

# LYNDON MAGAZINE



**NOVEMBER &  
DECEMBER 2024**



**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

As each November approaches, I notice I often find myself in a season of reflection and gratitude. November is the time we mark Remembrance and the sacrifice made for our freedoms. Each year, before Remembrance day, I like to visit The National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, home to over 400 symbolic memorials. Situated across a 150 acre site amongst 25,000 maturing trees, the memorials pay tribute to those who have served our country, including the Armed Forces, civilian and emergency services, and UK charities.



This year, on the huge circular monument, I found the name of a young man who once lived on our estate, who lost his life in 2019, while serving in Zambia on a conservation exercise. It was an event that shook our community to its core, with each of us asking how could this happen in times of peace. As I stood gazing at his name, etched in stone, I was very mindful that, although we are fortunate enough to live in relative peace, our world is very much not in a state of peace. Wars continue to rage on all over the globe: Gaza, Israel, Ukraine and the list goes on. Hundreds of thousands of people lose their lives daily, and it seems all we can do is watch from a safe distance as it all unfolds on our TV screens.

If we've learned anything from war, it's surely that war is never the answer. Indeed, someone once said, *'If war is the answer, it must be a very stupid question.'* I heard someone else say recently, "The truth is, until all people are free from war and devastation, there can be no lasting peace for anyone." It's an uncomfortable truth I am learning to live with.

So, in all this world of turmoil, you might wonder what I am grateful for. I think at the moment, I'm simply grateful for The Prince of Peace. The one who became just like us so that we could maybe become more like him. The one whose peace could never be found through war and violence, but is rooted in a justice for all, no matter who we are, where we come from or what we believe. The one who challenges us to *'Act Justly, show kindness and walk humbly with our God.'* (Micah 6:8a).

The peace Christ gives us, and will always give us, is not the world's peace, not the so-called peace imposed by the world's winners on the 'losers' they exploit, not the pretentious peace that papers over injustice and exploitation, of which the Roman historian Tacitus said, 'They make a desolation and call it peace'. The peace of Christ is something different: living, active, creatively seeking reconciliation, proclaiming love even to enemies. How does that peace become prayer, and prayer become that peace?

Malcolm Guite captures something of this concept in the prayer I would like to leave you to ponder on. It's an image of prayer patiently picking the locks on the chains of unforgiveness that bind us, and then we, of our own choice, once freed, seeking and assisting, in prayer and in life, the very people, with whom we have not had peace before. Not easy, and only possible, like all forgiveness, if we know in our hearts that we ourselves are completely and utterly forgiven and loved by God.

Peace by Malcolm Guite

Not as the world gives, not the victor's peace,  
Not to be fought for, hard-won, or achieved,  
Just grace and mercy, gratefully received:  
An undeserved and unforeseen release,  
As the cold chains of memory and wrath  
Fall from our hearts before we are aware,  
Their rusty locks all picked by patient prayer,  
Till closed doors open, and we see a path  
Descending from a source we cannot see;  
A path that must be taken, hand in hand,  
Only by those, forgiving and forgiven,  
Who see their saviour in their enemy.  
So reach for me. We'll cross our broken land,  
And make each other bridges back to Heaven.

*Go Well, Karen*

National Memorial Arboretum



## “Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink”

These well-known words are taken from the Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The mariner is in the middle of an ocean surrounded by water, none of which is drinkable as it is salt water.

71% of the earth's surface is covered by water and 96.5% of this is found in the great oceans of the world. The human body consists of between 45% and 75% of water with an average of 60%. Without food and only drinking water a human body can normally survive for 3-10 days but it has been known to survive up to 2-3 months.

Water plays an important role in the survival of both the world and the human body. At the same time, as we have seen recently, an excess of water can be catastrophic for living communities.

With this background in mind, I thought that in this issue we would look at water in the bible.

### **Creation**

Genesis chapter 1 verse 2 tells us that in the beginning the earth was formless, empty, dark, and covered with water, and that the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Here, at the time of creation we learn of the existence of the Holy Spirit. It is so easy to think that the Holy Spirit only came into being at Pentecost. What happened at Pentecost, was that as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit filled the hearts of believers.

Jesus was with God the Father in the beginning and through him all things were made. (John 1 v1). And so, the three persons of the Godhead existed from the beginning.

God separated the water on the surface from the moisture in the atmosphere and called the latter sky and the dry ground below he called earth. (Genesis1 v 6-10)

### **Crossing the Red Sea**

After the tenth plague when the first born of the Egyptians was struck dead, Pharaoh called Moses and told him to take his people and go. They journeyed towards the Red Sea. It is not known at which point they crossed, but it is thought that the most likely place was at the north of the sea in what was known as The Bitter Lakes. This was an area covered with reeds and also known as the Reed Sea.

We do not know how long it took to reach this point, but it is estimated that it would have taken about six weeks. During this time Pharaoh realised that Egypt had lost its slaves and decided to send his army after them and bring them back to Egypt. The Israelites were trapped by the sea with no means of escape and panic set in. The people rebelled against Moses and said that they would have been better off remaining in Egypt. (Exodus 14 v 11-12)

Moses had great faith and said that the Lord would fight for them and deliver them that day. (Exodus 14 v 13-16). By a miracle, the pillar of cloud moved between the Israelites and the Egyptians so that the Egyptians could not see. Moses did as the

lord had commanded him and stretched out his hand over the sea and a strong east wind held the sea back and the Israelites crossed over. By the time the Egyptians caught up with them the wind had changed, and they were drowned. For the full story read Exodus 14.



