

**St Paul's Methodist Church,
Woodfield Road, Northgate, Crawley**

Ministers:

Rev Melvyn Cooke 01293 973847 melvyncooke@me.com

Deacon Jenny Parnell 01293 664696 jenny.parnell@methodist.org.uk

Website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

St Paul's Newsletter *12 -19 Dec 2021*

A message from Rev Melvyn

Dear Friends,

Christmas is coming, or at least we think it is according to the latest briefing from Downing Street. I am not sure if it is just confusion or a fear of cancellation that is causing such a hiatus of concern and anxiety at present. Certainly, the impact of another variant of the COVID virus is cause for concern; I know of more people at present infected with the virus than in the whole of the previous year combined. I am so grateful for those who have re-assessed our risk assessment, and even more thankful for all who adhere to the guidance and advice that has been shared.

Weekly my social media account reminds me of the postings that we all needed to do online last year, from Sunday meanderings to full blown attempts at putting online a carol service, with differing shades of success. Things have moved on, and perhaps it is because of the remembrance of the reality of last year, that we fear for what we might lose this year.

Whatever it looks like, Christmas is coming but the stark reality is that Christmas has come, all those years ago in a small village, with throngs of people having the routine of their lives disrupted because of a governmental edict, having to leave the security and sanctuary of their homes to travel, all for the sake of a headcount. We call it Christmas, but it was in truth the greatest gift, miracle, and moment in the history of the world. We speak of the incarnation, God becoming man, the reality of grace coming into a needy world.

So, nothing much has changed in 2000 years, we still need grace, we still need a light to brighten our darkest places, and we need not just to celebrate Christmas, but we need to know the joy of the Prince of Peace reigning in our lives.

Happy Christmas from *Hazel and Melvyn*



It is now mandatory to wear face masks in places of worship, the only exceptions being the under-12s and people with a valid medical reason not to do so. It's good to know that St Paul's, in common with many churches which put the safety of their members first, is already doing this.

Just remember **Hands, Face, Space** and keep each other safe and well.

What's on at St Paul's

Sun 12 Dec 10:30am Worship with Deacon Jenny Parnell
Baptism of Tommy David Patrick Sargeant

Christmas services at St Paul's

Sun 19 Dec St Paul's Gift Day collections for Action for Children & MHA
10:30am Worship and Pop-up Nativity with Deacon Jenny
4pm Carols by candlelight with Rev Melvyn
Christmas Eve 6pm Communion service with Rev Melvyn
Christmas Day 10:30am Christmas Celebration with Deacon Jenny
Sunday 26 Dec NO SERVICE

For kids and young people

YPSG Last practice for this term is on Friday 17th December, 6:30pm for ages 6-11, 7pm for over 11s. Practices restart on Friday 14th January.

19th December - a Gift Day to think of others at Christmas

For many years at St Paul's, we have raised funds for *Action for Children* and *MHA (Methodist Homes)* with special Christmas activities and collections. Unlike last year when a lockdown was in place, we will be in church for Christmas services so we can catch up on our charitable support by making the 19th December a special Gift Day. There will be collections at both the Pop-up Nativity in the morning and the Carol Service in the afternoon. Please come prepared with plenty of cash to put in the baskets following the services.

Deacon Jenny's Advent Course

There are two weeks left of this enjoyable and thought-provoking course when we look at the Song of Simeon and the Angel's song through music, art, the Bible, prayer and a call to action. We are joining in on Zoom along with participants from several of our circuit churches. If you want to join the remaining sessions, email ask.stpauls@gmail.com and ask for the Zoom link.

Loaves & Fishes closed and Pizza Party postponed

Sadly, on reviewing the latest Covid situation, it has been decided that Loaves and Fishes will remain closed until 10th January at the earliest and that the Pizza Party is postponed until a date to be decided in the new year.

Wednesday Fellowship takes a break

There will be no meeting of the Wednesday Fellowship on the 15th December. Hopefully we can restart on the 5th January.

A thank you from Cedar Lodge

I would like, on behalf of my fellow residents, to thank Carol and the choir for coming to Cedar Lodge last Wednesday, singing & leading us in 'Christmas Carolling'. We also enjoyed a cup of tea & 'Tit-bits' afterwards. Thank you all. *Arthur P.*

In your prayers

As we approach Christmas let's take some time to pray for ourselves, our families and friends. With Covid still causing anxiety and life being disrupted in many ways, ask our God of love and mercy to give us strength and patience as we wait in hope of better times ahead.

Continue to pray for all others you know who are in need of our prayers.

Please send prayer requests to ask.stpauls@gmail.com and remember to obtain the permission of the person to be named

No quiz this year

After many years of running a Christmas and New Year quiz in aid of St. Paul's Church and St Catherine's Hospice, regretfully there will not be one this year. Unfortunately, Mrs Helen Edmunds who prepares these quizzes each year is seriously ill and unable to send us a suitable quiz. *Geoff Ridgway*

Editor's comment I, and I'm sure many others, will miss the enjoyable tradition of settling down after lunch with 'Geoff's quiz' and hoping to be a winner. Thank you, Geoff, for doing it for so many years.

Sharing Christmas greetings at St Paul's

While Covid cases are still high, we're sorry but once again there will not be an internal post system for exchanging Christmas cards at St Paul's.

As we did last year, we would like to send out a communal Christmas card to everyone in the St Paul's family, particularly those still staying at home. Please send a short Christmas greeting, or just your name, to ask.stpauls@gmail.com by for inclusion. Let's have lots of names on our Christmas card. To send cards to your friends please use Royal Mail or hand them over in person; **please do not** put cards in the wooden pigeonholes.

We must still keep Covid at bay

The latest Government Covid guidelines show that, in common with other churches, we are already taking every precaution to keep everyone as safe as possible. Cases are still on the rise in Crawley so please continue to wear face coverings on entering the building, in the communal areas and during worship unless you are exempt for medical reasons.

Anyone wanting to enter the building to carry out tasks related to the church must notify Nicola by emailing crawleymethodistchurch@gmail.com. This ensures that areas that have been visited are cleaned in preparation for the next group and that you can be contacted in case of the need to trace as has been necessary recently. Thank you all so much for your support. *Carol*

Stocking filler idea

Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Oxford has published *Yet More Trying Times*, a second book of "Cartoons for a Pandemic" in time for Christmas. Jim Godfrey drew cartoons every week from the start of the pandemic for his church's newsletter and published them in the first book, *Trying Times*, which raised over £2500 for *Action for Children*. *Yet More Trying Times* has more inspired offerings, which would make a great gift. Available for £5 including postage, with profits going to *Action for Children*. from <https://www.wesleymem.org.uk/welcome.htm> Sample cartoon below.

TRYING TIMES WK 59



Sandra's Christmas Star Biscuits

Ingredients:

- 4 oz butter or margarine
- 2 oz sugar.
- 5 oz plain flour
- 2 oz fine semolina
- pinch salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon



Preheat oven to Gas 3, or 160C

Cream fat and sugar together then stir in the dry ingredients.

Knead together lightly then roll out to 1/4 inch thick on a floured board.

Cut out using a star or other Christmas cutter.

Prick with a fork.

Bake on a lightly greased tray for 15 - 20 minutes, until pale golden.

Can be decorated either by sprinkling with castor sugar before baking, or allow to cool and decorate as you wish with glaze icing, silver balls etc.

The Christmas newsletter will go out on Wednesday 22nd December. Let's make it a really good Christmas Special with contributions from lots of you. Please send me your seasonal items by Monday 20th December. *Joyce*

Contacts

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General enquiries, prayer requests and newsletter items

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St Paul's website www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk

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