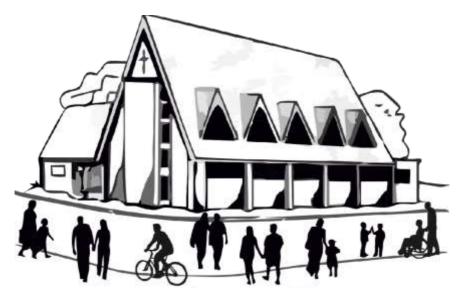
# LYNDON MAGAZINE



# JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2025

# Lyndon Methodist Church



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The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministerial team or the Editor

## **MINISTER'S LETTER**

#### Dear Friends

write this letter just as we are approaching Christmas week, in preparation for you receiving it in January 2025. I hope Christmas 2024 was a peaceful one for you and yours and that the love of the incarnate Christ Child, has held and sustained you in your busyness, missing, merriment, grief, sadness, joy, loneliness, health struggles, family complexities and the many myriad more of life's circumstances.





The approach of a Near Year always invokes in me a sense of contemplation and reflection. This year is no exception as I turn to a familiar image.

I have always been inspired and intrigued by Holman Hunt's painting The Light of the World. I have an old print of the painting on my study wall, which I often reflect on.

Holman Hunt, was the nineteenth century artist (1827–1910) who produced this unmistakable piece of Christian art work. He actually painted two versions of the painting, one in his younger days (pictured left) and one in his later years, as his sight was deteriorating.

Both paintings reveal a night scene set in an orchard where, a figure, wearing a crown of thorns and carrying a lantern knocks on a closed door with rusty hinges and overgrown with ivy. The title of the picture refers to Jesus' words in John 8:12: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'

The text behind the painting is from the book of Revelation 3:20: 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'

What I love most about this piece of artwork is, every single detail matters.

Christ is dressed, not just as the crowned king that Revelation points to, but also as an Old Testament priest bearing the breastplate of the 12 stones representing Israel (the twelve sons of Jacob) (Exodus 28:30). Notice how the closed door has no handle, which means it must only be openable from the inside. See the apples on the floor, a reminder of the story of the Fall. There is a hint of light in the sky that the painter himself said reflected Romans 13:12, 'The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. There's a lot that could be said about this painting but I just wanted to share a few things that struck me this year as I reflected on it:

The first was its realness. It shows a very real man standing in a very real world, but behind the realism there is something of the spiritual: the picture of the human heart without Christ shown here as a closed door overgrown with weeds. And Hunt paints all this in the gloom of night-time, representing the doom and gloom of life circumstances we sometimes find ourselves in. The Christian gospel is about a real Jesus who steps into that gloom with us, to comfort and guide us to a place of peace.

The second thing that struck me was its authority. Somehow, Hunt has managed to create a Christ who conveys both gentleness and humility with great strength. So, while Jesus' hand is knocking on the door there is no sense of hesitancy in his face, only authority. In this depiction of both 'meekness and majesty' Hunt echoes the biblical depiction of a Christ who was and is both servant and king. In this painting I see a Christ who both requires our loyalty, but who also deserves our love.

The final thing I noticed is the opportunity the picture conveys as well as the very real tension. Jesus is knocking on the door but his feet show that he is already on the point of turning away. The sky shows that dawn is near. It's a decisive moment of opportunity and the picture poses a question: will the door of the heart be opened?

The bigger questions the painting seems to ask are: What is our response? Will we open our hearts to the one who is the light of the world? Have we opened the door of our lives to Christ? These are big questions, aren't they?

In 2006, while training to become a Local Preacher, I wrote a meditation based on Hunt's Light of the world. It's somewhat of its time (as in my thinking) but I thought I would share it with you anyway, so, here we go:

Here I stand outside the door. I know you are in there, Lord. If I knock on the door, will you let me in? A small gap below the door radiates your warmth. Tentatively, I try to knock the door, but I can't. I ask myself, why would you let me in? What do I have to offer you? I place the palm of my hand against the door. Immediately, the light below grows brighter. My heart pounds as it feels your immanence (nearness), yet my head says you are distinctly transcendent (far away). Can you be both? I need to reach you. But how?

