

THE RECORD

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR 2020 - 2021



CHURCH ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

The **Methodist** Church South Fylde Circuit
Making Disciples: Transforming Lives and Communities

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This edition is being emailed to as many people as possible and is also available to download on the church website. A limited number of hard copies are available to pass on to those who do not have on-line access.



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THE BURNING BABE

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
Surpris'd I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow;
And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,
A pretty Babe all burning bright did in the air appear;

Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed
As though his floods should quench his flames which with his
tears were fed.

"Alas!" quoth he, "but newly born, in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I!

My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,

For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood."
With this he vanish'd out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas day.

Robert Southwell
Catholic Priest, martyred in 1595

A word from Stephen....



Dear Friends

The retail industry has left us in no doubt that Christmas is coming and the need to prepare early so as not to be disappointed.

The apparent lack of preparation in the Christmas story is all part of the message. Mary shocked to be pregnant and roughing it in a stable when it comes to the time of the birth, sleeping shepherds first to receive the announcement. You could say it was only the Magi who were prepared properly. They travelled furthest, brought gifts and were determined to bid the King of Kings and Lord of Lords welcome. They understood the significance of the one to be born and set off early in order to be part of the event. They were indeed Wise Men.

Christmas means many things to different people; it changes with the years but always at the centre is the reassurance that God is with us. Preparing for Christmas is not easy in these times, as then we may need to be like the Innkeeper and be ready to improvise, long suffering like the donkey with a heavy load or believe the incredible can happen like the Shepherds.

As we enter into the Advent themes and tell the Christmas Story we must remember Christmas is as much about today and tomorrow as it is the past. Connecting the challenges of life today with the transforming love of God is what this season is all about. Hymn writer Maggi Dawn writes:

Into the darkness of this world,
Into the shadows of this night;
Into the loveless place you came,
Lightened our burdens, eased our pain
and made these hearts your home.
Into the darkness once again-
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love to make us whole,
Come with your light to lead us on,
driving the darkness far from our souls:
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

O Holy Child, Emmanuel,
hope of the ages, God with us,
visit again this broken place,
till all the earth declares your praise
and your great mercies own.
Now let your love be born in us,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come in your glory, take your place
Jesus, the Name above all names,
we long to see you face to face,
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

May the Peace and Joy of Christmas be yours
Stephen

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday worship resumed again at Church Road on Sunday 6 December and will take place every Sunday unless there are changes in Government guidance. For the time being, if you wish to attend it will be necessary to register in advance by email or phone to help with seating arrangements and to reduce queueing time. Various measures will be in place in accordance with Government and Methodist Church guidelines to help keep everyone safe.



When arriving at church you will be welcomed by the stewards in the usual way and your temperature will be taken. You will be asked to confirm your name and the number in your household/bubble attending and sitting together.

It will be necessary to wear a mask during the service. Although hymns will be included in the order of service, we are asked not to sing but just to follow the words on the screen.

Whilst some of this feels strange to start with, experience from the previous resumption of services in September suggests that people quickly become accustomed to the 'new normal' and feel reassured by the measures in place.

Anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell) should not attend due to the risk that they pose to others; they should self-isolate at home immediately with other members of their household.

To attend services at Church Road, please email churchroadworship@gmail.com or ring 07788 166144 before 9.00 p.m. on the preceding Friday.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

SUNDAY 20th

6.30 p.m. CAROL SERVICE
led by Revd Stephen Heath

WEDNESDAY 23rd

4.00 p.m. CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

CHRISTMAS EVE - THURSDAY 24th

4.00 p.m. CHRISTINGLES ON ZOOM
(see website & Facebook for details)

CHRISTMAS DAY - FRIDAY 25th

11.00 a.m. JOINT SERVICE AT THE DRIVE
led by Revd Stephen Heath

SUNDAY 27th

10.30 a.m. CIRCUIT SERVICE
led by Revd Stuart Wild & Revd Stephen Heath



CHRISTINGLES ON ZOOM

Sadly, due to the restrictions, we have decided not to hold a Christingle Service in the Church this year, but we are offering to deliver a Christingle pack, including orange, with all you need to make one at home. The offer is limited to one per child in each household, or one per household where there are no children. Please email Ben Derbyshire: b_derbyshire@hotmail.com to order your pack no later than the 18th December 2020.

