

# Pivot



The Magazine of

Broadstone Methodist Church



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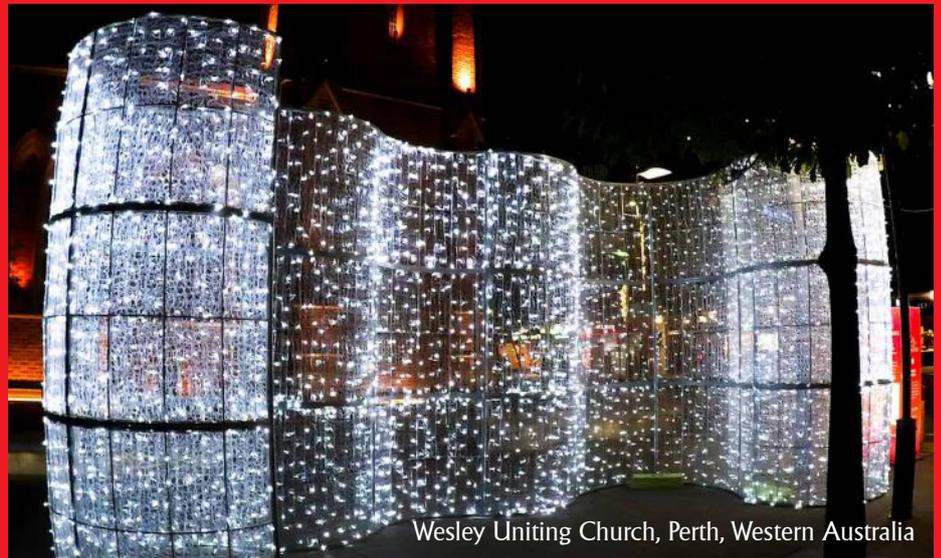
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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to this 2022 Christmas edition of Pivot. As always, in our Christmas edition, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, this time with articles about Christmas in other parts of the world, about Advent and Thanksgiving, as well as information about our own Christmas events. We also have some heart-warming contributions about our young people; Toby's move to a new life in Shropshire, and the Broadstone Scouts wonderful poppy display for Remembrance Day.

But Rev Karen also reminds us of the many economic challenges that individuals are facing and will face in 2023 and beyond in the UK. Conflict, injustices and suffering are reported daily from around the globe, and the impact of climate change is becoming increasingly apparent. How do we reconcile our celebrations with all this suffering? Karen points out that Christmas joy is God's free gift to us all whatever our circumstances, Tim Spencer speaks of the sound intellectual basis for our faith, and Rev Elizabeth's lovely blessing tells us that, through faith, we can all find peace in God's presence.

*We wish all our readers joy, hope and peace this Christmas and throughout 2023*

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# CHRISTMAS JOY

REV KAREN JAMES



It is that time of year again – the Christmas adverts are out! It is interesting to see what the shops think we need to hear in this preparation and waiting time. Most focus on sumptuous feasts; tables laden with good things – enough to feed a small town I should imagine. All beautifully prepared and presented with no hint of the stress and mess to get to that stage. Comical turns and clever adaptations of Christmas films and stories to entertain us and hopefully draw us in to the shops and buy their produce.

There is heart in these adverts as well (lest you should think I am becoming too cynical!). One purposefully draws attention to the thousands of children in care and the amazing work that foster families do – a timely challenge to the assumption that everyone's Christmas will be filled with good things and spent in jolly harmony with family and friends in order for it to be considered a good Christmas.

Another advert has the child excitedly putting together their 'list' which eventually is long enough to be wrapped around the house, only for it to be snatched away in the wind – leaving them with a picture of being together with their family and they recognise that that is what they wanted all along.

This Christmas, we will all be affected in one way or another by rising energy and other costs – it will

impact on how we do things this Christmas. While the advertising campaigns do show some acknowledgement of this, there is still that sense that we can buy our way to Christmas joy. We should always remember that the joy of Christmas is a freely given gift from God. God's own self coming to live on earth with us – as human as we are. Turning the expectation of what it means to live and be human in community completely upside down. Seeking peace and not power, looking to each others' needs before our own. Igniting the spark of the divine that is in each and every one of us – enabling us to hold onto and know joy even when it feels that we have reached the end of our own earthly resources and abilities to achieve joy.

