

# HANHAM METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



**NOVEMBER / DECEMBER**

## **Welcome to the magazine of Hanham Methodist Church, a member of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit.**

Our services are open to all, whether or not you are a Church member. Youth Church runs in parallel to our Sunday morning service, and a crèche is also available.

We have a loop system for those hard of hearing. Notices and service sheets are available in larger print and services on CD are available for the housebound on request.

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Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect Church policy. Enquiries should be directed to the Editor.

Copies of this magazine are held on the Church website and therefore all articles can be viewed through the internet.

Submissions of all articles should therefore highlight any information you wish to be removed from the online version.

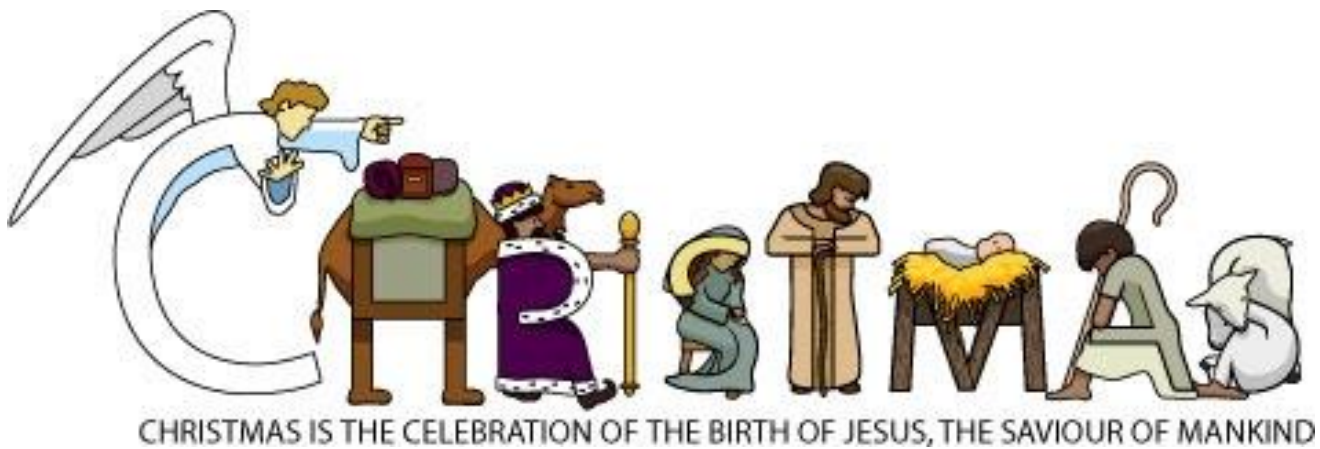
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*Full details of all Church activities can be found on our website.*



## The Countdown Begins...

Well... you might not like to hear it... but Christmas, and not long after that the New Year, will soon be upon us. For me, and I am sure it's true also for many others out there, what really gets me into the Christmas Spirit are the iconic Coca Cola adverts that are always shown this time of year with the tagline: *The Holidays Are Coming*. I know, pretty sad isn't it? But once these start being shown on the television you just know that Christmas is right around the corner.



As we enter November the trees are beginning to go up, lights and decorations are appearing, and Christmas adverts are appearing on our screens. That hectic feeling is beginning to emerge once again within the shoppers prowling the high streets for the perfect gifts.

Yet, to the backdrop of all this I feel like asking –

### ***What's the meaning of Christmas to you?***

Is it the decorating, the shopping, the spending or the giving? All of which surely has its own role to play in our experience of this festive season. Is it the family gatherings, or the friends, the neighbours or the strangers that we shall meet? Is it the people whom we choose to be around that make it Christmas for us?

Or is it the carols that we sing, or the Nativity scenes with shepherds, wise men and angels that really make it Christmas for you?

I'm not sure there is a right or wrong answer to this question.

For me though, Christmas is fundamentally about seeking four things: **Hope, Peace, Love** and **Joy** – all of which flow from Christ, who sits at the centre.

Now it would be easy for me to say, as many Christians do, how Christmas seems to have lost its meaning within society when compared to these four aspects, but I am not sure that is true...

