't gone as planned but this sure beats Christmas shopping doesn't it.'

Dave Martin, St David's.

WEEKLY COME ALONG ACTIVITIES

AT ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH

EVERY MONDAY 9:45AM TO 10:45AM	SING AND PLAY FUN FOR ALL
EVERY FRIDAY 10AM TO 12PM	COMMUNITY CAFE COME JOIN THE CONVERSATION!
EVERY FRIDAY 1PM TO 4 PM	SOUP & ROLL, GAMES, BOOKS COMPANY JIGSAWS AND CONVERSATION

AT ST David's METHODIST CHURCH

EVERY WEDNESDAY 10:30AM TO 11:15AM 11:30AM TO 12 NOON	COFFEE MORNING FOLLOWED BY A REFLECTION
EVERY FRIDAY TERM TIME 9AM TO 11AM	PARENT TODDLER GROUP JUICE & COFFEE ,SONG TIME ,MEET NEW PEOPLE ,,PLAY & HAVE FUN



May this eternal truth be always on our hearts
 That the God who breathed this world into being
 Placed stars into the heavens
 And designed a butterfly's wing
 Is the God who entrusted his life
 to the care of ordinary people
 became vulnerable that we might know
 how strong is the power of Love
 A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp
 A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore
John Birch, www.faithandworship.com/prayers



Part of the work Open Doors undertakes is to help the church to pray, give and speak out for those who share our faith but not our freedom. This month they highlight the persecution of one young girl Rumana (9) in Bangladesh who is rejected and bullied for being a Christian. Neighbours wouldn't even help when the family home was burned down. But Rumana is an amazing young girl - praying for those who persecute her, and trusting in Jesus.

The story of Rumana is not an isolated case, she is not alone and it is very poignant to hear that many will not have the freedom to celebrate the birth of our Lord as we do. Christmas is a time when every child should feel safe and loved. Many children and their families will face rejection and bullying for being Christian. Rumana has extraordinary faith, but often feels alone.

'Christian children and youth endure considerable levels of violence as their parents choose to follow Jesus – including verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence,' explains Sister Hadassah, an Open Doors partner in Bangladesh who supports Rumana and her parents, as well as many other persecuted children and their families.

She continues: 'There are hundreds of young children of Christian converts facing similar issues. When someone is young, they are more vulnerable. Bangladesh has a strong community-based culture, so when the community cuts off the converts and isolates them, that brings huge emotional damage to the Christian children.'

This brutal rejection, bullying and ostracism is hard every day for Rumana, but the isolation can feel worst of all at Christmas. Rumana knows it's a special time for Christians to remember the birth of Jesus, and she loves

spending it with other Christian children.

With the help and prayers of people like you, Open Doors partners can host a special, three-day Christmas celebration for Christians from a Muslim background from across Bangladesh – like Rumana.

Open Doors by arranging this special event ensure that Rumana is able to celebrate Christmas safely and joyfully with other young believers who face the same troubles and understand what her life is like. The charity also provides a regular Sunday school that she is able to travel to where she can meet other children scattered in different villages.

During the Christmas celebrations they cut and eat a birthday cake for Jesus and share a special meal. Before they leave each family get a Christmas gift from Open Doors partners who in addition to practical gifts provide something greater. The gift of community, encouragement and love often lacking in her life on a daily basis.

So as we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus please pray for all those like Rumana who face grave persecution and a lack of freedom to worship as we do this very extraordinary and joyful time of year.

Maria Carter, Mary Jones, Open Doors Representatives.

Author: Charles Wesley (1745)



Let earth and heaven combine,
angels and men agree,
to praise in songs divine
the incarnate Deity,
our God contracted to a span,
incomprehensibly made man.

He laid his glory by,
he wrapped him in our clay;
unmarked by human eye,
the latent Godhead lay;
infant of days he here became,
and bore the mild Immanuel's name.

