

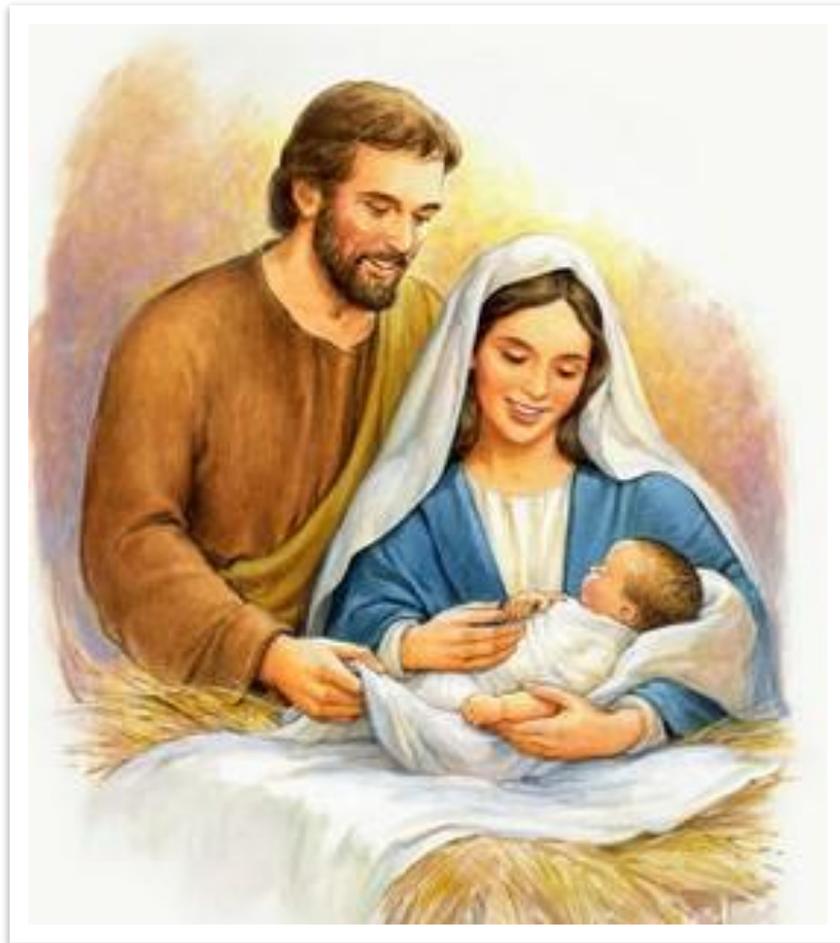
WARMINSTER UNITED CHURCH

(Methodist/URC)

George Street, Warminster BA12 8QA

Winter 2023/4

December '23, January, February '24



Ministers: Rev Susan Holden 01985 511349

Student Minister: Joe Amoah

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SERVICES IN DECEMBER

A warm welcome to all

Sunday 3rd 10.30 a.m. led by Revd Susan Holden

Sunday 11th 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Eric Clifford

Sunday 17th 3.30p.m.

Christmas Carol service.

Led by Joe Amoah

Come and enjoy singing carols and hearing
the Christmas story



You are invited to share refreshments after the service

There will be a retiring collection for "Crisis at Christmas"

(Please see Hilda with offers of Mince pies and help with serving refreshments)

Sunday 24th 10.30 a.m. Christmas Eve communion

led by Revd Susan Holden

25th December 10 a.m. Christmas Day worship

led by Erica Castle

we will be joined by our friends from the Baptist Church

31st December 10.30 a.m. Worship led by Karen Woollard

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10am Every Wednesday from 29<sup>th</sup> November until Christmas

**"Journeying with the Magi." an Advent Group**

First meeting is 'Gold'

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WARMINSTER: On **Saturday 16th December** we are invited to join the other church congregations in the Three Horseshoes Mall at 10am for carols for the passers-by, and also to distribute free mince pies. There is also a King's Tent where the children can meet one of the Wise Men and get some chocolate money.

## Message from Joe Amoah

As I pondered the content for my inaugural article, a thoughtful suggestion emerged – why not delve into a deeper exploration of who I am? Let's unravel my passions, priorities, vision, and beliefs in ministry together. This will provide a deeper understanding of who I am and what drives me.