When I look around me, I see people filled with **hope**. Children are hopeful of what they will be given Christmas day; hoping that it will all be as magical as they have been dreaming, wishing, wanting, willing for it to be in their eager anticipation and excitement.

I find parents seeking **peace** (and Zoe and I will no doubt be amongst them this year). With the hectic rush and preparations to get everything ready in time. The hallowed promise of holiday, of rest and relaxation surely can never be far from their minds.

**Love** is expressed. From the obvious sharing of gifts between family and friends to the little smile or conversations shared by strangers.

We all wish to have a merry Christmas, filled with **joy**, fun and laughter. Some jet off to warmer climates, while others surround themselves with friends and loved ones here. After all, it is meant to be a day of celebration.

However we wish to celebrate Christmas, Hope, Peace, Love and Joy – can still be found in and around us. Christ is still at the centre of all these things, because we can partake in all these aspects of Christmas. We are the lens through whom others can and will see Him – given to the world.

My hope and prayer as we begin the real countdown towards Christmas is that you find within yourself and whatever plans that we have this Christmas – these four aspects of Advent. The Christ who offers them to you, and the opportunity to pass them on to someone else. Family, friend, or stranger.

Merry Christmas,

*David*

*Rev. David Willis*

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## **RIVERS OF THE BIBLE    Mark 1:9-11**

For our fifth river we move to the New Testament but once again it is the River Jordan that commands our focus. The Jordan, of course, is central to the Bible narrative, from the moment Joshua leads the Hebrews over its waters into the Promised Land. This was a significant theological moment for the twelve tribes as it marked the final deliverance from the incarceration in Egypt some forty years before.

It is the same Jordan that feeds the Sea of Galilee around which so much of our Lord's public ministry is set and here in the opening verses of Mark's gospel the Jordan is the scene for a critical meeting of Jesus and his cousin known as John the Baptist.

We have to understand how influential John was to the Hebrew story. Although the nation could boast a long line of prophets like Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos that all belonged to a history of at least 400 years ago. But since then there had been 'no open vision' in all those long years, no prophetic voice to address the people's longing for a word from the Lord.

Now, suddenly, onto the scene comes this gaunt, ascetic figure known as John the Baptiser. His message was one of repentance, a call to a new life and the promise of the coming of the Messiah. And as an outward act of their commitment to the new way of life John baptised them in the Jordan. This in itself was a huge about turn in Jewish culture. Never before had a Jew undergone Baptism; the rite was reserved only for Gentiles who adopt the Jewish faith. Before this time it was deemed totally unnecessary for the Hebrews to in anyway even consider Baptism as an act of repentance.



The parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14) shows that Jesus was as adamant as John for the need of repentance.

Into this scene on the banks of the Jordan steps Jesus. This is the moment that he enters his public ministry. For anyone making a significant change to their life the questions and the doubts hang heavy, and it was surely no different for Jesus. For years he had lived quietly in his home town of Nazareth, possibly running the business and caring for his mother and younger siblings. This new step was more than just popping into the local synagogue to make a commitment; it entailed a long journey on foot to the Jordan and undergoing a rite completely contrary to Jewish custom.

William Barclay in his book 'The Mind of Christ' entitles the chapter covering our Lord's baptism 'The Hour Strikes'. It was here in a particular moment that he takes a step from which he will not turn back- a step that will change his life forever and indeed change humanity forever. It was a unique moment in the world's history. But it is also a moment to which in our own individual way we can relate. Those times when we have to make a choice and move on despite all the doubts and fears what the future may bring. It might be a choice of a career, the choice of a partner, a decision to have children or a commitment to become a disciple of Jesus

Our assurance is that Jesus has been there, like us, and by that river on that day he committed himself wholly to his Father's will.



*Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise*

TJL



# Christmas Coffee Morning



In aid of Church funds

In Main Hall

Saturday 24th November 2018

9.00 - 12.00 noon

Come along and have a mouth watering bacon or sausage bap. If you prefer you can have cheese or fruit scones, or a variety of delicious cakes all followed by a nice cup of tea or coffee.

**PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO PUT THIS IN YOUR DIARY!**



**Help Needed!** As you see we are holding a Christmas Coffee Morning on 24th November which is in aid of Church Funds. This partially takes the place of the Christmas Fair. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

We would be grateful for assistance with putting up and taking down tables, helpers to serve, washing up and **please, please** can we have some cakes to sell. This is for the Church and the more members we have involved the easier it is for everyone.

Many thanks, EVCOG





YOU ARE WELCOME TO COME AND JOIN US FOR  
**A GALA CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2018

At 12.15 pm

Tickets £13.00 per person, children £6.00

All in aid of Church Funds.

Tickets available from Pat Webber,  
John Brown or Anna Bakker

### **Advent House Groups**

*This year we are going to try some different material. A book of meditations, reflections and questions has recently been published entitled 'Beyond the Chocolate Window', the very title suggesting that there is far more to Advent than the typical calendar that children (and adults) open during December. The book is written by a Methodist Deacon, Becky Lovatt who is based in East Devon.*

*This means that there will not be a booklet to hand out but each week I will print off bible readings and questions so you can prepare.*

*All the sessions will be at No.4 Martins Close commencing at 7.30pm and finishing with refreshments at 9 o'clock. We thank Joan for her hospitality.*

*The dates are: Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November, Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December.*

*Tim Lansdown, Chairman, Worship Committee*

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## **Wives Group**

Once again this is my annual account of what has been happening within the Group over the past year. We had a very varied Programme with numerous speakers, Holiday Highlights by Hilary Cooke, the History of Education by Pam Blackmore, and Trisha Reid told us about her trip to New Zealand. We were taken back to the golden years of Severn Beach, had several musical evenings, photographs set to music and a trip to Fonthill Garden Centre, all very enjoyable.

We had lovely weather for our summer outing to Oakham Treasures, Portbury on the KCT bus ably driven by Mike Vernon. Due to most of our members being of a certain age we could remember having or using quite a lot of the items displayed!

Our Charity for the year was Cruse Bereavement Care and we had various fundraising activities to help towards this. We held several bring and buys, Saturday coffee mornings together with our Summer coffee evenings. We also had a sponsored walk which took place on the cycle path from Bitton to Mangotsfield and back. We were of different abilities so we paired up and walked along at our own pace. The nicest thing about being a walker is when we return to the Church the non-walkers have provided us with very welcome refreshments.

We are only a very small Group (22 in number) and we have had quite a bit of illness in the Group over the past year but once again we have surpassed ourselves. We have been able to donate £250.00 to the Church and £1800.00 to our Charity. I think all our members should be very proud of what we have achieved.

Our Charity for 2018/19 is Bristol After Stroke and a little while ago Claire Angell came to the Group and told us all about them and the wonderful work they do. Let's hope we can have another successful year at least equally the one we have just had.

Why not come along and join us for an evening, we would love to see you. We start at 7.30 pm and a copy of our Programme is on the notice board in the foyer.

*Pat Webber, Secretary*

### **Just to say...**

A big thank you to all those who have been so kind and caring before, and following my recent surgery.



Thank you for the many cards and flowers and more particularly your prayers during the last few very traumatic weeks.

I am please to say that I seem to be making a good recovery, although it will be a few months before I am expected to be fully back to my old self.

Michael and I have been ably supported and for that we are for ever grateful.

*Barbara Lewis*

Mary Golding would like to express thanks to all the people at HMC for their kind wishes, cards and flowers given to her after her recent car accident.



The Christmas Card Tree will be in church from early December. All donations to Mission charities.

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## More Random Thoughts: Wisdom and Decline

To seek Wisdom is to seek that which of itself is intangible, of little substance even in philosophical terms. We can of course experience the 'real' effects that an act of Wisdom will generate both personally and collectively, but of itself, it is elusive and spiritual. Even so, two quotations may help:-

- (i) "The young mistakenly think that imagination is a substitute for experience; their elders are equally wrong in believing that experience can substitute for intelligence."  
(Arthur Koestler)
- (ii) "If you desire to understand and seek Wisdom, first seek an awareness of your own nature and its strengths and weakness and discipline yourself accordingly in Love."  
(ARGI)

Put at its simplest Wisdom resides in the ability to develop and refine our nature by the application of intelligence and imagination, filtered through the discipline of Love.