### **Lack of water**

At the banks of the Red Sea there was fear because of too much water but after crossing the river and continuing their journey to Rephidim, where they set up camp, the people complained to Moses about the lack of water. Moses prayed, and God told him to take his staff and go with some of the elders to the rock at Horeb, also called Sinai. He was to strike the rock with his staff and water would come out for the people to drink, which it did. God again provided for the very basic need of the people as he had done in the provision of manna and quails earlier. (Exodus 17 v1-7). This is not to be confused with a similar incident thirty-seven years later at Kadesh when Moses, having been told by God to speak to the rock, disobeyed God by striking it twice with his rod. This disobedience cost Moses the joy of actually entering into the promised land. (Numbers 20 v 6-13)

Some years ago, while on holiday we took a trip which included visiting a rock faced mountain, without any vegetation, from which water flowed. The phenomenon was that no one had ever found how the water got into the mountain or its source. This made me think that perhaps, at Horeb, the water was already in the mountain and that the miracle was that it began to flow out at the precise moment Moses struck it with his rod.

### **The healing of Naaman**

Naaman was an Aramean (Syrian) who was the commander of the army of the

king of Aram who had been very successful in that post. He had developed a skin disease which is referred to as leprosy but may well have been one of a variety of ailments which affect the skin. If this became known he would become an outcast.

Somehow the maid of Naaman's wife heard about this and suggested to the wife that if Naaman went to the prophet in Israel he would be healed.

This servant was a captive from Israel who had great faith and courage in speaking to her mistress. On hearing this, Naaman set off with gold and clothing as gifts for the healing which Elisha refused to accept. When he reached Elisha, he was surprised that he was treated as an ordinary person and not with the honour he was used to. Elisha sent his servant to tell Naaman to wash in the Jordan seven times and that he would be healed. He was furious and went away. Fortunately, Naaman's servants said to him that if he had been asked to do a great thing, he would have done it. Naaman had to learn a lesson of humility and then he went and did what Elisha said and he was healed. The seven times was symbolic of perfection and wholeness (for the full account read 2 Kings 5)



Although the Jews regarded Jehovah as being their God, this story shows that he is the world's God and the only God. After Abraham had been prepared to offer his son as a sacrifice, God said to him "through your offsprings all the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 22 v18) This culminated in the coming of Jesus. The genealogy in the gospel of Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is through him that the whole earth can be blessed.

## **Baptism**

John the Baptist preached a message of repentance. Those who confessed their sins and repented were baptised in the river Jordan.

Baptism symbolised the washing away of sin and the rising to a new life following God.

By washing in the river Jordan, Naaman was symbolically being washed clean of his disease and rose as a new man. If he had continued with being a leper, he would have ended up as an outcast.

John was surprised when Jesus came to him and requested baptism. Jesus was sinless and had no need to repent of anything. By his baptism Jesus was:

- Showing his support for John.
- Identifying with those who were repentant rather than with the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Confessing sin on behalf of the nation.
- Beginning his public ministry.



## Living water

We have seen from the history of the journey of the Israelites over forty years that there is a continual need for a supply of drinking water. We have also seen that we cannot live long without water.

The gospel of John records the time when Jesus met a Samaritan woman at the well at Sychar. He asked the woman for a drink of water. This was an unusual request as Samaritans and Jews did not associate together. During the discourse which took place Jesus offered her living water. He went on to say “Everyone who drinks this water (that is water from the well) will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4 v 4-14) It is this gift of eternal life which Jesus freely offers to all.

When I was young, we used to sing this hymn:

*We are feeding on the living bread,  
We're drinking at the fountain head;  
And who so drinketh, Jesus said,  
Shall never, never thirst again.  
What never thirst again?  
No never thirst again!  
And who so drinketh, Jesus said,  
Shall never, never thirst again.*

Barry Davis



## Prayer For November and December

Over the last few months, we have seen the escalation of violence, fighting, loss of life and damage to property in places like Israel, Palestine, the Lebanon, Ukraine and Russia. We read so many times of tragedies with families trying to cross the channel in small boats to escape their own countries, looking for a better place to live, but not making the crossing safely. Whilst the rioting in the UK appears to have calmed, there are daily reports on our news feeds of people being killed in our own country due to knife crimes and violence. May we continue to pray for peace in all these situations and others across the world. Please pray that God's influence will be felt by the leaders, guiding them to making the right decisions so that the world becomes a more peaceful place.



We pray for those who are affected by natural disasters and issues of climate change which are causing a detrimental effect on their livelihoods and put many lives at risk. May we strive to do what we can to limit our own negative impact on the world.

We pray for members of our own congregation who are sick or struggling to leave home and those who are anxiously waiting for tests, test results or operations. We also pray for those that have recently been bereaved. May they all feel our love reach out to them and feel God's healing and comforting hand upon them, bringing them peace.

We pray for the success of the Christmas Fayre and that it has a positive impact on the people in our local community.

As we go through the stationing process, we pray God will guide those involved in the submission of the church's needs and wants and those who are part of the final decision making team both for the congregation at Lyndon and for Rev Karen Webber and Helen Cook as they seek new challenges.