### **A Foundation of Faith:**

My relationship with God is the cornerstone of my life, guided by the profound wisdom found in Proverbs 3:5-7, encouraging us to trust God with all our hearts. This belief fuels my passion to help others connect and deepen their relationship with God through the church's work.

### **Vision for the Church's Mission:**

Affirming the URC Basis of Union, I recognize that the Lord Jesus Christ continues His ministry through the Church. The church, entrusted with the words of eternal life, redemption, and liberation, has a mission to live out and share this good news globally (Mt 16:18; 18:17; Mt 28:19-20).

### **Engaging with Wider Society:**

I envision the church as a witness of Christ in our community, not just through preaching and teaching but also by modelling a new life in Christ. The gospel's transformative power should be attractive and evident in both word and deed.

### **Relevance of the Church:**

As a divine initiative, I firmly believe that the church remains relevant and significant. It is a continuation of Jesus' mission two thousand years ago, with the Bible serving as a witness to God's revelation. Grappling with its meaning in our lives today is essential (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pt 1:3, 20-21).

### **Biblical Preaching and Bible Study:**

Therefore, continual growth in understanding God and seeking His will is pivotal. Therefore, prioritizing biblical preaching and Bible study is a central focus in my ministry. I am passionate about sharing the gospel in ways that are contextual, relevant, and accessible while remaining faithful to God.

### **The Gospel Message:**

The gospel is the good news of the kingdom of God, offering reconciliation to God and each other through faith in Christ (Jn 20:31; Acts 10:43; Rom 3:28). This transformative message, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings life, liberation, and the ability to do good works (Eph 2:10).

**The Priesthood of All Believers:**

Recognizing the priesthood of all believers, I see each member capable of playing a significant part (1 Pt 2:9). I aim to encourage the gifts within the congregation, fostering participation and leadership where it complements the ministry of the entire body (1 Cor 12:12-31).

**Top Ministry Priorities:**

My primary goal is to assist the church in connecting and deepening their relationship with God, allowing everyone to joyfully celebrate the good news of Jesus. This focus extends to a missional approach, reaching out and engaging with our local community.

**Youth and Young Adults Outreach:**

Having served as a youth and young adult leader, I understand the challenges these groups face in participating in church life. I have a heart for reaching out to them ensuring they recognize the valuable space they hold within our church.

**Innovative Technology Integration:**

Leveraging my background in computer science, I am motivated to explore innovative ways to integrate technology into our church life. Embracing technology can enhance our worship experiences, communication, and outreach efforts. I am excited to collaborate with those passionate about leveraging technology in ministry.

**Passion for Discipleship:**

My deep-seated passion lies in resourcing discipleship. My belief in the transformative power of small groups led me to explore this topic in my BA dissertation. I advocate for integrating these spaces into our church life, fostering engagement and a deeper connection with our faith. Walking alongside each other, we can collectively deepen our relationship with God, living as witnesses and servants of Christ in our unique contexts.

As we prepare for Christmas and the new year, I wish you and all your family a Merry Christmas.

God's blessing,  
Joseph Amoah

## 10.30 A.M. SUNDAY WORSHIP JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 2024

- Jan 7<sup>th</sup>: Joe Amoah HOLY COMMUNION  
14<sup>th</sup>: Revd Susan Holden  
21<sup>st</sup>: Eric Clifford  
28<sup>th</sup>: Revd Craig Manley  
Feb 4<sup>th</sup>: Jeannie MacMeekin  
11<sup>th</sup>: Revd Susan Holden HOLY COMMUNION  
18<sup>th</sup>: Joe Amoah  
25<sup>th</sup>: Geraldine Mann

### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18<sup>TH</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

Thursday 18th (12 noon) we will meet at St John's Church on Boreham Road

Friday 19th (12 noon) we will meet at the Minster Church on Church Street

Saturday there is no meeting, but on

**Sunday at 3pm we will meet at United Church for a joint service followed by tea and biscuits.**

Monday 22nd (12 noon) we will meet at St George's RC

Tuesday 23rd (12 noon) we will meet at Christ Church.

Wednesday 24th (12 noon) we will meet at Foundation Christian Fellowship on the Woodcock Trading Estate (opposite New Windows showroom)

If you know anyone, a neighbour or a friend, who is struggling financially please contact Warminster Churches Together as there are funds to help with white goods, heating bills, food, etc.