I feel your omnipresence (presence everywhere) – yes! But why am I locked out? Did I hurt you? Why won't you open the door? I put my hand on the handle and as I do, my whole being fills with warmth. The doorframe glows vividly. But what is this? I don't understand. The door isn't locked. It never was. As I open the door the light dazzles me. My heart is beating faster now. I was never locked out at all. It was I who had locked myself away. Denied myself of your omnipotent (all powerful) perfection. The door was always open. I just had to open it, Allowing your brilliance to flood into my life

I stand in the doorway and your awesome power envelopes me. Come friend, come in. Leave the door open Come sit down with me This room is my heart.



One thing I've learned over the years is that, for me, there has been no one-time decisive moment of allowing Christ into my life. Instead, it's been a daily, conscious, opening of the door of my heart that's been required, in order to allow the Christ child to continually enter in. Which seems ever more needed now given

#### 6 Minister's Letter

the times we are living in: escalating wars, poverty, homelessness, mental health needs, loneliness, isolation, needless violence, to name but a few. The daily opening of my heart is absolutely necessary so that my heart does not become desensitised to the ever-growing injustices going on all around us.

So, friends, as we enter into 2025, may I invite you to join me in the daily practice of flinging open the doors of our hearts, that we might all welcome in, the Justice-seeking Prince of Peace. And whatever the New Year holds for each of us, may we each know, the Light of the world, the one who lights the way for us, is with us always. Immanuel. God with us.

Go Well, Karen



#### Covenants

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of January we shall be holding our annual Covenant service. There is no set time for this, but the majority of Methodist churches hold it on the first Sunday of the New Year. Another popular time to hold it is at the beginning of the Methodist year at the beginning of September.

During the service we are called to consider our relationship with God and rededicate ourselves to his service.

In my working life I read many documents or agreements in which the parties to the agreement covenanted to either do or not do certain things.

In this issue we are going to look at five covenants God made with his people.

#### Noah

Stories of a flood are common among the nations of the Middle East. Although Genesis states that the flood covered the world, it probably only covered the area of the Middle East. At the time the account was written only a very small part of the world would be known. This would mean that the exotic animals included in children's Noah's Ark sets are unlikely to have been found in the Ark.

The reason for the flood was that people were doing such awful things that God decided to destroy them all, apart from Noah and his family who were righteous.

After the waters had subsided and those on the Ark had disembarked, God made a covenant with Noah, his descendants and every living creature that never again would all life be cut off by the waters of a flood. (Genesis 9 v8-11) God also said that the rainbow in the sky would be a sign of the covenant he had established between himself and all life on earth. (Gen 9 v17)



#### Abraham

Abram grew up in Ur of the Chaldeans where he married Sarai. He was faithful to God and when he was 75 years old God spoke to him and called him to leave his country and step out in faith into the unknown and move to a country God would reveal to him. God promised Abram that he would:

- Lead him to the promised land which was Canaan.
- Be the father of a great nation and be blessed.
- Make his name great and that he would be a blessing.

Bless those who blessed Abram and all people on earth would be blessed by Abram. (Gen. 12 v1-3)

In return Abram had to continue being faithful to God and walk in God's ways. He set off with his wife Sarai, nephew Lot and their possessions including flocks. They eventually ended in Canaan.

Abram and Sarai were childless and could not see how the promise of their descendants becoming a great nation would be fulfilled. At this point God appeared to Abram in a vision and promised him a son and said that his offsprings would be as numerous as the stars. (Gen. 15 v1-6)

When Abram was 90 years old and still without a son, God appeared to him again and made a covenant with him that if Abram was faithful to him and was blameless, he would be the father of many nations and that from now on he would be called Abraham. The name Abram means "exalted father" but Abraham means "father of many" (Gen 17 v1-9)

At the same time God told Abraham that his wife Sarai would bear a son and that her name would be Sarah. The name Sarai means "my princess" but Sarah means "princess". Sarah was admitted into the covenant with God and was no longer the sole princess of Abraham but a princess to all and become the mother of nations. (Gen 17 v15-16)

Eventually Abraham and Sarah had a son Isaac, and a long line of descendants followed.