We also pray for our services in November and December and all those that lead them that we can all be truly uplifted and feel God's presence in all that we do. We pray for all those volunteers that help our services to run smoothly, so that we can bring God's love and message to our community.

Amen

## On the First Day of Christmas

We all know the popular Christmas song, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', with its 'partridge in a pear tree' and 'Five gold rings!', but which ones are the twelve days of Christmas? They don't match up with our 24-day advent calendars, so where do they come from? Are they just made up for the song?

The answer is no! The original twelve days of Christmas were a series of religious feast days celebrated as part of the Roman Catholic religion in medieval and Tudor England. Starting on Christmas Day, there were 12 days of religious celebrations, feasting and entertainments that lasted all the way up to 5 January.

In this article I thought it would be interesting to look at some of the traditions, and how the Tudors celebrated Christmas.

### 24<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Eve

Today, many people enjoy the run up to Christmas and celebrate by indulging in chocolate advent calendars, but in Tudor times people fasted for four weeks leading up to it. This meant not eating meat, cheese or eggs, even up to Christmas Eve, making the thought of the Christmas Day celebration even more exciting!

Everyone, even poorer people stopped working for 12 days starting from Christmas Day, so on the day before they decorated their homes, including items that would normally be used for work, eg spinning wheels so that they wouldn't be able to use them for 12 days, with whatever greenery they could find growing, including holly, ivy and mistletoe, items that we still use to decorate our houses today. The green plants were thought to symbolise eternal life, as most of the other plants had died during the winter. It was, however, considered to bring good luck to the household for the plants to be brought into the house on Christmas Eve, but not before this date as that was said to lead to bad luck!



### 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day

Christmas Day, the first day of the celebrations, would have begun with Midnight Mass. Church bells would ring, candles would be lit, and everyone would go to church in their best clothes to begin the celebrations.

After going to church again in the morning, people would sit down to their Christmas feast. In the richer households the menu would include a starter of plum porridge (a thick meat broth made with plums, spices, dried fruits and wine), followed by roast meats such as boar, venison and birds. Even in the poorer households, where meat was a luxury that few could afford, they would often have goose as a festive treat.

Alongside the meat, both rich and poor families would eat pies, stuffing and puddings. Records show that even Brussel sprouts were eaten in 1538. They would also have enjoyed mince pies and gingerbread.

## 26<sup>th</sup> December – The Feast of St Stephen

The second day of the Tudor Christmas celebrations in Tudor England was the Feast of St Stephen, who was the first Christian martyr who was known for helping the poor. We have all sung the carol, “Good King Wenceslas” which refers to King Wenceslas going out on the feast of Stephen which was a snowy night with food and to collect firewood to give to a poor man. Although the carol was written in Victorian times, many years after the Tudors lived, the idea was still the same. The Feast of St Stephen was a day of charity and giving to those in need. The Alms (charity) boxes in churches were opened and the contents shared to the poor people.

Stoning of St. Stephen, relief on the baptismal font in the church of Saint Matthew in Stitar, Croatia



## 27<sup>th</sup> December – The Feast of St John

The third day of Christmas was classed as the Feast of St John, celebrated because he was supposed to have drunk some poisoned wine, but was miraculously unharmed. This gave the Tudors an ideal opportunity to drink lots of wine or, if they couldn't afford it as it had to be imported from Europe and was very expensive, ale which was much cheaper, or something called 'Lamb's Wool' which was made from beer mixed with spices and apples.

Wassailing was an important Tudor Christmas tradition, where everybody in the household, starting with the most important, would drink from a large wooden bowl filled with hot ale or cider, sugar, spices and apples with a crust of bread at the bottom. Each person would make the toast of by shouting “Wassail” (meaning for your health) before having a drink and then passing the bowl on to the next person.

## 28<sup>th</sup> December – Childermas

Childermas, or the Feast of the Holy Innocents was celebrated on the fourth day of Christmas. This day was to remember the killing of the innocent babies by King Herod as he tried to get rid of the baby Jesus. Tudor children were often whipped in the morning to remind them of the suffering, but then later in the day they were allowed to be in charge rather than their parents.

In one popular tradition, boys would shut their schoolteachers out of schools not letting them in until they promised to give out fewer punishments in future.

## 31<sup>st</sup> December – New Year's Eve

Traditionally this was a day spent playing games, usually much livelier than the games of cards and dice which were played all year round by the wealthy. Some

of the games are still played today including Blind Man's Buff and Hide and Seek.

For working men, this was the only day that they were allowed to play games such as football, tennis, cards and dice so many indulged in the opportunity. Another sport that was allowed was archery, ensuring that Henry VIII had a ready supply of good archers for his army!

### **1<sup>st</sup> January – New Year's Day**

In Tudor England, it was New Year's Day, the eighth day of Christmas, that gifts were given, and not Christmas Day as it is now. Evidence suggests that it was the upper and middle class people who gave gifts, usually to their lord and those in court were expected to present gifts to the King and Queen which would be displayed for all to see, although sometimes the King and Queen were known to reciprocate.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January – Twelfth Night**



The twelfth day of Christmas was known as Twelfth Night, and it marked the night before the Feast of Epiphany which celebrates the Wise Men going to Bethlehem to visit Baby Jesus. Although this night signalled the end of Christmas, it was usually celebrated with great feasts, games and plays. In the Tudor Court there were masques (a kind of play) and huge banquets.