*Karen Woollard*

## CHURCH MEETING/AGM

The New church council members /trustees appointed at AGM on November 19<sup>th</sup> are: -

**Erica Castle, Anita Silk, Karen Woollard** – continuing in their 3-year appointments

**Jan Cobb** – new 3-year appointment

**Marion Barton** - Re-elected for 1yr

**Helen Dawson, Hilary Reed.** Newly appointed for 1yr

**Thanks to retiring council members/ trustees - John Alpin, Marion Hornby, Joan Jones, Heather Morgan.**

There are vacancies if anyone would like to join the church council/trustees. You must be a church member and can be co-opted for the remainder of the year (to next AGM). See Susan or Erica to discuss.

It was agreed at church meeting to proceed with a new audio-visual system in the church and to make applications for funding where available.

**Dates for meetings-** Church council 8 Dec 2.30pm

The next Church meeting for all church members will be in Feb 2024, day and time to be arranged.

The next AGM will be in Oct 2024

## BIBLE STUDY

A small group of us still meet each Wednesday evening on Zoom and together we read different books in the bible. At the moment we are reading Genesis. It is taking a long time as it is a long book - perhaps we will finish it by Christmas and start a new book in January. Please let me know if you would like to join us and I will send you a link.

[marionhornby@gmail.com](mailto:marionhornby@gmail.com)

## A Remembrance Day Service on The Atlantic Ocean from John Alpin

I have just returned from a 24-day trip to the Caribbean on the P&O MV Aurora. The holiday was fantastic but it is not the holiday I wish to tell you about but the unexpected emotional and spiritual aspects of the trip that surprised me. Let me set the scene for this trip.

My father was born in Southampton in 1924 and at the age of 15 was too young to be 'called up' for the Armed Forces at the start of WW 2. His older brother joined the Royal Navy serving in the Submarine Service and advised my father that he should join the Merchant Navy when the time came to 'join up' as the Royal Navy was too dangerous! However, both boys and girls could join the Merchant Navy as young as 14 or 15 and this is what my father did. He joined in the "boy" ratings category who were typically: Deck Boys, Galley Boys or, in father's case, a Mess Room Boy (steward). In those days seamen 'signed on' to a ship for a voyage and at the end of the voyage they 'signed off' and had to re-sign on or find another ship. Consequently, my father sailed on many types of ships but mainly oil and gas tankers. The majority of his time was spent in Atlantic and Arctic convoys but sometimes it was not practicable to form a convoy or to escort a single merchant ship and they were left to look after themselves. This was potentially very dangerous for these predominantly unarmed and slow ships. I'm not sure his brother was right! Near the end of the war my father found himself working on troopships including the old Queen Mary sailing all over the world repatriating troops.

Fast forward to my childhood in the 1950s and 60s in Hythe on the edge of Southampton water. I used to travel on the Hythe Ferry to Southampton and pass by the ships in port or play on the beach at Calshot, at the entrance to Southampton Water, watching the ships come and go from the port. Watching the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth I dreamt that one day I would sail from Southampton and then cross the Atlantic to New York (still to do!). Because of the family connection with the sea (two of my grandparents were in the Union Castle line in the 1920s) I was fascinated by everything to do with the sea and ships. I wanted very much to experience life at sea and as I grew older, I wanted to explore places of interest by ship e.g., the Panama Canal. I also began to take an interest in the changes taking place in the oceans as a result of environmental issues.

I left Southampton on October 22<sup>nd</sup> bound for the Caribbean via Madeira on the outbound leg and The Azores on the homeward leg. This journey was to fulfil part of my dream to cross the Atlantic Ocean. From experience of religious services on cruise ships on sea days I thought there might be some sort of Remembrance service on the Aurora, given the number of sea days on the voyage. In expectation I took my poppy, as did many other guests. Any religious service is at the discretion of the captain so we were all pleasantly surprised that a well-planned Remembrance Service was led by Captain Simon Love, accompanied by some of his crew and guests who did readings, prayers and poems. It was an inter-denominational service and international as guests and crew represented many countries. It was held in the ship's main theatre and with approximate 800 guests and crew in attendance – the theatre was about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. The singing was lusty as there was a large contingent of Welsh passengers in attendance! I think the expression "all in the same boat" very apt and I found it very poignant and emotional to be standing on a ship alongside so many different nationalities and faiths. Standing in silence in the gentle movement of the ship and hearing the familiar words of the service and music one couldn't help but think of the thousands of civilian seamen from countries all over the world who had perished at sea. I thought of those, like my father, who survived but must have been scarred by what they experienced as young people. The words

of the familiar hymns “O God our Help....and “Eternal father strong to save...” seemed to mean much more at sea. **Note** – At the outbreak of war there were 185,000 civilians serving in the Merchant Navy. Over 36,000 were lost in enemy action, 5,700 prisoners and 4,700 wounded, totalling approximately 47,000 casualties. At a casualty rate of approximately 25% this was considerably greater casualty rate than almost every other branch of the armed services.