#### Moses

The promises to Abraham were unfolding through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob who had twelve sons. Each of these sons became the head of the twelve tribes of Israel. After an encounter with God, Jacob was told that his name would be Israel. (Gen 32 v24-32)

Due to a famine the extended family of Jacob, of about 70, had to leave Canaan and go down to Egypt where there was food to eat and pasture for their flocks. After the famine was over, they did not return home but settled permanently in Egypt.

After 400 years it is estimated that the original 70 would have increased to between

2-2.5 million. This number of foreigners alarmed the then Pharoah who thought they may become a threat to his authority. In an effort to prevent this he treated them cruelly as slaves.

Moses was called to lead the Children of Israel (or Israelites as they were called) out of slavery in Egypt back into the promised land of Canaan.

After the escape from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea they came to Sinai where God made a covenant with Moses and the people.

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant you will be my treasured possession. You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

(Exodus 19 v 5-6)

Moses called the elders of the people who accepted the covenant. God then revealed to Moses the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20 v 1-17) These were followed by civil and religious laws to govern the nation of Israel. (Exodus 21-30)

#### David



Towards the end of his life David was settled in a fine house of cedar, a sign of luxury, and the nation was at peace with its neighbours.

He was contemplating on the fact that it did not seem right that he was living in luxury, but the Ark of God remained in a tent. (The tabernacle) It was in his mind to build a temple to house the Ark and to be a permanent place of worship.

God said to David that as he had been a man of war and shed blood, he should not build the temple but that after his death his son Solomon, a man of peace, would do so. (1 Chronicles 28 v 3)

Instead, God promised David that he would make him a great name and that he would establish his house for ever. This means that there will always be a kingdom which will be ruled by a descendant of David

#### (2 Samuel 7 v 9 &11)

The genealogy in Matthew 1 v 1 refers to Jesus the Messiah being the son of David, the son of Abraham. The history of the ancestors of Joseph are traced back to Abraham. The words "son of" do not imply an immediate son but a son born of the descendants of that person.

That promise to David was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus who sits on his throne in heaven and who will come again and reign in the world at the end of time.

#### Jesus

The keeping of the covenants God made with his people in the Old Testament was

#### 10 Covenants

dependant on the worshipper making the appropriate offering and the shedding of blood of the animal offered in sacrifice. In this way sins were forgiven.

Jesus announced the New Covenant as he was celebrating the Passover with his disciples. He took the cup of wine, gave thanks and said, *"This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Matt. 26 v 28)

The blood of animals in the old sacrifices could not remove sin, only God could do that. As Christ was God, being one of the parts of the triune Godhead, his outpoured blood on the cross was a once and for all sacrifice for the sins of all who put their faith in him. Unlike the old covenants where the offering of sacrifices was a continual process, the offering made by Jesus was unique and a one off.

#### Methodist Covenant Service

In this service we acknowledge the covenant made with Israel and the promise of new life promised by Christ in the new covenant.

After we have affirmed the gift of salvation through Christ, we make some very serious promises in which we acknowledge that we are not our own but "wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal". What we pledge to do is very heart-searching and involves total commitment to following Christ.

Barry Davis



# Prayer For January & February

As we start a new year, we pray for all peoples, at home and abroad who are suffering from financial difficulties, war, hunger, homelessness, lack of medical facilities, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. We continue to pray particularly for the people of Ukraine, Israel, Palestine and Syria.

For people facing fires, floods, eruptions and earthquakes caused by climate change as well as for those in the emergency services facing danger as they go to help others. Help us to think about what we can do, however small, to reduce the impact of climate change on the wonderful world that has been created for us by God.



Pray for the work of the Leprosy Mission and all those people that they support.

Please pray for those in authority that they will direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and peace, so that we honour one another and seek the common good.

Much closer to home, please pray for those we know who are unwell or have serious or life-threatening illnesses and for the families and friends of the bereaved. Pray for those who are anxiously waiting for test results or operations. May they all feel God's healing touch.

Pray for the doctors, nurses, care workers and volunteers. Give them the skills and strength they need to support those in need.

We pray for those members of our congregation who, for whatever reason, are unable to join us in our acts of worship. May they know that they are still in our hearts and minds.