Included in the feasts was a Twelfth Night cake. It was a huge fruit cake, tasting a bit like a giant brioche, and was baked with a coin or dried bean hidden in the mixture on each half of the cake. Men and women took slices from opposite sides of the cake, and whoever found the bean or coin in their piece became the king or queen of the bean. It was their job to host the evening's entertainment, of singing, dancing and games.

### **6<sup>th</sup> January - Epiphany**

On this final feast day of the Christmas season, after going to church, people celebrated by eating roast lamb and Epiphany tart, a kind of jam tart made in the shape of a star.

Although people would leave their decorations up until Candlemas, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, the twelve days of Christmas would be over for another year.

*Information taken from an English Heritage article.*

## Embracing Autumn Reflection

As the leaves turn to vibrant hues of red, orange, and yellow, autumn heralds a time of reflection and appreciation for the beauty of God's creation. For Methodists and many others, this season offers a unique opportunity to deepen one's faith through the simple act of walking in nature.

Taking a stroll through the crisp autumn air, surrounded by the masterpiece of changing foliage, can be a profound spiritual practice. It is an act that allows one to connect with God through the environment, to see His hand in the intricate details of the natural world. The Methodist tradition, with its emphasis on personal experience and the sanctity of creation, encourages such communion with nature.

Journalling during these walks can be a meditative process, a way to capture thoughts and revelations that arise when one is immersed in the tranquillity of God's artwork. It serves as a tangible reminder of the moments when one feels closest to the divine, fostering a deeper understanding of one's own faith journey.

Autumn's transformation is a metaphor for the spiritual changes that individuals undergo. Just as the leaves shed their green for new colours, so too can people shed old habits and thoughts, revealing the vibrant potential within. This season, let the Methodist ethos of personal experience and the reverence for God's creation guide you to a closer relationship with the divine.

By embracing the practice of walking, reflecting, and journalling, you can turn each step into a prayer, each thought into a hymn, and each moment into a step closer to God.

Autumn is a season that resonates deeply with the themes of change, maturity, and harvest, which are often reflected in the hymns sung during this time. In the Methodist tradition, hymns play a significant role in worship and personal reflection, offering a way to express faith and devotion through song. An example is "Autumn Days" (StF 121) by Estelle White, which celebrates the beauty of creation with vivid imagery of the jewelled grass and the bounty of the harvest.

Hymns not only reflect the changing seasons but also encourage believers to contemplate the deeper spiritual lessons that can be learned from the rhythms of nature. They are often used in Methodist services during the autumn months to inspire reflection on God's creation and our place within it.

Singing these hymns can be a meaningful addition to the practice of walking in nature and journalling about the experience. They can provide a soundtrack for your reflections, deepening your connection to God as you meditate on the lyrics and their relevance to the world around you.

As you embrace the autumn season, consider incorporating hymns into your personal devotions or church services. They can enhance your appreciation of the season and its Creator, enriching your faith journey from a Methodist perspective.

The history of Methodist hymns is a rich tapestry that intertwines with the seasons, including autumn, and reflects the denomination's deep commitment to the expression of faith through song. These hymns are not just melodies and words; they are the spiritual narratives that have carried the faith of generations, encapsulating theology, experience, and hope.



One of the hymns, "For the Beauty of the Earth," was penned by Follitt S. Pierpoint in 1864. Pierpoint was inspired by the beauty of the countryside near his home in Bath, England. This hymn, which expresses gratitude for the natural world, has become a staple in Methodist hymnals and is often sung during the harvest season, when the splendour of autumn is fully revealed.

"We Plough the Fields and Scatter" is based on a poem by Matthias Claudius, written in 1782, and was set to music by Johann A. P. Schulz. It was translated into English by Jane Montgomery Campbell in 1861. This hymn is traditionally associated with the Harvest Festival, a time when Methodists join in giving thanks for the bounty of the land, a sentiment that resonates with the harvest themes of autumn.

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" was written by Henry Alford in 1844. Alford, an Anglican priest, was a prolific poet and theologian. His hymn invites the faithful to give thanks for the harvest and to contemplate the spiritual harvest of souls at the end of the age. It is a hymn that captures the essence of Methodist eschatology and the hope for divine providence.

These hymns have been sung in chapels and churches, in fields and homes, carrying the message of faith, gratitude, and reflection. They are more than just songs; they are a means of teaching, a form of prayer, and a celebration of the divine hand in the natural world. As Methodists sing these hymns, they join a chorus that spans centuries, a shared voice of a tradition that values the act of singing one's faith as a profound act of worship.

The history of these hymns is a testament to the enduring power of music in the Methodist faith. It is a history that speaks to the heart of what it means to be a part of this community of believers: to find God in all things, to give thanks for the beauty of creation, and to join together in song as an expression of shared belief and hope. As autumn unfolds its tapestry of colour, these hymns provide a soundtrack for reflection and gratitude, echoing the Methodist conviction that in every leaf, in every note, there is the possibility of encountering the sacred.

By engaging with these hymns, Methodists and Christians of other denominations can find spiritual depth and continuity in their worship, marking the passage of time not just by the calendar, but by the rhythm of their faith. Whether through the reflective tones of Lent or the exuberant alleluias of Easter, hymns serve as a soundtrack to the spiritual journey, enriching the worship experience and deepening the connection to the divine.