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Christmas Services

AT ST DAVID'S METHODIST CHURCH CRAIG Y DON

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER 10AM	ALL AGE NATIVITY
THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER 6PM	COMMUNITY CAROLS AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE
SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 10AM	CAROL SERVICE TRADITIONAL & MODERN CAROLS
MONDAY 23 DECEMBER 10AM –12PM	JUNIOR JAMBOREE FUN FILLED TIME FOR CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 11
TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER 4PM	CHRISTINGLE POPULAR FAMILY SERVICE FESTIVE JUMPERS AND HATS
TUESDAY 24 DECEMBER 11:30PM	CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION SERVICE
WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 10AM	JOY FILLED BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

AT ST JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH LLANDUDNO

THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 5:30-7PM	SHOPPERS' CAROLS, THE CHRISTMAS STORY, MINCE PIES AND NON-ALCOHOLIC MULLED WINE
SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 4PM	CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE
WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 11AM	CHRISTMAS DAY PARTY PRAISE JOY FILLED BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION BRING YOUR FAVOURITE GIFT OR WEAR A CHRISTMAS JUMPER

ART SERVE FESTIVAL 2024

The third weekend in October saw Chris and I travelling south to the annual Art Serve Festival. Art Serve grew out of the Methodist Music Society and is now an ecumenical movement, which celebrates creativity, both in worship and our own personal gifts.

Last year, we were unable to attend due to flooding in Derbyshire, so we were looking forward to catching up with old friends in the new venue at Kent's Hill, Milton Keynes.

The theme for the weekend was 'Creating Harmony' and the keynote speaker was Rev. Jenny Pathmarajah, a Methodist minister with a special interest in the relationship between spiritual and secular music.

Over the course of the weekend, we had the opportunity to join three workshops. I chose two connected with worship, and one which was a craft I had never heard of! - Needle Felting

The drama workshop was certainly challenging and out of my comfort zone! After some initial tips and exercises about voice projection and the use of space, we were asked to pair up with someone. We were given a sentence and had to ad lib the ensuing conversation with our partner in front of the group! I love reading from the Bible in worship and doing monologues but am much happier with the words in front of me! My heart sank as I was paired up with the tutor for our second attempt.

I can't remember much about the conversation but it started with 'You'll never guess what I heard when I was at the shops' and finished with someone falling in a lake!

My second workshop, led by Rev. Pathmarajah, was an exercise in finding popular tunes which fitted hymn words. She explained that people not used to attending church are more likely to join in if they at least know the tune! Singing the Faith includes some traditional folk tunes to which modern words have been written, but we were challenged to really push the boundaries. Try singing Brother, sister, let me hold you (StF 611) to the tune Clementine, or Come you Thankful people, Come (StH 123) to Do a Deer.

My final choice of workshop was Needle Felting and a chance to learn a new craft. This involved sculpting unspun wool into various shapes simply

by continually ‘stabbing’ the shape with a barbed needle to make the



Helen's Needle Felting Creation

fibres mould together. We were given a health and safety warning before we started as it is very easy to stab your finger instead of the wool. Plasters were at the ready!

Everyone was amazed at what they had managed to achieve at their first attempt.

The weekend always gives the opportunity to hear what other churches are doing and we heard about a new venture called Joy of Music. The local church had identified that one of the needs in the area was people's mental health and loneliness. They met with interested professionals to discuss what the church could offer. As a result, it was decided to start a weekly drop in based around music in all its forms, listening and performing, with lots of coffee, biscuits and chats!

The lay worker is an excellent musician and they now have the funds to employ a retired professional. The mornings always finish with a ‘jamming’ session for those who want to join in.

We were told about the man who had hardly left his house since the death of his wife and now brings his guitar each week and even performed at a fundraising event.

The weekend ended with worship celebrating our creative gifts of music and drama to give praise and thanks to God.

Next year, the title of the festival is ‘Wellsprings’ and the date is already in our diary!

Helen and Chris Cooper, St David's

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

METHODIST GOVERNANCE :

WHAT IS THE SIX YEAR RULE IN THE METHODIST CHURCH

The **Six-Year Rule** in the Methodist Church relates to the length of time an individual can serve in a particular leadership role or office within the church. The rule is designed to promote healthy rotation, encourage fresh perspectives, and prevent burnout among church leaders. Here's a summary of the key aspects:

Length of Service:

- An individual may serve in a particular office (such as Church Council member, Steward, or other key roles) for a maximum of six consecutive years.

Break Period:

- After serving for six consecutive years, the individual must step down from that role. They can take a break or engage in different roles within the church.

Eligibility for Reappointment:

- After a break period, the individual may be eligible for reappointment to the same role, allowing others the opportunity to serve in the meantime.

Purpose:

- This rule encourages sharing leadership responsibilities, brings new energy and ideas into the church's activities, and ensures that leadership is distributed among members of the congregation.