Wisdom changes, often imperceptibly over time and whilst a most reliable asset, it is not infallible and sometimes we can mistake knowledge for Wisdom.

A teacher may inspire a student by conveying his or her personal enthusiasm for a subject when simplifying its' complexity and without losing its' essence, - is this ability an expression of Wisdom?

Many years ago, I thought that in growing old, under the anvil of life's experience and my religious background, I would grow in wisdom, humbleness and contentment and become less desirous of more of life's rewards.

I also thought that humbleness and contentment would grow from the gradual acceptance of who I really am and what exactly I have and can achieve.

But now I realise that as knowledge and experience have increased, humbleness has, nevertheless, largely developed from the realisation of how little I have understood about life's personal events and their on-going effect for me and others. And now, passing through the beginning of life's 'ancient time', I find wisdom remains more elusive and I desire to enjoy more "periods of contentment'. Poorer health is one factor that we all experience, but another is a desire for new objectives (perhaps in the service of others), which must be accomplished within our diminishing capabilities and encompassed by a Faith and Hope that best enables us to embrace our unforeseen and limited future.

Even when ill-health or accident eventually overwhelms us we may still be able to pray for others and ourselves and in our reduced circumstances there will hopefully be others to support us and ease our 'spiritual pain' by their Love, Compassion and Prayers.

The religiously orientated person may possess not just a hope but a confidence that the spiritual God residing at the core of his or her being, will better aid a 'contended living out' of what remains of life and beyond.

ARGI

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## Signposts

Find the Christmas Card list, but the hour hasn't changed yet. Bonfire night still to come. Halloween, Remembrance Sunday. At the moment the weather in chaos, hurricanes in America, storms in the Med. In the Pacific and Wales with people evacuated and a train marooned.

At such times each day and moment is important and we can only be thankful that the Lord of Creation Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour is with us.

A mixture of celebration, remembrance and consideration of the world in which we live.

The most important must be the coming of God into the world, not all powerful as so many leaders of the world would want but as a baby requiring love and care. Jesus came into our humanity to show a better way, the way of love, may we be able to follow his way and teaching that the world and our community may grow in hope and love for each other.

ACW



# Rotas

## Flowers:

Nov	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
	Messy Church	Pam Blackmore	Philip Briggs	Lilian Curnock Brenda Jackson

Dec	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
	Messy Church	Valerie Smith	Christmas	Christmas	Christmas

## Doors and books:

Nov	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Morn</b>	P Webber J Tippett	M Golding D Davies	K Cowie I Cowie	J Roberts M Stoodley
<b>Eve</b>	Messy Church	United Reform Church	M Kenway M Kenway	C Haycock R Ireland

Dec	2 <sup>nd</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>	30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Morn</b>	P Kirby J Angell	J Green P Blackmore	M Wilby M Sagar	H Teague B Jones	P Webber J Tippett
<b>Eve</b>	Messy Church	B Griffen W Stamford	J Morgan M Morgan	T Lansdown	No service

## For Your Diary

4 <sup>th</sup> Nov	4.00pm	<i>Messy Church</i>
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov	10.45am	<i>Remembrance Service</i>
	4.00pm	<i>United Service – United Reform Church</i>
18 <sup>th</sup> Nov	10.45am	<i>Mission Sunday</i>
	6.00pm	
25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	10.45pm	<i>D Alderman – Holy Communion</i>
	6.00pm	<i>C Spencer</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	10.45am	<i>Gift Service*, All Age Worship and Parade</i>
	4.00pm	<i>Christingle for the whole church</i>
9 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6.00pm	<i>Cluster ‘Nine Lessons and Carols’ at HMC</i>
23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	4.00pm	<i>Christian Aid tea</i>
	6.00pm	<i>Carols by Candlelight</i>
24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4.00pm	<i>Crib Service</i>
	11.15pm	<i>Christmas Eve Communion</i>
25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9.30am	<i>Christmas Morning Service</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	2.00pm – 4.00pm	<i>New Year’s Day Music and Meditation</i>

*\*Gift Service – collecting toys, sweets, toiletries for mums and children on behalf of Home Start*