## Isaac Watts: The Godfather of English Hymnody

This year we celebrate the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Isaac Watts, born on July 17, 1674, in Southampton, England. His is a name that resonates through the corridors of Christian hymnody and religious poetry. His life, a testament to the power of faith and the beauty of verse, has left an indelible mark on the world of worship music and beyond.

Watts displayed a propensity for rhyme from an early age. He was once asked why he had his eyes open during prayers, to which he responded:

A little mouse for want of stairs  
ran up a rope to say its prayers.

He received corporal punishment for this, to which he cried:

O father, father, pity take  
And I will no more verses make.

Watts's early life was steeped in education and religion. His father, a committed religious nonconformist, instilled in him the values that would shape his future works. Despite facing the challenges of nonconformity, which included being barred from attending universities like Oxford or Cambridge, Watts pursued his passion for learning at the Dissenting Academy at Stoke Newington.

His refusal to conform to the established Church of England did not hinder his intellectual or spiritual growth. Instead, it propelled him to become a prolific hymn writer, credited with composing around 750 hymns, many of which are still sung today. His hymns, such as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Joy to the World," and "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past," are not just songs but reflections of a deep theological understanding and a profound sense of devotion.

Watts's influence extended beyond hymn writing. He was a theologian and logician, contributing significantly to religious and educational discourse. His works in geography, astronomy, grammar, and philosophy were widely used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, showcasing his versatility and commitment to education.

The legacy of Isaac Watts is not merely in the volume of his work but in its enduring quality. His ability to articulate the human experience of faith, to give voice to worship, and to educate through poetry and song has earned him the title of the "Godfather of English Hymnody." His hymns have transcended time, language barriers, and denominational lines, becoming a unifying force in Christian worship.

Watts's life journey, from his humble beginnings to becoming a pastor and an influential figure in London's religious scene, is a story of resilience and dedication. His long tenure at the Abney household, where he found both patronage and a platform for his work, is a testament to the impact one individual can have when supported by a community that shares their vision.

The life of Isaac Watts was reflected on during the Songs of Praise episode on Faith in Poetry which was broadcast on 29<sup>th</sup> September this year. If you would like to watch the programme it is still available to watch on I-Player.

The programme includes the hymn "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun" which presenter Aled Jones describes as "containing rhyming couplets, full of rhythm,



language and story telling that makes for a stirring song”.

This part of the programme was filmed in Abney Park, Stoke Newington which is where Isaac Watts lived for many years of his life, going there in 1712 when he was suffering from ill health and remaining there, living with Sir Thomas Abney and his family at the manor house until his death in 1748.

Aled Jones interviewed Dr Daniel Johnson, who has a PhD in History from the University of Leicester, where his research concentrated on Isaac Watts and who is considered to be one of the country's leading



experts on Isaac Watts. He suggests that the descriptive, vivid language that was used by Isaac Watts in his hymns is concise enough to allow the singer to bring their own faith to the table as they are singing. He says that Watts saw passion in a spiritual sense, with that passion coming out in the inner life of the Christian and wanted to write hymns that cultivated that passion so that the singer can express and share these feelings in the way that they sung the hymns and turn their feelings towards God.

Perhaps his most famous hymn is the Easter classic “When I survey the wondrous cross”. It is believed that Charles Wesley, who was also a prolific hymn writer, once said that he would have given up all his hymns if he could have written just that one. Dr Johnson notes that in this hymn Isaac Watts puts the singer into the biblical narrative as though the singer was there as part of the crowds as the action was taking place – ‘When I survey the wondrous cross’, but then brings forth their own life and experiences, hopes, aspirations and needs – ‘my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride’. He doesn’t allow you to be a passive worshipper, instead the last two lines of hymn asks you to reflect how you are going to respond to the cross – ‘demands my soul, my life, my all’. Powerful words indeed.

#### *References:*

- *Isaac Watts's life and contributions to hymnody and theology can be explored in detail on Wikipedia.*
- *Songs of Praise broadcast 29/9/24.*

# Beacon Church Pheasey 60th Birthday

## Community Bonfire Bash

Saturday 9 November 2024 - 4-8pm

Bonfire

Bouncy Castles

Food Vans

Crafts

DJ

Games

All Free and  
All Welcome

[www.beaconchurchpheasey.com](http://www.beaconchurchpheasey.com)



Beacon Church  
PHEASEY AND PARK FARM

## Costing us the earth?

In view of recent extreme weather events, I guess that there are not many global-warming sceptics around these days. If one takes 'the long view', the impact of mankind on our planetary home is well demonstrated by research undertaken by the British Antarctic Survey.

Ice cores are cylinders of ice drilled out of an ice sheet or glacier. Most ice core records come from Antarctica and Greenland, and the oldest continuous records to date extend back 123,000 years in Greenland and 800,000 years in Antarctica.

Ice cores contain information about past temperature, and about many other aspects of the environment. Crucially, the ice encloses small bubbles of air that contain a sample of the atmosphere – from these it is possible to measure directly the past concentration of atmospheric gases, including the major greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

Antarctic ice cores show that the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> was stable over the last millennium until the early 19th century. It then started to rise, and its concentration is now nearly 50% higher than before the industrial revolution. Measurements from older ice cores confirm that both the magnitude and rate of the recent increase are almost certainly unprecedented over the last 800,000 years.