Exceptions to this rule can sometimes be made in special circumstances, but the general principle is to follow the six-year limit to promote inclusivity and diversity in leadership. When in church ask a post holder how long they have been in office and if they are aware of the Six Year Rule

Graham Morgan, St David's

HAVE AN ECO-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

Your Carbon Footprint is a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result your activities.

The festive season is a carbon-intensive time of year; shopping, travelling, eating and drinking more than any other time of year – and in fact using around 5.5% of our annual carbon footprint over only three days.

Here are 12 ways to reduce your carbon footprint this Christmas

1. Christmas cards

In the UK we send about 150 million Christmas cards a year. Sending just one card produces 140 grams of carbon dioxide; although that will lessen as the Royal Mail expands its electric vehicle fleet. That's equivalent to powering 200 average UK homes for a whole year.

Just making a few tweaks to how you send out your greetings this year could make a difference. From making sure you choose 100% recyclable cards, avoid glitter (it ends up in landfill), and delivering on foot where you can. Emails, e-cards or phone calls are much lower carbon options for friends that live abroad.

2. Christmas trees

Real or fake trees – In terms of carbon it is much better to go for a real one as long as it is disposed of correctly after Christmas, by wood chipping, burning or better still – replanting. Most local councils and many local charities have a tree collection scheme.

Artificial trees have a carbon footprint of around 40kg. They are not recyclable, and most are only used for four years before being binned. So, if you are going to go for a fake one, make sure you choose one that will last you a long time (10+ years) to reduce its carbon impact.

3. Wrapping paper

227,000 miles of wrapping paper is used each year in the UK. That's enough to go around the world nine times.

Unwrapping presents is a true joy, particularly for the young (and young minded). You can reduce your impact by choosing recycled and recyclable options or reusing what has already been given to you instead of buying more. Make sure that anything you cannot save for next year goes straight

into the recycling bin (unless it's glittery or plasticised).

4. Glass

13,350 tonnes of glass is sent to landfill during December and January every year. Recycling all that glass would save about 4,200 tonnes of CO₂. This is equivalent to taking 1,300 cars off the road for a year.

Make sure that all bottles end up in your recycling bin.

5. Unwanted presents

People across the UK are expected to get £1 billion worth of unwanted Christmas presents, according to the Royal Mint.

A great way to reduce this waste is to focus on buying the gifts that family and friends have specifically asked for. You could even consider doing a Secret Santa so that everyone gets fewer presents, but ones that they really want.

Shop from small or ethical businesses to take excess plastic packaging out of the mix too.

6. Fairy lights

An extravagant lighting display can cost as much as £210 to power for 12 days over Christmas. LED lights use about 90% less energy than incandescent and last much longer too.

Remember to switch them off before bed and take any old or unwanted lights to your local recycling centre.

7. Plastic and packaging

The Christmas season generates a huge amount of plastic waste, with an additional 125,000 tonnes collected in January bins. That's five times heavier than the Statue of Liberty.

Think about ways you can reduce your personal plastic footprint – gifting items without plastic packaging, buying vegetables loose, refilling detergents and recycling everything that you can. It takes a lot less energy and natural resources to recycle than to manufacture from raw materials.

8. Christmas dinner

The carbon emissions from all of the UK's Christmas dinners is equivalent to a car travelling around the world 6000 times.

A traditional roast turkey with all the trimmings has a big carbon footprint, mostly from the lifecycle of the animals.

You are not asked to go vegan (although a fully vegan roast has 50% fewer emissions than a meat roast) but there are some clever swaps you can make to reduce carbon with no compromise on flavour. These include making plant-based stuffing, sticking to just one form of meat, and filling up the majority of your plate with delicious, locally grown vegetables.

9. Food waste

We bin 230,000 tonnes of food over Christmas – that’s as heavy as the empire state building.

Not only is it wasteful, but waste food eventually rots which releases methane into the atmosphere.

This Christmas, try to only buy what you think will get eaten. Freeze portions or get creative with leftover meals. Donate unopened packets and cans to your local food bank and use your food waste bin for peelings and vegetable leftovers.

10. Aluminium

From canned drinks to mince pie wrappers, we use a lot of extra aluminium over Christmas. Manufacturing new aluminium is a very energy and carbon intensive process, but producing it from recycled materials uses 95% less energy. While cans normally make it into the recycling, smaller bits of foil often don’t.