Pray for our services in January and February and all those that lead them, in particular for our Covenant service on  $5^{th}$  January where we renew our commitment to our faith. We continue to pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly. Help us to all think about the ways in which we can help, too, to bring your love and message to our community.

Amen



Based on J M Barrie's original play with permission from Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children



A musical adventure

Music: George Stiles Lyrics: Anthony Drewe Book: Willis Hall

# April 3rd-6th 2025

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 7:30 pm Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 pm

Dovehouse Theatre, Solihull ticketsource.co.uk/smash

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI mitishows.co.uk



#### **Church Flowers**

Our flower ladies at Lyndon do a great job, throughout the year, and even more so at special occasions.

Every Sunday, they brighten up the church with their beautiful flower displays. Not only that, after the service the flowers are broken down and distributed to members of the congregation to let them know that we are all thinking of them – perhaps when someone is sick, or is celebrating a birthday, or is going through times of trouble, or perhaps to thank them for something that they have done.

The money for the flowers is given by other members of the congregation – perhaps to remember a loved one who has died, or to celebrate an anniversary, or just because they want to.

You can see from the pictures of the work that the flower team have done for Remembrance Sunday and how the church was decorated at Christmas.

Of course, this work doesn't happen all by itself. There is a team of willing volunteers





who will happily arrange the flowers, break them down and distribute them after the service. However. we need somebody who is willing to volunteer and help coordinate this important work. The role has been carried out by Brenda Davis for many vears and she has now decided to hand over the reins. Lorraine Sibson has been doing this, along with her other roles at church for the last few months, but also now

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needs to pass the role over to a new co-ordinator, although not without some training and support to start off with!

Could that person be you? You don't need to be able to do flower arranging, as this is more of an admin role. Annually, you would need to prepare the rota for arrangers and donors which is usually done for the period March to February. In addition, on a weekly basis you would need to contact the donor about two weeks



before the date they have chosen to ask for their donation. You would also need to co-ordinate the flower arranging process for the special festivals - Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. Please speak to Lorraine Sibson for more information.





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Church Flowers 17

#### **Christmas at Lyndon 2024**

Once again, Christmas at Lyndon was an uplifting time, with a variety of services and experiences for all.

It started back in November with the Christmas Fayre which, despite the heavy rain which kept some of the visitors away, was a great success. We were entertained in the church by the Song Squad from Olton Primary School and even Father Christmas paid us a visit, meeting and greeting the children in his purpose-built grotto and giving them presents.



The centre corridor was decorated with Christmas fairy lights decorated by the children from Olton Primary and church members. There were also some in the hall behind some of the stalls. There was a wide variety of stalls, including children's toys, craft items, chocolate, Christmas items and of course, the cake stall. We also had a bottle stall, guess the weight of the cake, and guess the name of the teddy bear. The kitchen did a roaring trade in bacon butties and hot drinks, too!

We managed to raise over £800 which will go into church funds, but more importantly, we attracted many more people into the centre. Thanks must go to Rebecca Marks for organising us all, and to everybody who volunteered to help in



#### some way and make it the success it was!

Our first Sunday in Advent is quite often marked by our traditional Gift Service, where we reflect on those who perhaps don't have as much as we do. This year was slightly different as instead of having a toy service, we were invited to offer gifts of money towards the Lyndon House Minibus Appeal which was our chosen charity this year. To make it more fun, Karen had produced a big picture of a minibus, and members of the congregation were invited to stick £1 or £2 coins on it or drop folding money into a bucket in front! This was the charity also supported by the two collections at the services before Christmas. The total amount raised is not available yet - I'll let you know in the next magazine.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, (unlucky for some, but not in this case!), the lunch club met for their annual Christmas Lunch. There was a choice of melon or soup to start followed by a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Dessert was either Christmas pudding or trifle, and if that wasn't enough, to finish off they had tea or coffee and mince pies and Maltesers. I am reliably informed that Margaret did them proud producing a lovely meal which everyone enjoyed. More perhaps. importantly, was the fellowship that was shared.

During the week before Christmas, a group from Olton Primary came to the church, along with their parents and carers to perform their nativity.



I understand that the church was full, I wish it was like that every week, and everyone enjoyed the service.