We are also arranging a Zoom gathering at 4.00 p.m. on Christmas Eve when we can make and light our Christingles together, so please note the date. Details of how to join in will be posted on our Facebook page and website.

WORSHIP in JANUARY

3rd

10.30 a.m. COVENANT SERVICE
led by Revd Stephen Heath

10th

10.30 a.m. Revd Terry Hudson

17th

10.30 a.m. Andrew Barratt

24th

10.30 a.m. Judith Smith

31st

10.30 a.m. Revd Stephen Heath



WORSHIP in FEBRUARY

7th

10.30 a.m. Pat Hirst

14th

10.30 a.m. Revd Stephen Heath

21st

10.30 a.m. Deacon Kim Gabbatiss

28th

10.30 a.m. Christine Pierce

FLOWER DEDICATIONS

We are grateful to those who have continued to contribute to the displays of flowers in church each week in memory of family members or someone special to them. Although there have been no flowers in church recently, it is still important for us to recall these special memories and to remember these people in our prayers.



OCTOBER

- 4th Birthday memories of Conrad and Vera Pate
 In memory of Polly and Leonard Gray
 In memory of Dorothy Spencer from her loving daughter
 Margaret Paterson
 Birth of Sydney Knight
- 11th Fond family birthday memories from Rosemary Wells,
 Katherine and Sarah
- 25th Oct In loving memory of Len and Nan Macklin who devotedly
 worshipped in the Church from the 1960s to the time of
 their respective passing. Rest in peace Mum and Dad. Love
 Colin, Michael and Gillian, your 5 grandchildren and your
 9 great grandchildren.
- 31st Oct Anniversary Memories of John Eadon from Rachel and Helen

NOVEMBER

- 1st The death of Sydney Knight
 Loving birthday memories of a very dear brother
 from Evelyn Grace
 Cherished memories of Marjorie and Peter from Gary, Mandy,
 Yvonne and the grandchildren

NOVEMBER (cont'd)

- 8th The death of Sydney Knight
 The death of James Maddocks
 The death of Margaret Joyce Knight
 Fond family memories from Sybil Bleach
 Birthday memories of Louise Eadon from Rachel
 and Helen (11 November)
- 15th Kay Makepeace in memory of her parents
- 22nd Treasured birthday memories of Paul,
 from Evelyn Grace & Suzanne

DECEMBER

- 6th Loving birthday memories of Marion Holland
- 20th Treasured memories of Claire Berwick
 In loving memory of John & Clarice Hughes
 from Margaret Wrigley
 Loving Birthday memories of a dear husband Arthur, and
 of my son, David Milnes, from Myrtle

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

MATTHEW 6; 28-29

FLOWERBED IN FRONT OF CHURCH

Owing to Coronavirus restrictions, we have been unable to have flowers in church or distribute them to the sick and housebound. We have therefore planted out the flowerbed at the front of church with primulas and spring bulbs in memory of those for whom the dedications of flowers has been requested. In these difficult times we hope that the flowerbed will also bring joy to those who pass by.



SHEILA LOWE

(member of Fairhaven but formerly of Church Road)

*"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord:
he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."*

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;

he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill,
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.

The Vestry Team

At the meeting of the Church Council held on Zoom in November, members unanimously supported the appointment of Catherine Irving as a new Church Steward. We're sure that the whole church will wish her well in her new position of responsibility. At the same time, Colin Hird and Hazel Hawkins have retired from the team and we record our sincere thanks to them for all they have done in their time as stewards.

The vestry team now comprises Janette Farley as lead steward, supported by Jonathan Livesey, Ben Derbyshire, Chris Jones and Catherine Irving. We appreciate their commitment to the life of the church and we pray for support for them all as they fulfil their duties of leadership.



TIME OUT

Dear friends,

It is well over 12 months since we have updated you on the activities of the Time Out Group and we have so much to share and celebrate with you!

Last time we wrote, the young people had just finished the Youth Alpha course and we were subsequently thrilled when four of them chose to publicly declare their faith and become members of the Methodist Church. The confirmation service, followed by the church family celebration was a really special and memorable occasion and one which we were truly blessed to be involved in.