This Christmas, make sure that the foil is free from crumbs and food and scrunch items together into as big a ball as you can before placing it into the recycling.

11. Festive clothes

Fast fashion is a huge cause of carbon emissions. According to Hubbub, a third of under 35s buys a new Christmas jumper every year.

But it’s not just the throwaway nature of Christmas jumpers that is the problem, it’s also the materials they are made from. 95% of high street Christmas jumpers are made wholly or partly from acrylic, a synthetic material that sheds plastic microfibres into our water streams every time it is washed.

Instead of buying new festive clothing, look for second hand items – they get such little wear that they will be as good as new. Sell, donate or swap clothing you no longer wear yourself.

12. Driving home for Christmas

Last year an estimated 12.8 million cars hit the road on the 23rd and 24th December – that’s a third of all cars licenced in the UK.

Travel in a carbon-conscious way this Christmas. If you’re going solo, it’s nearly always more efficient to get public transport – that seat on a train has nearly 75% fewer emissions than driving a petrol car. If you must take the car, think about filling all the seats or lift sharing for less carbon per person. Travelling outside of peak times reduces emissions, as does cruising in the left hand lane – the most efficient speed is around 55mph.

Have a Happy Eco-Friendly Christmas!

Mary Jones. St John’s

Information from Good Energy, 2023



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The birch leaves are falling, Lord,
yellow diamonds on the green grass,
released in the autumn wind.

But I, Lord,
I still clutch tight the leaves of my old
life, useless, withered and dry.

Teach me to let go of the old –
old hurts and animosities,
old troubles and grief.
Teach me to release them into the
wind of your Spirit
to be whisked away,
that like the tree I may rest a while
at peace within,
then grow again in the spring.

Annie Heppenstall,
From Acorns and Archangels

Wild Goose Publications

www.ionabooks.com

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES



I've always liked them and still do though some things have changed over the years.

Some of the things I liked as a child :

Going to see Father Christmas at Lewis's store in Manchester (one year on the same day I even saw Uncle Walter

Christmas in Paulden's store opposite).

Hiding under the bedclothes with my brother on Christmas Eve so Father Christmas wouldn't see we were still awake and, when he came into the room, listening to him come in and, hopefully, leave pillow slips full of presents by the end of the bed and Christmas stockings on the bedrails.

Opening the presents in bed on Christmas morning and later in the day, showing all the presents to a houseful of family visitors and, later still, all the goodies we had for tea which we never had during the rest of the year (especially pickled walnuts – yum yum!)

Going to the pantomime at Manchester Hippodrome on Boxing Day.

Some of the things I liked as a teenager :

The Christmas Eve service at church finishing at midnight, followed by a cuppa and mince pie before going out carol singing all night, rounded up by having breakfast together.

Large family get-togethers at home on Christmas night and at an aunt and uncle's the next night, especially the three mile walk back home in the dark in the early hours of the morning.

The Methodist Youth Club Christmas Party with its carol-singing, party tea, dancing , snooker and table tennis.

Some of the things I liked as an adult :

Reliving through my son and daughter some of my childhood experiences and listening to their versions of school Christmas parties and suchlike.

Struggling with DIY presents on Christmas Eve and, well after midnight, creeping round their bedrooms with the



pillows and Christmas stockings (dressed as Father Christmas in case they were awake).

The continuing family get-togethers with ever-changing faces.

Office Dinner Dances and New Year Cocktail Parties for clients.

Some of the things I liked every year :

Christmas trees and decorations and Nativity Scenes.

The excited faces of children.

The many and varied church services and celebrations.

Mince pies, Christmas food and goodies (and have I mentioned pickled walnuts?).

Now, as a still maturing Senior Citizen I still like Christmas.

Looking back on the many Christmases I have enjoyed so much.

Thinking of the so many loved ones and friends who have been or still are so important to the festivities.

Looking on (with some frustration at no longer being able to actively participate) but still enjoying the Christmas church services and festivities.

And

An ever growing and maturing experience of what it really is all about :

‘GOD (IS) WITH US’

Every day of our lives, through thick and thin!

And the icing on the cake too : lives that will never end!

Jack Waddington, St David’s

WARM WELCOME

Warm Welcome has been running at St John's since January 2023 and was initially set up in response to the request from Government for places of worship and community spaces to consider if they could help people in their locality during a time of increased cost of living and high fuel costs.