The fastest natural increase measured in older ice cores is around 15 parts per million over about 200 years. Now, atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> is rising 15ppm every 6 years.

Methane, another important greenhouse gas, also shows an unprecedented increase in concentration over the last two centuries, to much more than double its pre-industrial level.

During the last glacial period, Greenland experienced a sequence of very fast warmings. The temperature increased by more than 10°C within a few decades. Other records show that major changes in atmospheric circulation and climate were experienced all around the northern hemisphere. At least regionally, the climate is capable of extraordinary changes within a human lifetime.

Ice cores provide direct information about how greenhouse gas concentrations have changed in the past and provide evidence that the climate can change abruptly under some circumstances. However, they do not provide a direct analogue for the future, because the ice core era (800,000 years) contains no periods with concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> comparable to those of the next century.

This LMC Mag item is based on a British Antarctic Survey publication, grossly condensed with apologies by Roger Hancock. (Here is the link to the full article)

<https://www.bas.ac.uk/data/our-data/publication/ice-cores-and-climate-change/>







## **HOTLINE TO HEAVEN**

**Prayer is a hotline to heaven;  
You'll never be placed in a queue.  
You're through to the throne room,  
The great heart of God.  
With love, he will listen to you.**

**On call every hour, every minute,  
No second will he let pass by.  
He hears if you cry out or whisper his name,  
He hears a mere breath or a sigh.**

**In daylight or darkness, he's there still,  
And if you have no words at all,  
That's when he reads every beat of your heart,  
And gets ready to answer your call.**

**So leave all your worries there with him;  
He works out all things for the best.  
He'll turn all your tears into blessings one day,  
So wait and stay calm - be at rest.**

*© Marian Cleworth  
Published in The People's Friend*



# WELSH CHOIR ON TOUR

CŴR MEIBION TALGARTH MALE CHOIR



Presenting a varied programme of Choral Classics, Operatic choruses, Traditional Welsh Hymns, Folk and Pop classics and Songs from Stage Musicals.

Selly Oak Methodist Church  
Langleys Road, B29 6HT

7.30PM FRIDAY NOVEMBER 22nd 2024

Tickets at the door £15 (Cash or Card)  
All Proceeds to **Birmingham Hospice**

## Circuit News

As one of the representatives for Lyndon, I attended the Circuit Meeting in September. This Meeting was much shorter than the Spring Meeting and was held at Carrs Lane Church in Birmingham City Centre one evening. For me personally, it was a convenient venue and West Midlands Buses did me proud as the bus stopped right outside the Church!



The Meeting started off with a time of refreshments and general socialising with the main Meeting commencing at 7.30 p.m. Basically, the Meeting was just to take forward any matters from the Meeting held in March and also to approve certain reports that had been prepared but nevertheless it is interesting to glean what is going on within the Circuit and the Magazine is, of course, an opportunity to share some of the details with you.

The Circuit as a whole is trying to improve communication, and, in this connection, a new website is going to go live within the next few weeks and it is hoped that this will be useful and helpful to all. It is also hoped that we can communicate and work together as a combined enterprise as opposed to working as individual Churches on some things. It was also apparent that if a Church is experiencing issues or wants independent advice then help and assistance is available at Circuit level.

At the March Meeting, it was reported that there were not many Circuit Stewards

but since then several new ones have been appointed which is obviously very positive but there are still various Circuit Appointments that are vacant and sometimes are proving difficult to fill. There were a couple of Local Preachers who had now been appointed to preach and were now undergoing their 'on trial' period.

Outreach work within the Circuit continues in various forms but it does include work being done at Lozells Methodist Church, working with Citizens U.K. and the work being undertaken with the Stechford Pioneer Project to mention just some.

The Circuit is now looking towards filling Ministerial Roles from September 2025. There is a set process in place which is lengthy. As from September 2025 there will be seven Churches within the Circuit that will have vacant positions including Lyndon. It has been decided to try and get two new Ministers to cover them and work is in hand regarding this, but no further information will be forthcoming yet. Basically, the first selection takes place in November followed by another one in January. It must be remembered that generally there is a shortage of Methodist Ministers,

The Church at the Maypole has closed, and we were informed that it had now been sold. The amount it had been sold for had exceeded what had been expected. With regard to Saltley Methodist Church, the actual Church has closed, and future worship will be carried out in a more modern building at the back of the premises. With regard to the Manses within the Circuit, the Property Steward advised that at present there were several that were being rented out which could be brought back into use when new Ministers are appointed.

The Meeting concluded before 9.00 p.m. and the next Meeting is due to take place in March 2025.

*Janet Rudge*

Editor's note:

Further to this meeting, the profiles for two new Ministers for the Circuit were prepared for submission and it was envisaged that one of the prospective new Ministers would cover South Yardley, Lyndon and Saltley. However, due to the profile for the other Churches that needed a Minister not being approved at the final stage by the Connexional Scrutiny Group, both Profiles had to be altered so that the new proposal is that the new Minister for Lyndon will also have Pastoral Care for an additional three Churches namely South Yardley, Saltley and Castle Bromwich. The Connexional Scrutiny Group have approved the alterations to the Profiles. We now await news on the next part of the process.



**The Cat Lane<sup>+</sup>  
Players**

**Present**

# **Peter Pan**

(a pantomime!)

