

South Wigston Methodist Church

The Oracle



December & January

Cover photo: Methodist Church Christmas message 2020

Our Mission Statement

The people of South Wigston Methodist Church are called to live the good news of God's love through open hearts, open minds and open doors.

We strive to be a place where understandings of Jesus Christ can flourish.

We're called to be good neighbours to people in need, to challenge injustice, and to meet regularly for prayers, singing and learning.

.....

One of the ways in which we seek to put this mission statement into practice is to ensure that our church is a safe place for all who use it by following the safeguarding policies and practices of the Methodist Church. Our church's safeguarding policy is on the noticeboard in the lounge. The Safeguarding contact is Helen 07500 180517.

South Wigston Methodist Church
Blaby Road, South Wigston LE18 4PB
www.swmchurch.org.uk

Minister: Rev. Fran Rhys 0116 257 1069

Senior Steward: Mary B. 0116 281 2625

Leicester Trinity Circuit, Charity registration number 1129943

Editor: Mary B. contact: pmmbry@gmail.com 07891 917768
Contributions always welcome; deadline 20th of each month.

Worship resumes in December

Sunday 13th 10.15 Holy communion led by Rev. Fran Rhys
Sunday 20th 8.45 Bible breakfast led by Rev. Fran Rhys – on Zoom

Christmas Day



10.15 Miriam Stevenson leads worship for all

Please see the weekly newsletter for updates and changes.

Carols on the doorstep

Sunday 20th December at 5.30pm

See the back page of this Oracle for full details

Sing Christmas at home with BBC Radio Leicester

Tuesday 22nd December between 7 and 8pm

This event is going ahead but we will have to listen to the broadcast and sing from our own home – wherever we may be. We are also encouraged to sing the final hymn, “O come all ye faithful”, on our doorsteps. Window posters and carol sheets will be available on www.singchristmas.org.uk

January worship

Sunday 10th 10.15 Covenant service led by Fran

Sunday 24th 10.15 Worship led by the local worship team

A message from our minister



One of my favourite daily walks takes me round the Wigston cemetery, a little wildlife haven with striking old gravestones, reflecting many different eras. Recently a little robin stayed on the back of a bench as I walked close by, tilting its head on one side. Robins are one of the favourite designs on Christmas cards – have you wondered why? I wonder if it's the influence of a Scandinavian folk tale about a plain robin without a red breast which has empathy for Christ on the cross. This robin notices a thorn in Christ's brow, which it removes with its beak and as a result a drop of Christ's blood falls on the bird's breast and this miraculously remains evermore among robins.

I realise this is merely a folk story, but it carries an important message with it. We have been going through hard times, with isolation, loneliness, fear, anxiety, and grief very real for many people. You could say that we have been sharing in some of the sufferings of Christ, some of us much more than others. We are approaching the festival of Christmas with its central message of incarnation – of God born in the infant Christ to be God with us. We are not alone – Christ is inspiration or companion or many things beside.

There is a poem by Denise Levertov about the lamb of God 'born in bloody snowdrifts'. In it she writes about our propensity to want to avoid hard times:

‘And we
frightened, bored, wanting
only to sleep till catastrophe
has raged, clashed, seethed and gone by without us,
wanting then
to awaken in quietude without remembrance of agony.’

Or, as someone called R.S. Shannon has written, the fruits of striving with difficulties and failure last longer than those that come with ease.’ We are getting through these difficult times and the defenceless lamb of God is born among us once again. God is with us.

Contributors to a Methodist Facebook group have been coming up with alternative versions of carols inspired by the past year and Covid.

Do you remember the version of *We three kings* which was popular in the early 1960s?

We four Beatles of Liverpool are.
One in a taxi, one in car,
One on his scooter, parping his hooter,
Following Ringo Starr.

And of course we all know that
While shepherds washed their socks by night,
all seated round the tub,
The Angel of the Lord came down,
and gave their socks a scrub.

There are also some inventive cartoons – one shows the wise men wearing masks and queuing 2 metres apart at the stable.

Christmas Quiz by Brenda

1	Where angels come from	3 6 2 5
2.	Alcoholic dairy product	6 6
3	Book by C D	1 9 5
4	Royal broadcast	3 6 6
5	Firm	6
6	Now	7
7	Late night gathering	8 4
8	The 5 th Sunday before Christmas	4-2 6
9	Seasonal frolics	9 6
10	Killing noises	6 5
11	Medals	11
12	Keep them or break them	11
13	Count the days to Christmas	6 8
14	For the winner or to drink	7 3

Carols or songs

- 15 I T B M
- 16 B I T N M C
- 17 T T D O C
- 18 J T T W
- 19 I H I L
- 20 H Y A M L C
- 21 O L T O B
- 22 W T K O O A
- 23 A I A M
- 24 I C U T M C
- 25 H T H A S



Answers on page 8

Image: https://openclipart.org/image/400px/svg_to_png/280707/Singers.png

PUT THAT LIGHT OUT!