This trip was my dream partly fulfilled but also a reminder of the great loss of life the Merchant Navy suffered during WW 2 with, it seems to me, little official recognition.

**NB.** When I say we were literally in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean I mean we were; 3 days from The Azores and 2 days from Barbados, approximately 800 miles to Bermuda and 1,500 miles to Morocco with 400 square miles of empty sea around us. The depth of water under the keel varied but was at times approximately 15,000 ft (mind boggling) – The Mid-Atlantic Ridge (or Trench). You can fly from the UK to the Caribbean in about 9 hours - it took us nine days at an average speed of 18 kts (21 mph) and we travelled a distance of 8,147 miles!

The following poem was read at the Remembrance Service:

### HEROES

**Don't speak to me of heroes until you've heard the tale  
Of all those merchant seamen who sailed through storm and gale  
To keep the lifelines open in freedom's hour of need  
When a tyrant cast a shadow over every nation's creed.**

Captains, greasers, cabin boys, mates and engineers  
Heard the call to duty and cast aside their fears.

They stoked those hungry boilers and stood behind the wheel  
Whilst cooks and stewards manned the guns on coffins made of steel.

**They moved in icy convoys from Scapa to Murmansk  
And crossed the western ocean, never seeking thanks.**

**They sailed the South Atlantic where raiders lay in wait  
And kept the food lines open to Malta and the Cape.**

Tracked by silent U-boats which hunted from below,  
Shelled by mighty cannons and fighters flying low,

They clung to burning lifeboats where the sea had turned to flame  
And watched their shipmates disappear to everlasting fame.

**I speak not of a handful but thirty thousand plus,  
Some whose names we'll never know in whom we placed our trust.**

**They never knew the honour of medals on their chests  
Or marching bands and victory and glory and the rest.**

The ocean is their resting place, their tombstone is the wind,  
The seabirds' cry their last goodbye to family and friend.

Freighters, troopships, liners, and tankers by the score,  
Fishing boats and coasters, two thousand ships and more  
Flew their country's ensign as they sank beneath the waves  
And took those countless heroes to lonely ocean graves.

**Their legacy is freedom to those who hold it dear,  
To walk with clear horizons and never hide in fear.  
So, when you speak of heroes, remember those at sea,  
Defiant merchant seamen who died to keep us free.**

(David Partridge October 2002)

### SUNDAY MORNING ROTAS

|                                                    | DOOR     | VESTRY   | COFFEE  | FLOWERS | FLOWER<br>DISTRIBUTE |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| DECEMBER<br>3rd                                    | Diana    | Erica    | Evan    | Helen D | Sarah                |
| 10 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Joan J   | Marion B | Sarah   | Joan    | Hilda                |
| <b>17<sup>th</sup> 3.30 p.m.<br/>Carol service</b> | Andy     | Polly    | Anita   |         |                      |
| 24 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Penelope | Marion H | Linda G |         |                      |
| <b>25<sup>th</sup> 10.a.m<br/>Christmas Day</b>    | Andy     |          |         |         |                      |
| 31 <sup>st</sup>                                   | Hilda    | Joan J   | Evan    |         |                      |
| JANUARY 7 <sup>th</sup>                            | Jan      | Erica    | Sarah   |         |                      |
| 14 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Diana    | Marion B | Hilda   |         |                      |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>                                   | Andy     | Polly    | Linda G |         |                      |
| 28 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Penelope | Marion H | Anita   |         |                      |
| FEBRUARY<br>4 <sup>th</sup>                        | Sarah    | Joan     | Evan    |         |                      |
| 11 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Hilda    | Erica    | Linda G |         |                      |
| 18 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Diana    | Marion B | Sarah   |         |                      |
| 25 <sup>th</sup>                                   | Andy     | Polly    | Hilda   |         |                      |
| MARCH 3 <sup>rd</sup>                              | Jan      | Joan     | Evan    |         |                      |

**If you cannot do any dates you are down for, please swap with someone else and change clearly on the list in the foyer.**

**WE NEED MORE PEOPLE TO GO ON THESE ROTAS – IF YOU COULD TAKE A TURN, PLEASE LET JOAN KNOW. Thank you**

### **SAVE YOUR STAMPS FOR RNIB**

This Christmas, you can support RNIB without spending a penny. Simply remove the stamps, leaving a centimetre or so of paper around them and pop them in the box in the foyer. Marion Hornby will collect them for there and send them off.