At the young people's request, the group then moved from meeting monthly to every three weeks and after a social evening when they tackled a historical treasure hunt around St Annes, we started out on a journey together through the Bible Society 8 week study course. This proved to be a challenge and not necessarily as accessible as Youth Alpha had been, but the young people showed great commitment and perseverance and we shared some great discussions together, learning and developing our faith and understanding as we went along.

At the same time as we were working through the study, we were fortunate that with the support of the Church, Circuit and the District, last year we were able to take all five of the young people from Church Road who expressed an

interest (22 in total from the Circuit) to the national Methodist youth weekend, 3Generate.

Many of you will remember this event as the annual MAYC London Weekend held in May. In 2019, we didn't make it to the capital in May, but to Butlin's in Southport in drizzly November! The month and venue may have changed, but the premise had not and the young people shared in differing study



groups and social activities all exploring the theme "Where is God in My Story". The young people were a credit to Church Road; it was wonderful to watch them as they worshipped God with their peers from across the country in such varied ways, from worship led by the Methodist Youth Brass Band to night time praise led by GuavaB – Google him – we had to!



Two weeks later and they set their minds to Christmas and giving service to others. The group prepared and manned a stall at the Church Christmas Fair and proved to be well mannered and creative entrepreneurs!

From Christmas until just before Easter this year, we continued to meet face to face until Covid-19 changed the course of everybody's plans. Easter eggs were

subsequently sealed and delivered to their doorsteps and for many months we have had to keep in touch via email.

It has been a difficult time for the young people. Home schooling for all and for some the loss of the chance to sit the long-awaited GCSEs they had been preparing for and the uncertainty of what the future would therefore bring. Social isolation has also been challenging for them as for everybody else. News came that this year's 3Generate in Birmingham would be cancelled to great disappointment; however the summer did bring some highlights with more than half of the young people and their families sharing in some aspect (social, study and worship) of the virtual Christian Festivals from Cliff College, Keswick and New Wine.

Since then, new chapters have begun, the move to secondary school for some and college for others, all under the new regime of one-way systems, masks

and bubbles – some have burst requiring more home schooling, for others, part time courses now mean “zooming” in from home and the need for diligence in self-directed learning.

After several weeks of careful planning and completion of risk assessments with the support of Revd Stephen and Mike Bennett, we were therefore thrilled that Time Out would be able to resume meeting face to face, and we launched our new autumn winter programme based on part of the Nooma series. We were blessed to see eight of our young people return and to be joined by three new members, bringing our numbers up to 11.

Then lockdown 2!

Not to be daunted, part of the planned face to face programme has continued over the air waves, as the group prepared a virtual Christmas Reflection for 2020. You will have the opportunity to share in this during the Carol Service on Sunday 20 December and afterwards by following the links on the Church Road website or the Church Road Facebook page. We are so proud of what our young people have achieved and that they have chosen to share their time and talents to spread their thoughts and the Good News in this way. We hope you enjoy it!

The young people have also launched a Christmas Chocolate Gift appeal – see the following page for details.

We now look forward to our final meeting of the year in December (face to face all being well!) and the start of our new programme and new adventures in 2021.

We thank you for your continued support for the young people and ask that you continue to hold them in your prayers.

Sharon and Caroline

Sharon Hird and Caroline Livesey

Time Out Leaders

Church Road Methodist



“Time Out is a faith-based fellowship group for secondary school aged young people, encouraging them to explore their faith, what it means to them, how it relates to their daily lives and those of the local and worldwide community in which they live”.



Christmas Appeal from Time Out

Wesley's Larder continues to support many individuals and families and for Christmas, with your help, we would like to be able to offer chocolate as an extra gift alongside essential food items to those who visit over the coming weeks.



When you are doing your shopping, possibly buying two and getting one free, please could you pop the gift of a tub or box of chocolates into your basket.

The tubs and boxes of chocolates can be dropped at The Hub before morning worship on Sundays 13 and 20 December or any day of the week to 35 Blackpool Road, Ansdell. A box labelled Time Out Christmas Chocolate Gift Appeal will be at both drop off points. The chocolate gifts will be labelled with a Christmas message from all at Church Road.