It was brilliant. It was maroon in colour and it had a marvellous lens that shone right out! Nobody in our gang had a torch as good as mine. Never mind mobile phones, we used to boast about torches in 1940! They were important – not for reading



in bed, but because of the BLACKOUT. One of my main memories of those wartime Christmases was how black they were – and we had seven of them!

The trolleybuses had to have a mask round their Headlamps to direct the light downwards, and so did cyclists. We had to have special “blackout” curtains at the windows, and when you went outside in winter you took your torch. We used to have one by the back door in the scullery (didn’t have a kitchen!) – you see the netty was 30 yards down the garden path, so you needed the torch to see where the icy patches were on the path.

The blackout didn’t stop us though. I can remember Tuesday and Thursday evenings after tea, setting out for the youth club, with, of course, my torch for the journey home. HOW WE LONGED FOR LIGHT!

There was a song I seem to remember “I’m going to get lit up when the lights go on in London”.

Do you remember those words from the Old Testament “*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light*”. Well Christmas is all about the coming of that light.

Jesus comes amongst us as that light and light is symbolic of LOVE He comes to light up our dark places – our fears – our

pain – our regrets – with his love. There is no dark place where his love cannot reach.

May that love light up your homes and your lives this Christmas, and never mind Warden Hodges from Dad’s Army – let’s light up our part of the world.

Merry Christmas

Arthur

Answers to the Christmas quiz	
1	The Realms of Glory
2	Brandy Butter
3	A Christmas Carol
4	The Queen’s Speech
5	Stable
6	Present
7	Midnight Mass
8	Stir-up
9	Christmas Capers
10	Sleigh Bells
11	Decorations
12	Resolutions
13	Advent Calendar
14	Wassail Cup
15	In the Bleak Midwinter
16	Born in the Night
17	Mary’s Child
18	The Twelve Days of Christmas
19	Joy to the World
20	Infant Holy, Infant Lowly
21	Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
22	Oh Little Town of Bethlehem
23	We Three Kings of Orient Are
24	Away in a Manger
25	It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
	Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Leicester Trinity Circuit Reflections for Advent 2020



Magnificat

Each Sunday evening from 6pm

Zoom Link: available from Mary B.

Or join us by telephone: 0203 051 2874

Join us for thoughtful and thought-provoking explorations of Mary's Song through music, reflection and prayer, led by trainee local preachers and worship leaders. Each will conclude with a time for fellowship.

Advent 1: Sunday 29th November

God who saves (Luke 1 vv. 46-47)

Leader: Dr Douglas Beoku-Betts

Advent 2: Sunday 6th December

God who notices (Luke 1 vv. 48-50)

Leader: Moleen Chikumba

Advent 3: Sunday 13th December

God who turns the tables (Luke 1 vv. 51-53)

Leader: James Blackhall

Advent 4: Sunday 20th December

God who remains faithful (Luke 1 vv. 54-55)

Leader: Graham Tennant

Church family

We wish a Happy Birthday to everyone who celebrates in December & January

December 3rd Emily

4th Cara

13th Charles

29th Donna

31st Mary M

January 2nd TJ

6th Janet H

15th Margaret

16th Vivian

23rd Janice

24th Helen D

And a Happy Anniversary to

Sarah & Bradley who celebrate on 28th January

Flower rota

Please contact Margaret (0116 278 6616) if you would like to donate flowers in church on 13th December, 10th & 24th January.

A message from Alan

Thank you for the kind birthday wishes for my 95th, it proved to be an interesting and an exhausting day. It started with 2 phone calls from Australia, (whilst I was still in the shower) One from Brenda's sister Barbara, a chirpy 92 year old, the other from our niece Sue and her husband, Sue was our bridesmaid 59 years ago.

The highlight of the day was a DVD, recording messages from all our family in England and also those in Perth and Queensland Australia and Rosemary's husband Chris, who is working in Switzerland.

Thank you to those who came and waved through the window, it was lovely to see you.

God Bless you all, *Alan*



Thank you to Nicholas who provided the cover for the church Christmas card – he did get a bit of help with the design.

New Year's Day

Unfortunately, we will not be holding our usual get together on New Year's Day, a time when we have had a local walk and then lunch at church.

A time when we have been able to celebrate together in fellowship with those on their own.

We hope and pray that it won't be too long before we can meet again.

Yours in faith
Brenda



We are continuing to support Mariam and her family who live in Burkina Faso. Here is an update from Compassion.

