

South Wigston Methodist Church

The Oracle



**"Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light."**



**Scratch beneath the surface
this Christmas**

The **Methodist Church** 

**Out
of the
Ordinary**

December 2023

Cover picture: *Out of the Ordinary – the Methodist Church’s Christmas campaign 2023 – see the article on page 10.*

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 officer is Margaret Edwards, with Mary Bryceland.

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

Minister: Rev. Frances Ballantyne (Day off - Friday)
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Contributions always welcome.

Worship in December

Sunday 3rd 10.15 Howard Smith

Sunday 10th 10.15 Rev. Kim Shorley - Holy communion

Sunday 17th 10.15 Rev. Kim Shorley

Sunday 24th 10.15 Carol service

Christmas Day

10.15 Mrs Tricia Lockley

Hot drinks, mince pies, etc after the service



Sunday 31st 10.15 Andy Biggins and Colin Rodway

Worship in January 2024

Sunday 7th 10.15 Heather Corlett

Sunday 14th 10.15 Jean Thornton

Sunday 21st 10.15 Rev. Paula Hunt – Holy communion

Sunday 28th 10.15 Café-style worship with the local worship team

New Year's Day Lunch, Monday 1st January at 12.00 noon

Come and help us celebrate the New Year.

Join us in the church lounge for a lunch of soup and mince pies.

Donations for Action for Children.



A message from Deacon Sharon

O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.

As we enter Advent and look towards Christmas, we are all too aware that this just isn't the case at the moment in that part of the world. Bethlehem and the surrounding areas are anything but quiet and peaceful, and without getting into the political discussion each time we hear the news or pick up a newspaper we see stories of innocent men, women and children caught up in this violence.

December can be a busy time, with lots of good things to enjoy but can also mean, as my family say, we can easily get "tired and irritable". Children can become over excited with all the good things to enjoy - Christmas plays, parties, visiting family and this may not have the best effect on their behaviour! Too much to do, too much to buy, cards to write, presents to wrap, too much food to prepare and eat - the lists go on. Or for some Christmas is a difficult time, those spending time alone, memories of Christmas' of the past, loved ones no longer with us, pressure to be enjoying ourselves when life just feels difficult.

What are we celebrating at Christmas? We are celebrating the birth of Jesus, God's son, born in a smelly, messy stable. One of the names given to Jesus was Prince of Peace. And it seems to me that we need that more than ever at the moment.

What did it mean for Jesus to be the Prince of Peace? Well, if one carol writer is to be believed he was a very peaceful baby, one who didn't cry at all! As he grew up according to another hymn writer, he became gentle Jesus, meek and

mild but is this what Jesus was like? I really don't think so. He was a normal healthy baby who would have cried when he was hungry or needed attention and from other parts of the Bible, we read that Jesus did get angry when he saw that people weren't being treated fairly. So, what does it mean when we say Jesus is the Prince of Peace?

The peace that Jesus offers is both for us as individuals and for the nations. As well as the Christmas adverts on TV, at the moment there are the holiday company ads and one company uses the song, Hold my Hand by Jess Glynn. The words of which are

*Oh, won't you hold my hand? Cause I don't wanna walk on my own anymore
Won't you understand? Cause I don't wanna walk alone.*

We just have to reach out to Jesus, the God who knows what it is like to live our human life and we will find He is there, ready to hold our hand and walk with us whatever we are facing and bring us his peace.

When we think of the peace that Jesus brings to the nations that is harder to define, we catch glimpses of it, through the actions and giving of individuals, through the work organisations are doing in bringing humanitarian aid to those in need, in the protests people make against situations they find unjust and, in the steps, different governments are trying to make in bringing peace. The Bible promises that there will be a time when all trials and difficulties will end and that time will be when Jesus comes again, not this time as a baby but as the Prince of Peace, not this time in a backwater town in a smelly stable but then the whole world will know and experience the peace that only Jesus can offer.

In the meantime, we continue to hope, work and pray for peace and that as we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace I hope you, those you love, those caught up in war and the whole of creation will experience more of the peace that Jesus offers, both at this Christmas time and into the New Year.

With very best wishes,

Deacon Sharon

Rev. Frances

We are pleased that our minister is making good progress; however, she does not feel well enough to return to work until January at the earliest. We send her our best wishes for a full recovery.

The Church family in December

Happy Birthday to

December: 3rd Emily

13th Charles

29th Donna

31st Mary M

January: 6th Janet H.

15th Margaret E.

16th Vivien

23rd Janice

y24th Helen D'A

Happy anniversary to Sarah & Bradley who celebrate on 28th January

Church Flowers If you would like to have flowers in church to celebrate a special occasion, or in memory of someone, please contact Margaret E. 0116 278 6616.

December 10th Janet H.

The calendar for flowers in 2024 is now on the notice board in the lounge – please fill in your dates.