Thank you in advance for your support.



DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO WILL BE ON THEIR OWN AND HOUSEBOUND ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

The Borough Council and various church-based and other local charities, including Wesley's, have come together to arrange a volunteer-led Christmas meal delivery service, which will be completely free of charge.

If you would like to nominate someone to receive a Christmas Day meal, please get in touch with our partners at the Well Church via the website <https://iwell.org.uk/community> where there is a nomination form or via the dedicated nomination hotline – speak to Liz or Roy on 07549 760056 between 10:00am – 6:00pm up to December 18th.

Ideally, please check that it is acceptable to the person(s) you are nominating beforehand.



A STAR SHINES BRIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

A star shines bright in Bethlehem
The saviour of the world as come
The son of God the great I AM
Emmanuel
The prince of peace and truth and love
Reign high above Jerusalem
Ring out the bells in all the earth
The birth of Jesus Christ
O Holy One of Israel
We praise Your name throughout the land
The King of Kings and Lord of Lords
We shout a loud Amen.

Written by Kath Kay
By the grace of God

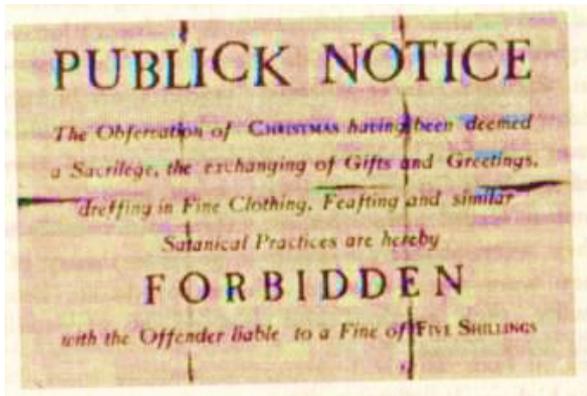
Have a great Christmas and a blessed New Year
2021

CHRISTMAS CANCELLED

“In reality, we cannot ban Christmas. To do so would just lead to breaches - and what are you going to do about that?”

Professor Calum Semple,
Virologist at Liverpool University speaking in November

There has been much speculation about the celebration of Christmas this year, with shops closed for weeks when they would normally be busy with festive shoppers and worries over how families and friends might be able to get together. Health officials with their professional concerns over the potential for further spreading of the virus have been accused by some of the popular media of wanting to ban Christmas.



But during the English Civil War in the middle of the 17th century, Christmas was indeed officially banned – not for health reasons, but out of the political and religious philosophies of Oliver Cromwell and his fellow Puritans.

To Puritans, carol singing and related Christmas festivities were not only

objectionable but sinful. They viewed the celebration of Christ’s birth on 25 December as a Roman Catholic plot and a wasteful tradition that threatened their extremist view of Christianity. They believed that the celebration of Christ’s birth was no more than an excuse for singing and bad behaviour. Nowhere, they argued, had God called upon people to celebrate Christ’s nativity in such fashion and in 1644, an Act of Parliament effectively banned the festival. The singing of carols was made illegal.

However, the attack on Christmas proved to be one of the Parliamentarians' biggest mistakes, as across the country people continued to observe the traditions, albeit discreetly. Although churches and shops were forced to close, public houses were full on Christmas Day and, the further away from London you were, clandestine religious services and other celebrations continued to be held. The singing of Christmas carols essentially went underground.

With the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 and the return of King Charles II from exile, all the legislation of the period 1642-60 was swept away and both the religious and secular elements of Christmas could once again be celebrated openly - which indeed they were, with renewed exuberance and wide popular support. The attack on Christmas had failed



Back to the present, it seems that some relaxation will be permitted over the festive period this year to allow limited Christmas celebrations with family and friends, but continued vigilance will be needed to protect against any possible upsurges in infections. In so many respects, Christmas will be different this year, not least for those of us for whom traditional carol services are an essential feature of our worship for Christmas. This year, there'll be no congregational singing!