It's a difficult time all around the world, as well as at home. Many parents and caregivers of sponsored children have lost jobs, leading to food insecurity and the risk of homelessness. Your donations are being used to bring hope and much needed support to those living in extreme poverty during a global pandemic.

In Burkina Faso, our staff share:

"Dear supporters, we want to thank you. We want to thank you because your support helps us to be able to reach out to those children and those families. We could not have done it without your support. Thank you very much and may God continue to bless you in Jesus' name."

Issaka Kiemtore, National Director

Control & click to [Watch our message from the field](#) and see how your donations are providing Mariam with a future. (It runs for 3 minutes.)

Thank you again for all that you're doing for Mariam during this time. You're helping our church partners provide vital care throughout this challenging season. You're enabling them to be God's hands and feet, bringing His light of hope to children living in extreme poverty.

We're so grateful for your faithful support. Please help us continue this work as we seek to release children from poverty in Jesus' name. God bless you.

A message from Compassion and a carol service to watch on TV.

God bless you for supporting Compassion during an unexpected year. As we face a Christmas like never before, we'd like to thank you for your faithful support of Mariam.

As a sign of our appreciation, we've partnered with TBN - the world's largest Christian television network - to create **Carols with Compassion**. It's a Christmas concert for you to celebrate our amazing God and the start of His incredible salvation plan for the world.

Airing on **Sunday 6 December at 8pm** on TBN UK (Freeview Channel 65 and Sky 582) and streamed from our Facebook page and YouTube channel, Carols with Compassion will feature musical performances from Graham Kendrick, Philippa Hanna, Noel Robinson, the London Community Gospel Choir, Hillsong London, Lurine Cato, Martin Smith and Elle Limebear, alongside readings and performances by Compassion-sponsored children around the world.

There'll also be a message on the hope found in the Christmas story brought to you by Richmond Wandera, Compassion graduate and senior pastor of New Life Baptist Church, Kampala.

We hope this uplifting concert will encourage and delight you as we celebrate the birth of Jesus together.

Thank you so much for your love and care for children living in great need around the world. Whether we're facing restrictions or not, may God bless you and your family richly during this Christmas season.

Christmas Eve

“Tell us a story mummy.” Joy said to her mother.

“Settle down and I will tell you a story from long, long ago”

Mummy started

“A large crowd had gathered one night on the main street outside the Methodist Church. It was dark and cold, but this didn’t affect the enthusiasm for the carol singing throughout the district. There was a pattern to the way it went, led by a church member and cornet player with the local brass band. They were not the only group out that night and there was much banter between the groups, with each exchanging Christmas greetings”

“What happened then mummy?” asked the children.

“They went round singing carols to lots of friends, then back to the church for supper at 12 midnight, followed by more singing to the ones not previously visited. They finished at 2 or 3 am with the singing of the Doxology on the morning of Christmas Day”

“What’s the Doxology mummy?”

“It’s a hymn of praise to God,”

“Merry Christmas Mummy, A Merry Christmas everyone”

Anon

The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him, all creatures here below,

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Holocaust Memorial Day Wednesday 27th January

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) encourages remembrance in a world scarred by genocide. We promote and support Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) – the international day on 27 January to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi Persecution and in genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

27th January marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

HMD is for everyone. Each year across the UK, thousands of people come together to learn more about the past and take action to create a safer future. We know they learn more, empathise more and do more.

Together we bear witness for those who endured genocide, and honour the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition.

In 2021 the usual gatherings can't take place but ideas can be found on www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/hmd-together/

Why not take a few moments on the day to remember the past and pray for peace.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Oracle throughout the year – it was great to have some new contributors telling us about their lockdown experiences. Special thanks to Brenda who contributes several items to every edition.

CAROLS ON THE DOORSTEP

**SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER
5:30 PM**

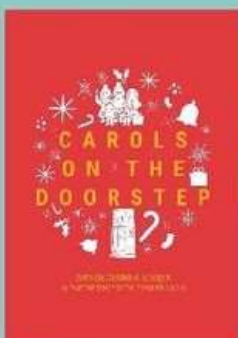
**Join us for a National carol sing on your
doorstep with your neighbours.**

It's so easy to join in....

*Download and print the Carol Sheet and invitation from
www.premierchristianradio.com. or
www.newcastlemethodistdistrict.org

*Pop them through your neighbours' doors inviting them
to join you

*5:30pm on 20th December tune your radio to Premier
Radio or Freeview 725 or download the Premier Radio app
on your phone, then sing along to the Carols played. Why
not wear your festive jumpers too and even bring out
something to shake or rattle?



<https://www.facebook.com/CarolsOnTheDoorstep>