Every kilogramme of stamps raises £20 for RNIB, so why let them go to waste? Together, we can make a real difference to the lives of blind and partially sighted people this festive season.

### **CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES**

Thank you to everyone who generously contributed items to go in this year's Christmas shoeboxes and a huge "Thank You" to Brenda who co-ordinated the whole thing. We packed and sent 102 boxes. The boxes are transported to Bulgaria where they are distributed to orphanages, poor Roma communities, women's refuges, refugee centres, poor rural schools and isolated elderly or disabled people in extreme poverty. For many, this will be the only gift that they receive at Christmas. Last year nearly 8,000 Christmas Shoeboxes were donated. (111 from us)

House of Opportunity Operations Manager Rich Parsons says, *"The presents spread a great deal of joy and send a really encouraging message to people who live in extreme poverty. Many of the people we visit live with the risk of exploitation by people-traffickers and other criminals. For them to receive a Christmas box shows that there are people who want to bless them, not use them."*

We have been packing shoeboxes for many years now and hopefully will be able to do so again next year

Joan

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY DAYS**

October's activity day was once again based on the Pumpkin Patch characters originated by "World Vision". This is Halloween alternative material – sharing the love and light of God rather than the often somewhat darker side of Halloween traditions. This event was very popular and we had 32 children attending – the highest ever. It went very well but some felt that there were more people there than we should have.

We are doing a Christmas Activity Day on 21<sup>st</sup> December – the first time we have done one at this time of year. We have been overwhelmed by the response from families who have been before – so we now have 27 down to come and another 8 on a waiting list! No posters or advertising for this event!

We have a stalwart (overworked!) group of helpers at these events but if anyone else would like to get involved please speak to Karen or Joan

## CHARITY COFFEE MORNINGS

|                                         |                                    |                |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>2023</b><br>14 <sup>th</sup> January | <b>Forever Friends RUH</b>         | <b>£243</b>    |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> February               | <b>Médecins sans Frontiers</b>     | <b>£200.47</b> |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> March                  | <b>DEC Turkey/Syria earthquake</b> | <b>£267.60</b> |
| April 15 <sup>th</sup>                  | <b>People against Poverty</b>      | <b>£200</b>    |
| May 13 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>Christian Aid</b>               | <b>£120</b>    |
| June 10 <sup>th</sup>                   | <b>Warminster Food Bank</b>        | <b>£208</b>    |
| July 8 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>Dorothy House</b>               | <b>£238</b>    |
| August 12 <sup>th</sup>                 | <b>McMillan Cancer</b>             | <b>£212.60</b> |
| September 9 <sup>th</sup>               | <b>Action for Children</b>         | <b>£150</b>    |
| October 14 <sup>th</sup>                | <b>Brain Tumour</b>                | <b>£613</b>    |
| Nov 11 <sup>th</sup>                    | <b>Christmas Shoeboxes</b>         | <b>£180</b>    |
| <b>December 9<sup>th</sup></b>          | <b>Guide Dogs</b>                  | <b>Anita</b>   |

2023 as above. So, total raised in first 11 months is £2,632.67

The average raised seems to be around £200. The Brain Tumour one in October was organised by someone outside of the church and well attended by their supporters, some of whom ran stalls etc. So that one raised higher than average.

These mornings are well attended by local people, some of whom have become regulars.

**It is a very worthwhile venture both in terms of funds raised for Charities and outreach to the community – but it does need people willing to run the mornings!**

2024 list is up in the foyer. Some of the months have been filled in but there is still need for the rest to be filled. January has a suggested Charity but no one to run it! Could someone please volunteer to run January's coffee morning either for the suggested charity or one of their choosing. *Let Joan know please.*

|                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>CRAFT AND CHATTER</b> dates January 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, February 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup><br/>2-4 pm. New members welcomed</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|