Thank you for your donations for Mariam and her family in Burkina Faso.

We support them via Compassion.

Christmas and birthday gifts of money have been sent – Compassion workers in Burkina Faso will buy the most appropriate presents.

Wigston Food Bank (SW Congregational Church)

Organised by the Lions Clubs International (Oadby & Wigston branch), this is a self referral food bank. If you need help, you can just turn up, bring photo ID, proof of address, your own shopping bags (or trolley), and the suggested donation of £1.20. You will be provided with two bags of food for you and your family. **Dates: Mondays 11th & 18th December, 8th & 22nd January 2024.**

Brenda's quizzes

The quiz on SURNAMES raised £210 for the Wigston Framework Knitters Museum. Thank you to everyone who took part. The Christmas quiz is in aid of church funds. This is now available, and the topic is Places in the UK.



Rev. Arthur Rowe

On Sunday 19th November we had a faith lunch after worship and presented Arthur with a card and leaving gifts. The gifts were a framed photo of the cross and communion table – taken by Margaret’s grandson Andrew, and several M&S gift cards. We also welcomed some of Arthur’s neighbours who joined us for lunch. Janet made a tasty cake with the message *We will miss you*. It was a very happy and emotional time.



Arthur is moving to Havant at the beginning of December.

We were pleased that he was able to give a Reflection at the local worship team service on Sunday 26th November.

Christmas Greetings from the church family near & far

Thank you for your warm welcome and I look forward to getting to know you better and working with you over the coming months. As we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace may you know that God's peace and presence are with you this Christmastide and throughout the New Year. Blessings, *Deacon Sharon.*

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous
New Year, With love, *Pat*

May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace. May the gladness of Christmas give you hope. May the warmth of Christmas grant you love. Best wishes to all our Church friends. *Janice, David and family.*

Best wishes for Christmas and a blessed and peaceful New Year to you all.
With love, *Brenda.*

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and may we know God's Blessing at this
time. *Janet*

To all members, old and new and to all friends, a blessed, healthy, joyful and holy Christmas. May the message of the Christ child remain with you always. May the New Year bring hope and peace to you and all the world. *Patricia and Gerald Grudgings.*

A Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to everyone. With love, *Steve B*

May we all have a Happy Christmas and remember the meaning of
the birth of Jesus. *Pam*

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2024
Best Wishes Sue H

Happy Christmas to all my church friends. With love *June*

My Christmas message and hope for everyone, is best summed up in the words of my favourite carol:

"Mary's child your face lights up our way. Light of the world, Mary's child dawn on our darkest day." God bless you all. *Arthur.*

A Happy Christmas to everyone and thank you for all your love and support.
Best Wishes from *Debbie*

A Happy Christmas to all and Best Wishes from *Gill and Dieter.*

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with Love and Best Wishes, *Estelle and Charles*

May your Christmas be blessed with peace and happiness.
With love, *Margaret and Tony*

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, From *Cathy and Alan in Sandy Beds*

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas, love from Helen and Nicholas xxx

“Love Came Down at Christmas”
May you know the Joy, Wonder and Peace of the Christmas Message.
With our Love and Best Wishes, *Trevor Tricia and Family*

Happy Christmas and a peaceful new Year from everyone at the *Saturday Walking Group*.

Christmas wishes to all and peace and goodwill for 2024.
With love. *Vivian and family xxx*

We send our Love and prayers to you and your family this Christmas time.
A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. *Gaynor, Chris and family*.

With Blessings for a Joyful Christmas and a Peaceful New Year,
Mary and Eric

A very Happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful 2024 to all my friends and church family in South Wigston. With much love from *Beryl and family in South Wales*. God bless you all xx

Our love for a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, from *Simon and Karen*.

To everyone, I wish you a Happy Christmas and God's Blessing for the New Year. With Love, *Margaret D*

Seasons greetings to all, with love from *Janet and Adam Leddington*.

Another year virtually over! Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year, with special thanks to members and non-members for their continued support in providing me with work, with love *Stuart*.

More greetings on the next page!

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and may you be blessed in 2024.
Mary B and family.

Peace and joy to you and yours this Christmas time and for 2024.
Sue, Catherine and Emma.

Christmas greetings to all and goodwill. Thank you for making me welcome, love, peace and happiness bless you all. *Marc and family.*

David & I can only say a big thankyou for your prayers and practical support in recent weeks, now we want to wish you all Gods richest blessing through this special Christmas time and into the New Year. A peaceful and prosperous 2024. Best Wishes, *Frances & David*

amos  trust

justice and hope for the forgotten

PLACES OF PEACE - A CHRISTMAS EVENT FOR GAZA

*OADBY TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH
MONDAY 4th DECEMBER, 7pm*

Further info from derek.mclean@methodist.org.uk <https://www.amostrust.org/>

The Methodist Church's Christmas campaign

Scratch beneath the surface this Christmas

How can God's extraordinary love transform our ordinary lives? Your **Out of the Ordinary Christmas** starts now.