We have been meeting every Friday afternoon since (except when we have had building issues!) from 1-4 pm and there is quite the community feel to

it. It is a simple idea- soup, rolls, cakes, unlimited hot drinks. Time to chat, read a newspaper, help with the giant jigsaw. All of this with no costs to the guests. We recognised that there was something special about this time and that as well as food and fuel poverty, there was also a poverty of conversations and connections with others. This is why we continue all year, we value this time and the opportunities it gives us to help to meet these needs.

We would love more people to come, feel free to tell others who you think might be interested or benefit from this space, it is open to all, that includes you!

And if you think you might be able to help us in some way then there are roles for all- kitchen, waiting on and chatting, these are all necessary and important. We are ever so grateful to people from both St John's and St David's who help us to enable Warm Welcome to happen.

Please get in touch with Janet, Mary or Rhian via the church office at St John's, if you would like to know more.

'BORN IN THE NIGHT, MARY'S CHILD.....'

I can absolutely guarantee you that a hot topic of conversation in any maternity unit on Christmas morning as the night staff handover to the day staff is 'have we had a Christmas baby yet...?'



How can I be so sure of this? It is because I too have been a part of these conversations. It is quite a competition between the three maternity units in North Wales, who got there first! These 'firsts' on each unit are then photographed on Christmas afternoon by a poor reporter whose job it is to drive right across the area taking pictures of these mothers and babies. I don't suppose anyone (new parents or photographer) really wants to be doing this, but these new celebrity babies need to be celebrated.

Which gets me thinking about how something very ordinary becomes something extraordinary just because they were born after the stroke of midnight on a particular day. There is no celebrity status for you if you happen to take your first breath at 23:59 on the 24th December!

Of course all births are extraordinary, the mystery of a new person entering a room not through a door but yet at once they are there when they weren't 'there', or at least not visible just 5 minutes before. All babies are extraordinary too, just look at the intricacies of the human ear, those folds, all there for a purpose, every cell doing its thing to contribute to the very existence of a person. And every baby will have an extraordinary effect on their parents and family and maybe, in some cases they will grow up to have some extraordinary contribution to society.

But then it is all very ordinary too, as mammals, this is what happens, the female of the species gives birth and then nourishes the young through to maturity.

So thinking about Jesus whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, there was so much that was very ordinary, well, aside from being born in a cow shed with some shepherds watching, which sounds like an episode of 'Emmerdale' to me! It is what Jesus goes on to do that makes him extraordinary, the effect that he has on the lives of others.

So this Christmas is Mary's child going to remain ordinary to you? Just a baby, born long ago, or can he be something extraordinary for you and with you? ***Rhian Smith, St John's.***

UPDATE FROM LIZ ROYLE (LAY OUTREACH WORKER)

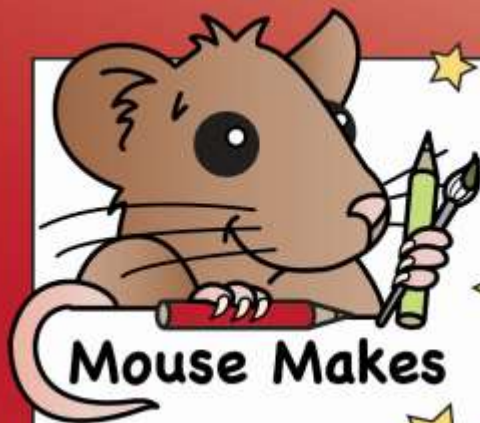
Can you believe it? I have been the Conwy and Prestatyn Outreach worker for 6 months. Time flies!



Many things have happened and there is a lot to talk about.

Food with Joy!

I have been working with the Old Colwyn Churches Together initiative, Food with Joy, to make packed lunches for families during the school holidays. During the 6 week holidays and October half term, we met once a week to assemble the lunches. The packages were then taken to the Home Start Community Centre and distributed to families in need. The reason for this initiative is that children who receive free school meals don't get any support during the school holidays and we wanted to see what we could do to help. ***(continued page 31)***



Mouse Makes

★ "Jesus said,
I am the ___ Y
and the ___ U ___
and the ___ I ___.

No one comes to the Father
except through me."