Written by Stephen and Rachel Humphreys

Directed by Mike Rawson

**Thursday 5th December 7:30pm**

**Friday 6th December 7:30pm**

**Saturday 7th December 2:30pm**

**and 7:30pm**

Bill signed  
performance!

**Adults: £6**

**Concessions: £4.50**

**Family: £20**



**This way to  
Neverland!**

**Box Office: 0121 730 1468**

**All performances at  
Castle Bromwich Methodist  
Church, B34 6PU**





# Handel's *MESSIAH*

**Bring and Sing**

**Saturday 30th  
November**

*With singers from Coventry Cathedral Chorus and  
Shirley Methodist Church Choir*

*Conductor: Julie Barnes*

*Organist: Graham Lowe*

*Registration: 2-30pm*

*Rehearsal: 3-00pm to 5-00pm*

*Performance: 7-00pm*

*Cost: £5 for singers and audience*

*To express your interest in singing please send your name  
and part to [MessiahatShirley@proton.me](mailto:MessiahatShirley@proton.me)*

*Shirley Methodist Church, 257 Stratford Rd, Shirley, Solihull  
B90 3AL*

## Harvest at Lyndon 2024

This year's harvest festival was a very special celebration as it also included the annual enrolment service for the boys, girls and staff of our BB and GB companies.

As usual, the church was beautifully decorated – thanks to all those who helped with the displays of flowers and produce. There were loads of wonderful sunflowers on display – much better than I had managed to grow in my garden from the seed from a previous church service, although at least mine flowered!

The non-perishable harvest gifts were given to the food bank at South Yardley



Methodist Church again this year and were gratefully received, with the perishable items going to Lyndon House. The flowers looked amazing and were given to church members who were unable to be at the service as well as others that were there, so that their beauty could be appreciated for as long as possible.

The service considered the wonder of creation, and we heard the story of the creation read from the Open the Book Bible. Members of the BB and GB then shared the work they had been doing in Brigade, creating a collage representing the different things that God created, earth, sky, sun, moon, sea, animals etc. You can see a picture of their work with this article.

The enrolment part of the service involved members of the Boy's Brigade and Girl's Brigade companies, both young people and staff committing themselves to the Brigades and the church, as well as members of the congregation promising and committing to support them.



The prayers of intercession and the Lord's Prayer were led by the young people, with the Lord's Prayer being done in sign language, too.

A truly uplifting service.



Harvest at Lyndon 2024 27



## Lyndon's Christmas Fayre - We Need Your Help!

Our Christmas Fayre this year will be on Saturday 23rd November between 10am and 1pm but we need your help to put it all together.

Could you help on Friday 22nd November to set up tables, run a stall on the day itself or help to set down after the event?

There will be some sign-up sheets in the vestibule, but you can also e-mail Rebecca Markson [rebeccamarks1508@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccamarks1508@gmail.com) or send her a message on 07952 051823 for more information.

We would also like to ask for donations from week commencing 28th October leading up to the event as follows:

- An item for our children's stall eg, a second hand toy in good condition (no books).
- A handcrafted item, eg knitted cardigan, a crocheted hat
- Chocolate for the GB chocolate stall.
- An item for the Christmas stall eg, a roll of gift wrap, a bag of bows, home made
- Christmas cards.
- A bottle for the BB bottle stall eg, pop, tomato sauce, bubble bath (no alcohol, please)
- Cakes on Saturday 23rd

Finally, we'd love to see you all there. Don't forget, entry is free and there is parking at the side of the building with wheelchair access. There will be a variety of stalls and things for you to enjoy, as well as a visit from the man himself! Ho! Ho! Ho!

Thank you so much!

### Going Green with Christmas Cards

As we did last year, we will not be putting out tables for Christmas Cards.

Instead, we encourage you once again to send in a message to go on a Church Christmas Card which will be displayed for all to see in the vestibule. Money saved on buying cards and postage could be donated to church or to your favourite charity. Send your message to Lynne Tyler or church email or put it in the box at the rear of the church. Deadline Sunday 24th November.



# LYNDON METHODIST CHRISTMAS FAYRE

**Come along for cakes,  
games and to see Santa!**

If you want to find out more please email  
[rebeccamarks1508@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccamarks1508@gmail.com).

Stalls cost £5, contact [captainsarah@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:captainsarah@blueyonder.co.uk) for  
more details.

**23rd November 2024 from 10am - 1pm**

Lyndon Methodist Church, Melton Ave,  
Solihull B92 7QX

# November & December Quiz

How well do you know your acronyms? - Try these....

1	What D I D is the longest running radio programme?	
2	Which F F is married to Wilma?	
3	Which State is abbreviated to N S W?	
4	What C F S is held annually in London (165.000 visitors)?	
5	What is the L S O?	
6	Which L T remained in Office for just 49 days?	
7	A O C was the fourth wife of Henry VIII	
8	What is known as I O M?	
9	Which O D is the policeman who patrols Top Cats Patch?	
10	Which G F entered Parliament in 1605 and was executed in 1606?	
11	Which C C became M A in 1964?	
12	Based in Small Heath, what does B S A stand for?	
13	Which W B is the nearest bridge to the Houses of Parliament?	
14	In athletics what does D N F mean after an athlete's name?	
15	The H O C is the only place the reigning Monarch cannot enter?	
16	Associated Dairies was the original name of which U K Supermarket?	