Look out for the scratch cards which are available for you to give out to friends, family & strangers – they will be in the foyer from Saturday 2nd December.

You can read more at:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/out-of-the-ordinary/>

Fragility of Freedom is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 27th January 2024

‘That is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees.’

– Anne Frank, diary entry, Saturday 20 June, 1942 – reflecting back on May 1940 when the Germans arrived in the Netherlands

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 6 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of people murdered under Nazi persecution of other groups and during more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

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

The Holocaust threatened the fabric of civilisation, and genocide must still be resisted every day. Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

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.

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

27th December 2023 As I’m putting together this Oracle news of the situation in Palestine/Israel and the war in Gaza is in all the headlines. Earlier in the year Rev. Derek McLean led a very powerful service at our church in which he talked about the *lack of freedom* for Palestinians. Information about an event which supports Gaza can be found on page 10. *Mary*

Please continue to pray for all involved in, or affected by, the situations in Palestine/Israel, the wider Middle East, Ukraine, and other places of conflict.

Christmas Prayer Appeal

Leicester City Street Pastors

Can you set aside 5 minutes a day in the run up to Christmas to pray for one of the following:


1. Leicester City centre. Pray for all those enjoying the celebrations. Pray for protection and safety.
2. Pray for all those who work in the night-time economy: bar staff, door staff, emergency services. Let them know the protection of God
3. Pray for the volunteers that work in partnership with other agencies in the night- time economy. Ensure people to volunteer and be part of keeping the city a safe and hospitable place to be.



The Christmas postbox is now available and will be opened on Saturday 16th December.


Cards for church friends only, please.


Regular events at church

 **Tuesdays 2 to 4 Knit & natter** ~ everyone welcome, even if you don't knit. Good company, a *warm space* and a cuppa.

Tuesday evenings Wigston & District Male Voice Choir rehearsal. New members welcome – just drop in. <https://wigstonmalechoir.org>


Wednesdays 6.00pm Gaynor Merry's weight loss group 07977 868824
gaynor.merry@ntlworld.com

 **Friday coffee morning 9.00 – 10.30** a *warm space*, free drinks, biscuits & toast

 **Saturday morning coffee 9.30 - 11.30** come along to *this warm space* and have a bit of company. Home-made cakes are usually served.

Saturday morning Walking group (non-church) The group meets at 9.15 and sets off at 9.30 for a walk of up to 1 hour returning to church for coffee and chat.

Cost 40p per week. Mary B. and Sue C. are regular walkers – please ask them for more details.

 Warm spaces where free hot drinks will be available – although donations are welcomed.

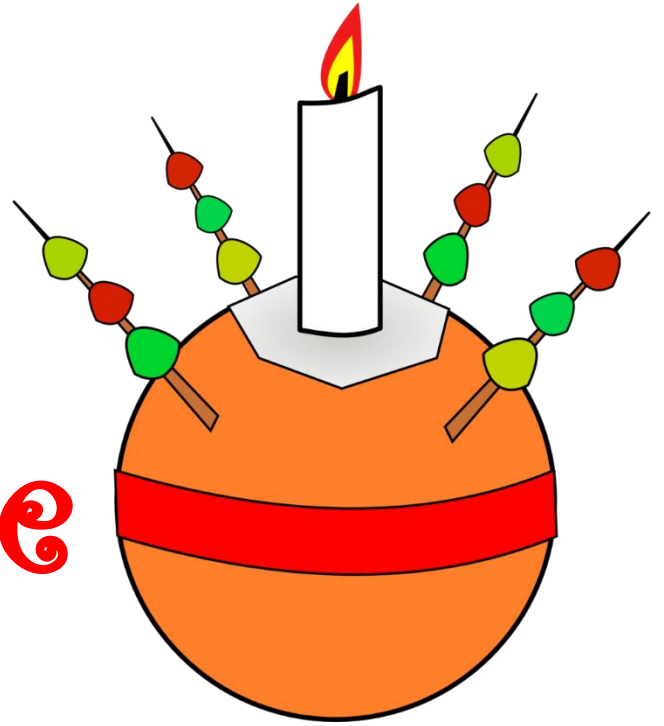
Newspaper collection – just a reminder that the Male Voice Choir is still collecting newspapers which are sold to raise money for various charities. Please put your papers in the room off the prayer chapel.

Food Bank – donations are always required especially tinned vegetables, fruit etc. and dried goods. There is a box in the lounge with further information.

Stamps for RNIB – please trim your stamps leaving 1 cm gap all round and divide into UK and foreign stamps. There is a box in the lounge.

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Messy Christingle



Saturday 16th December

12 to 2

Make your own Christingle

Free food & drinks

Christmas crafts

It's all free

EVERYONE WELCOME !