John 14:6

"The child to be born
will be called
H _____, the
_____ of _____"

Luke 1:35

"For unto you is born
this day a

S _____
_____ who is
_____ R _____
the _____ R _____"

Luke 2:11

THE GREATEST GIFT

"She will bear a son,
and shall call his name

_____ for he will save his
people from their sins."

Matthew 1:21

"Jesus said,
I am the

_____ and the life."

John 11:25

B	L	I	G	H	T	L	O	O	H	L	Y	O	R	C	R	T	U		
R	A	Y	W	O	J	J	R	S	O	N	O	F	M	A	N	H	A	R	T
E	M	M	A	N	U	E	L	N	L	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	U	
A	B	Y	J	E	S	O		O	Y	A	E	P	E	R	G	I	F	T	G
D	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	T	H	S
S	A	V	R	J	S	D		R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N

**JESUS
THE
GREATEST
GIFT
OF ALL!**

P	R	O	P	H	E	T	I	E	V	E	R	L	A	S	T	I	N	G
R	E	D	E	E	M	E	R	K	I	N	G	O	F	K	I	N	G	S
I	E	M	I	L	I	G		I	N	K	I	G	W	F	D	O	U	
E	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	S	E	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D	D
S	R	M	E	G	F	T		S	E	W	O	C	O	U	W	O	R	D
T	E	A	C	H	E	R	E	C	O	U	N	S	E	L	L	O	R	U

- EMMANUEL • MESSIAH
- REDEEMER • KING OF KINGS • WORD
- SON OF MAN • EVERLASTING • SHEPHERD • PRIEST • PROPHET • TEACHER
- LIGHT • BREAD • VINE • DOOR • LAMB • COUNSELLOR • CHRISTMAS • GIFT

Find the words from the Bible verses too!

Dec24 © deborah noble @ parishpump.co.uk

This reminds me of the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-39, where He commands us to 'Love your neighbour' in a practical way. Food with Joy began on this premise. We hope to continue to support the community in Old Colwyn with this project.

Choir: The circuit choir is going well. Our numbers increasing slowly. It is a good time of fellowship and we are learning new songs. Our first performance at Harvest Praise was nerve-rackingly exciting! We only had the chance to practice twice before the performance. I was very proud of how well everyone sang together with accompaniment from James and Hayley. We are currently working on our Christmas repertoire and I am looking forward to the performance on 5th December at St John's Llandudno.

Facebook: As you all may know, I have been using the Circuit's social media platforms to get the word out into the community about everything that we do in the church. We have seen a good response from all of our posts. The statistics show that we have reached around 15,000 people since May this year! It is great to see we are expanding our reach into our community in new and exiting ways! If you haven't already please like and follow our circuit Facebook page!

Future ventures: Behind the scenes, we have been working to establish more warm space across the circuit. Watch this space! (no pun intended!) If you are interested in volunteering, please get in touch. We have lots of projects ready to go and we need volunteers needed to help support.

Email – cpmclayworkerlr@gmail.com. *Liz Royle*



FROM 20-11-20 TO 20-11-20

**ARTICLES FOR THE
EASTER 2025 EDITION
EASTER 20 APRIL 2025**

Please can you get any contributions for this edition to me by:

16 MARCH 2025

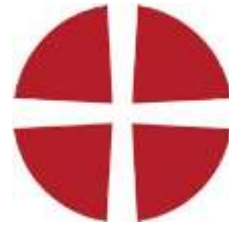
My email address is:-
maria.s.carter7@gmail.com
Thank you , Maria Carter &
Graham Morgan

Llandudno Methodist Churches

St John's and St David's Churches are part of the Conwy & Prestatyn Circuit of the Methodist Church. A leaflet is available at the back of both churches with further details about Methodism, its beliefs and practices.

Our minister is available to discuss any matter of concern, including:

- Information about the Christian faith;
- The baptism of children and adults;
- Preparation for church membership;
- Marriage preparation and ceremonies;
- Funeral and memorial services.



Superintendent Minister Rev Dr James Garnett. The minister can be contacted via St John's Methodist Church Office details listed below.

ST. JOHN'S METHODIST CHURCH OFFICE: Mostyn Street, Llandudno, Conwy, LL30 2NN. Telephone: (01492) 860439.

Email: stjohnsllandudno@gmail.com

St John's Church, Mostyn Street,
Llandudno. Services:

Sunday 11:00 a.m.

St David's Church, Mostyn Avenue,
Craig-Y-Don. Services:

Sunday 10:00 a.m.