**Answers please to Lynne Tyler or Church Email  
by 15th December 2024**

## THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

C	S	D	H	O	G	S	N	B	S	S	L
Q	O	N	A	P	Q	K	Q	E	D	R	O
E	T	R	E	N	W	P	V	G	R	E	R
V	F	K	M	H	C	O	A	P	U	P	D
L	C	H	R	I	D	E	A	J	M	I	S
E	N	L	T	E	L	R	R	P	M	P	U
W	J	R	S	E	T	K	X	S	E	Y	A
T	E	E	C	R	J	V	M	C	R	C	T
E	E	A	I	R	A	E	P	A	S	E	O
G	R	D	S	W	A	N	S	A	I	X	I
O	G	G	N	I	L	L	A	C	O	D	N
E	L	G	M	V	P	B	R	I	N	G	S

CALLING

DANCERS

DOVES

DRUMMERS

GEESE

HENS

LORDS

MILKMAIDS

PARTRIDGE

PEAR

PIPERS

RINGS

SWANS

TREE

TWELVE

### September & October Quiz Answers

1) Bangkok/A sock 2) Jeeves/Thieves 3) Gorilla/Aston Villa 4) Dennis the Menace/Tennis 5) It sank/Thomas the tank 6) Psalms/ Miss Brahms 7) Westward Ho!/ Columbo 8) The Haywain/River Seine 9) Repair Shop/Go 'Snap, Crackle and Pop' 10) Postman Pat/Mount Ararat 11) Albert Hall/Thunderball 12) Fiona Bruce/Deuce 13) Mr Tickle/Bicycle 14) Alan Bates/United States

There were 2 entries this month with 100% correct answers. Congratulations to Elaine and Jenny and the Hunt family who all got 100% right.

## Notices & Events

### **Ladies Club** - 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Wednesday 13th and 27th November

Wednesday 11th December

### **Lunch Club** - Fridays 12pm to 1pm

#### NOVEMBER

1st            CLOSED - HALF TERM

8th            Baked potatoes with various fillings

15th          Spaghetti Bolognese

22nd          Sausage and Mash

29th          Chilli and Rice

#### DECEMBER

6th            Cheese and Potato Pie

13th          Christmas Lunch (lunch club members only)

20th          CLOSED

27th          CLOSED

Price: starter £1, main £5, pudding £1

No need to book - Just come along

### **Monthly Prayer and Bible Study** - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

Wednesday 6th November

Wednesday 4th December

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

Monday 18th November

Monday 16th December



# Notices & Events

## **CHRISTMAS FLOWERS**

The flower ladies will be decorating the Church for the Christmas services on Friday 20th December. If anyone would like to help in anyway, please contact Lorraine directly. If you have any holly or ivy that we could use, please bring it to the church on the morning of 20th December between 9.30am and 10.00am.

If you would like to donate towards the cost of the flowers, however small, it would be very much appreciated. Please hand your donation to one of the Stewards or Lorraine.

*Thank you, Lorraine*

## **CHARITY SUPPORT THIS CHRISTMAS**

This year we have decided to do something different by supporting the people at Lyndon House whose main focus this year is on raising money for a new Minibus. Instead of the traditional toy service, this year we will be holding a gift service on 1st December and the gifts from this service and the carol service on 22nd December will be given to Lyndon House for their appeal.

## **NEW FLOWER CO-ORDINATOR REQUIRED**

After many years of service Brenda Davis has decided to retire from the role of flower co-ordinator. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Brenda for all the work she has done over the years but now we need somebody who is willing to take over the mantle. Lorraine Sibson has stepped in for the interim but we need to find a more permanent replacement. 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

## **CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING AT TESCO**

As in previous years we will be joining with people from the Hatchford Brook Churches Together to sing carols at Tesco, Sheldon for an hour one Saturday morning in December, either 14th or 21st. Currently we are trying to make the final arrangements. If you would like to support this outreach to our local community, please speak to Roger Hancock. Final details will be announced when they are available nearer the time.

# Services in November

## Sunday 3rd November

10:30am      Communion Service led by Rev Karen Webber

5.00pm      Lyndon People

## Sunday 10th November

10:30am      Remembrance and Parade Service led by  
Rev Peter Bates

## Sunday 17th November

10:30am      Service led by Barry Davis

## Sunday 24th November

10:30am      Own arrangement service led by Jo Hancock

## Services in December

### Sunday 1st December

10:30am Communion and Gift Service led by Rev Karen Webber

5.00pm Lyndon People

### Sunday 8th December

10:30am Service led by Barry Davis

### Sunday 15th December

10:30am Service led by a minister from the Circuit

### Sunday 22nd December

10.30am Crib Service led by Lynne Tyler

6.00pm Carol Service led by Rev Karen Webber

### Wednesday 25th December

11.00am Joint Christmas Morning Service with congregation at South Yardley Methodist Church, B25 8LW

### Sunday 29th December

10.30am Own arrangement service led by Claire Frew

*Our next issue will be January 2025*

*I am looking forward to receiving your contributions by*

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

*by email to Lynne Tyler or to [lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com](mailto:lyndonmethodist@btconnect.com)*

*or by post to Church – address below*



Lyndon Methodist Church  
Melton Avenue  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B92 7QX

<https://lyndonmethodist.org.uk>

Charity No. 1150167