JOHN BUNYAN (1628 – 1688) was probably the most famous preacher of the Puritan days, best remembered as the writer of the allegorical Christian story, *Pilgrim's Progress*. He became interested in religion after his marriage and joined a strict puritanical group in Bedford, where he became a preacher. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the relaxation of religious practices,

Bunyan refused to give up his style of preaching and was arrested. He was imprisoned in Bedford jail and it was whilst there that he started writing *Pilgrim's Progress*. In 1672, Charles II issued a declaration which suspended the penal laws against non-conformists and Bunyan was released, immediately resuming preaching around Bedfordshire and adjoining counties. The first part of *Pilgrim's Progress* was finally published in 1678 and the complete version in 1684.

Bunyan died in 1688 and was buried in Bunhill Fields, a favoured ground for non-conformists in the City of London. Susanna Wesley, the "Mother of Methodism" (died 1742) and Isaac Watts (died 1748) the "Father of English Hymnody" are also buried in the same ground.



CANDLELIGHT CAROL

by John Rutter

How do you capture the wind on the water?
How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How do you measure the love of a mother
Or how can you write down a baby's first cry?

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him
Seraphim round him their vigil will keep
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Saviour
But Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born

Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger
Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation
A child with his mother that first Christmas Day

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and star-glow
Shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn
Silent night, holy night, all is calm and all is bright
Angels are singing; the Christ child is born



(Isaiah 40 : 1-3)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her Iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah 40 : 4)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

An aspect of Christmas that we shall miss this year will be performances of Handel's Messiah. For many church choirs, performing the Messiah, or at least parts of it, is the highlight of the Christmas season. Sometimes, informal performances take place for charity in the form of a 'Do-it-Yourself Messiah', in which the audience serves as the unrehearsed chorus, supported by fully rehearsed soloists and orchestra.

In our circuit, Freckleton Methodist Church has for many years offered a performance of Messiah in Advent by the Keighley Vocal Union Chorus and invited soloists. Along with other performances up and down the country, this has not been possible this year.

Handel's Messiah was first performed in Dublin in April 1742. It received its London premiere a year later at the Covent Garden Theatre. The text was taken from the King James' Bible by Handel's close friend Charles Jennens. He described his work as "a meditation of our Lord as Messiah in Christian thought and belief." After an initially modest public reception, the oratorio gained in popularity over the years, becoming one of the best-known and most frequently performed choral works in Western music.

Although born in Germany in 1685, Handel settled in London in 1714 where he established his reputation through his compositions of Italian opera. He turned to English oratorio in the 1730s in response to changes in public taste; Messiah was his sixth work in this genre. Most historic accounts estimate that he wrote the Messiah in only 24 days, working around 10 hours each day. With roughly a quarter of a million notes, that suggests Handel would have had to keep a continuous pace of writing of 15 notes per minute!

Only the first part of the work is about the birth of Jesus. The second act covers the death of Jesus and the third is focused on His resurrection. As such, the piece was originally conceived as a work for Easter and its first performance was in the spring during Lent. However, by the 19th century, the Messiah had become a regular feature of the Christmas season, partly because at that time there was very little sacred music written for Christmas compared with some of the fine music written for Easter, such as Bach's St. Matthew Passion.

(Isaiah 40 : 9; Isaiah 60 : 1)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.



It is said that King George II, who was a great fan of Handel, was so moved by the “Hallelujah” chorus during the London premiere that he rose to his feet in appreciation. Naturally, following the monarch’s example, the rest of the audience followed suit, thus starting the tradition which persists to this day.

John Wesley was also at the premiere in London but unfortunately, he was not as impressed as the King. In his Journal he wrote ‘there were some parts that were affecting, but I doubt it has staying power’. Ah well, even Methodists can’t always be right!

(Isaiah 9 : 2)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(Isaiah 9 : 6)

Chorus

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Reflections at the turn of the year

from Chris Jones:

Our current experience of life is that it is not as it should be and we are longing for the day when things are put right. But is this just a reflection of a bigger picture? - of what it's like to live as a Christian in this age. We live in a time when we know there are many things that are not as they should be. Some of them are things that might happen to us - sickness, injury, injustice and ridicule. But we also live with the certain knowledge that there is a day when all of those things will come to an end.