On the Saturday before Christmas, ten members from Hatchford Brook Churches Together, including 5 from Lyndon and 2 from RCCG, entertained the shoppers with their carol singing, creating a bit of Christmas cheer!

The crib service on the Sunday before Christmas, was more of a Messy Service with everybody invited to make an angel to take home with them to remind them of the Methodist theme for the year which was based on the carol "It came upon a midnight clear", in which we are encouraged to "hush the noise and hear the angels sing". Before the service started, we watched the Nativity version on Bohemian Rhapsody on YouTube. If you haven't seen it before, I would encourage you to have a look – the link is below:

#### Bohemian Rhapsody - The Christmas Nativity Version

or you can just type into YouTube. In the service we also sang a new carol called



The Camel Shuffle. It's number 230 in Singing the Faith. The first line is 'Riding out across the desert' and tells the story of the wise men travelling to see Jesus. It went down so well that after we'd sung it there was a burst of applause!

In the evening carol service, we followed the usual pattern of telling the Christmas story interspersed with appropriate hymns. The big difference this year was that we used a variety of versions of the Bible including The Word on the Street Bible, The Message and a poem, "Shepherd leave your flock and fold", based on Luke 2 v 8-

20. At the end of the service, whilst Karen read John 1 v 1-14, the light, in the form of glowsticks, was passed round the whole congregation lighting the church in an amazing way. After the service, people congregated in the lounge for refreshments and to continue the fellowship.

There was no Christmas Eve communion service this year at Lyndon, but some of us attended the service at Solihull Methodist Church and were very warmly welcomed.

In addition, as last year, there was no Christmas Day service at Lyndon either. Instead, a joint service, let by Rev Peter Bate, was held at South Yardley Methodist church to celebrate the birth of Christ.





Faith doesn't always take you out of the problem, Faith takes you through the problem. Faith doesn't always take away the pain, Faith gives you the ability to handle the pain. Faith doesn't always take you out of the storm, Faith calms you in the midst of the storm

A men

Thought for the Month - © Christian Warriors of Prayer

Thought for the Month 21

# January & February Quiz

All your answers begin with the letter **B**.... Best of British luck

	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,			
1	Who is the eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of York?			
2	What type of animal is cartoon character Yogi?			
3	The most famous opera by Rossini			
4	From which plastic material were early telephones made?			
5	Audrey Hepburn starred as Holly Golightly in which film?			
6	Which alloy is made mainly of copper with a small amount of tin?			
7	In which county is the town of Reading?			
8	Who is Vic Reeves' fishing companion?			
9	Who are the 'Dynamic Duo"?			
10	Name the Motel in Hitchcock's film Psycho?			
11	In children's T V what were the names of the Flowerpot Men?			
12	What is the national bird symbol of the United States?			
13	Surname of the central family in Upstairs, Downstairs?			
14	What is Rhesus positive an example of?			
15	A sett provides a home for which animal?			
16	Who described his product as 'Bootiful'?			
17	A sapphire is usually what colour?			
18	What BO is a nocturnal bird with a heart shaped white face?			
19	Sofia is the capital city of which European City?			
20	In the Shakespeare play, the ghost of which character haunts Macbeth?			
	Anowara places to Lyppa Tyler or Church Email			

#### Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email by 15th February 2025

# PANTOMIMES WORD SEARCH

0	S	Ρ	Н	В	Y	0	А	D	G	В	Ν
Е	J	D	Ш	Т	L	L	Ρ	-	S	Е	0
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А	S	А	С	D	Т	R	Т	К	С	Ν	G
Т	Е	К	D	К	Ρ	F	ш	А	0	S	Ν
В	R	-	R	В	R	К	R	М	L	Т	I
J	Ν	С	Q	0	С	-	Ρ	-	-	А	Т
V	Ι	L	L	А	-	Ν	А	Ρ	D	L	Т
Е	Т	-	Н	W	W	0	Ν	S	L	К	I
Е	S	0	0	G	R	ш	Н	Т	0	М	Н
R	0	В	Ι	Ν	Н	0	0	D	G	Q	W
А	L	L	Е	R	Е	D	Ν	Ι	С	I	L