"For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." 1 John 5:4

As the battered, beaten up and bedraggled old year limps away and a new one approaches, we ask our Creator for direction and guidance. And let us believe in the year that is given to us, new, untouched, full of things that have never been, full of work that has never been done, full of tasks, claims, and demands. May we be ready. We have another 365 days to offer love in our hearts towards God and all people. We may not know what or how, but as good old Jeremiah reminds us :-

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future

Jeremiah 29:11:

As I look back upon 2020, I acknowledge I made mistakes, I have wronged, disappointed, been impatient, a little insecure, and occasionally found the world hard to deal with. But my prayer to my family, friends and myself is that God will continue to bear with me as I seek His rebuke, direction, wisdom and peace. Not too much rebuke though, thank you!

And as we look forward to a new year: when all else fails, when there is only darkness, no light, not even a tunnel, these words of Jesus are worth more than anything else in the world:

"And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

Matthew 28:20

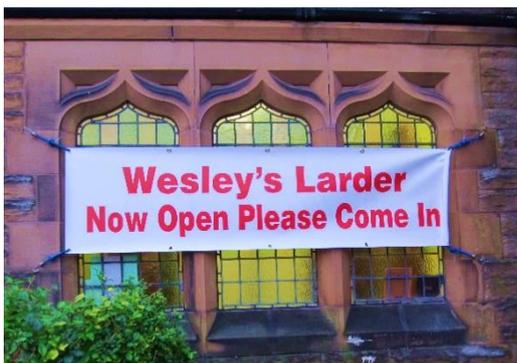
THE VALUE TO SOCIETY OF OUR CHURCHES

From food banks, community cafés, activities for children and young people, counselling services through to traditional activities like coffee mornings, churches across the country are increasingly offering support for the health and wellbeing of their local communities and bringing people together to alleviate loneliness.

Now, for the first time, a recent study commissioned by the National Churches Trust has attempted to quantify the financial value of these services to local communities. This has estimated that the total economic and social value that churches generated in the UK during the 12 months to May 2020 was at least £12.4 billion - roughly equal to the total NHS spending on mental health in England in 2018.

Of this, £2.4bn a year is the cost to local authorities and government which would be needed to replicate the range of services currently being offered by churches, including the market cost of hiring church premises and the replacement cost of volunteers' time at the national living wage. Over and above this basic cost, analysis of the social and welfare benefits of church outreach are estimated to be at least £10bn a year, calculated using an approach consistent with the government's guidance on assessing economic and social value for public investment purposes.

The report, entitled "The House of Good", has highlighted the UK's increasing reliance on volunteer led services and the social benefits generated. Many of the services offered by churches would not otherwise be available if they were to be dependent on government or private sector funding.



This research underlines the many practical expressions of the Christian faith that arise from the exhortation of Jesus, "Love thy neighbour". At Church Road, we also aim to be a church for our local community and as we are able to resume our normal activities, we look forward to finding new ways of living out our faith through serving others.



**Warmest Wishes for
God's Blessing at Christmas**

from

STEPHEN & LINDA HEATH

JUDITH SMITH

THE VESTRY TEAM

Janette Farley, Jonathan Livesey, Ben Derbyshire, Chris Jones & Catherine Irving

**We also send our greetings and good wishes to
all our former ministers and distant friends**

May we all experience the deep truth of Emmanuel, God with us



CHRISTMAS PLANTS.

Christmas plants have been delivered to the house-bound and those having to isolate, as a gift before Christmas from Church Road Methodist Church.

I've had many thank you phone calls and notes in response, which has been lovely. At the risk of naming them and missing someone I will just say it was a pleasure to be able to bring a little bit of Christmas joy to those who received them.

Can I also say a big thank you to the Pastoral Carers who took them out.

Judith Smith - Pastoral Secretary.

When the song of the angels is stilled,

When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman (1899 – 1981)

African American author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

In these challenging times, we cannot entirely foresee when our usual activities can resume at Church Road. We will need to proceed with caution to make sure that we can gradually reopen safely. To keep up to date and to hear about future activities, please look out on our website:

www.churchroadmethodist.org

Remember you are never alone. We are never more than a phone call or email away.

Please keep in touch and keep safe.



Peace be with you.