ALADDIN	BEANSTALK	BEAST
BEAUTY	CINDERELLA	DAME
DICK	GOLDILOCKS	JACK
MOTHER GOOSE	PETER PAN	ROBIN HOOD
SNOW WHITE	VILLAIN	WHITTINGTON

#### November & December Quiz Answers

1) Desert Island Discs 2) Fred Flintstone 3) New South Wales 4) Chelsea Flower Show 5) London Symphony Orchestra 6) Liz Truss 7) Anne of Cleves 8) Isle of Man 9) Officer Dibble 10) Guy Fawkes 11) Cassius Clay 12) Birmingham Small Arms 13) Westminster Bridge 14) Did not finish 15) House of Commons 16) Asda

There was only 1 entry this month with 100% correct answers. Congratulations to the Hunt family who all got 100% right, and commiserations to Kate Collen who got 2 wrong. Hopefully we'll get more entries in 2025!

# **Notices & Events**

## Ladies Club - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Wednesday 15th and 29th January

Wednesday 12th and 26th February

## Lunch Club - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

# JANUARY

	3rd	CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS				
	10th	Cottage Pie				
	17th	Chicken and Leek pie				
	24th	Mixed grill				
	31st	Fish pie				
	FEBRUARY					
	7th	Beef hotpot				
	14th	Brown Stew				
	21st	CLOSED FOR HALF TERM				
	28th	Cottage Pie				
	Price: starter £1, main £5, pudding £1					
	No need to book - Just come along					
Monthly Prayer and Bible Study - 7.00pm - 8.30pm						
	Wednesday 8th January (not 1st January)					
	Wednesday 5th February					

#### Hobs Moat WI - 7pm to 9pm

Monday 20th January

Monday 17th February

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# Notices & Events

#### **CHARITY SUPPORT**

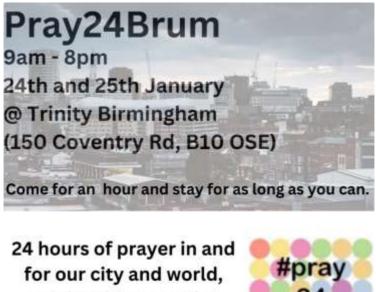
Just a reminder that we are still supporting the food pantry at South Yardley. Please continue to leave your contributions to this great, worthwhile cause in the boxes in the vestibule and on the reception in the centre. The need is greater than ever, and is always much appreciated.

Many thanks

#### LEPROSY SUNDAY

Our Leprosy Sunday this year is on 23rd February 2025 at 10.30 a.m. The service will be taken by a Leprosy Mission Representative. The theme this year is "Revive" and is based on the text from 1 Chronicles 4 v 10 (NIV):-Jabez cried out to the God of Israel "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain!" And God granted his request.

Brenda Davis



celebrating our unity across different Christian traditions



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# Services in January

# Sunday 5th January

- 10:30am Covenant and Communion Service led by Rev Ian Howarth
- 5.00pm Lyndon People

# Sunday 12th January

10:30am Service led by Barry Davis

# Sunday 19th January

10:30am Service led by Gareth Davies

# Sunday 26th January

10:30am Own arrangement service led by Helen Cook

# **Services in February**

# **Sunday 2nd February**

- 10:30am Communion Service led by Rev Karen Webber
- 5.00pm Lyndon People

# Sunday 9th February

10:30am Service led by Barry Davis

# Sunday 16th February

10:30am Service led by Mary Mahachi

# Sunday 23rd February

10.30am Leprosy Sunday

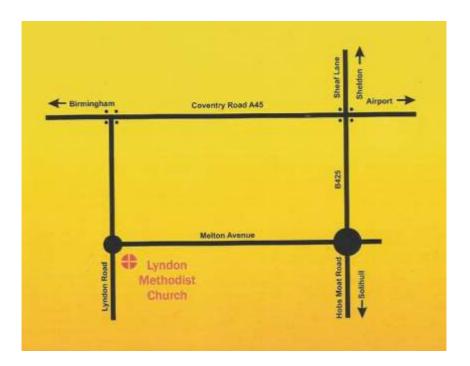
#### Our next issue will be March 2025

I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by

#### 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025

by email to Lynne Tyler or to lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com

or by post to Church – address below



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Charity No. 1150167