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2)*

Every blessing at this Christmas time – whether spent in a whirl of activity, amongst family and friends or more quietly and reflectively. Where there is much and where there is less – may all know a joy-full and peace-full time.

**Rev Karen James**

Nativity Ice Sculpture



# TOBY A VERY SPECIAL YOUNG PERSON

JACKIE SPENCER



## Toby starts Residential College

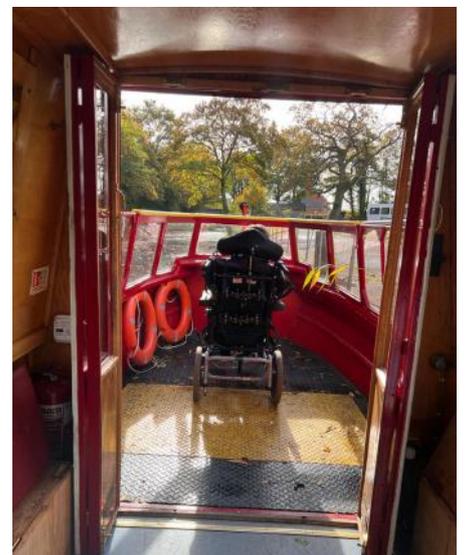
As many of you will have noticed, since September Toby has not been with us on a Sunday morning. This is for a very good reason. He has started a new life in Shropshire, where he has started at Condover College. It was a long fight to get him there, but we were sure it was what he needed and, thankfully, we won our case for him to continue his education. It was a short time between the final court decision and the new term start date, but we managed to get all his belongings packed up. We chatted with the carers at his new home for the essentials for him to start living with them. The day before the first day of term we put Toby in the car and packed his things around him.

We arrived at Toby's new home in Shropshire and settled him in and checked out his new room. He met his new housemates, five of them, all very similar to Toby in their abilities. We left him just before he had his tea. The staff kindly phoned me later to let me know that Toby was very happy, having had dinner, and was asleep, after spending the evening relaxing with his new housemates.

He started his new college the next day, travelling with one of his carers from the house. He has started well, adjusting to life in education once again. He is slowly settling into his new routine of activities and learning, including his physiotherapy and standing as before. As always, he is enjoying the music therapy and the swimming. He is also enjoying a new activity, 'laughter yoga'.

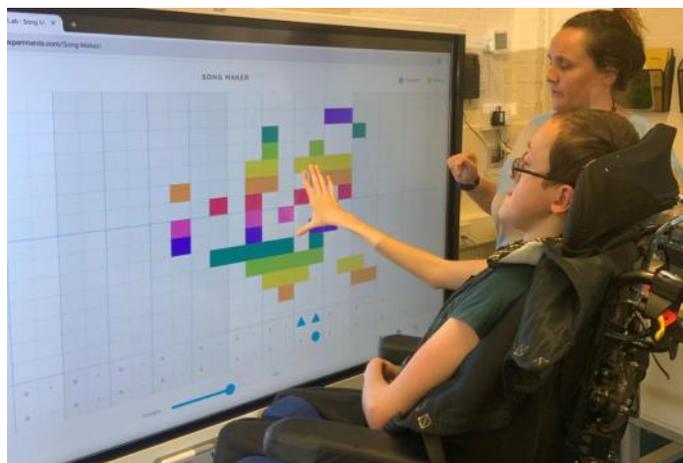
Toby is unable to return to us every day, obviously, however his new home has very close liaison with the college. He has work and activities from college to complete. Also Toby can do his physio there and during the holidays he can do his standing as he takes the frame home.

It is not all college work for Toby either. He leads an exciting and full life with his new housemates. Apart from relaxing and adjusting to his new home, Toby has been doing craft work, writing letters and sending birthday cards. He has also been enjoying parties for birthdays (including his own) with his housemates, enjoying sensory lights and music while dressing up for Halloween (a t-shirt for Toby, as he won't dress up!). He has also been for walks getting



to know the local area and he's now a season ticket holder for Chester Zoo. He and his housemates visit there as they all enjoy seeing the animals. Over half-term he has been to pick a pumpkin for himself. He has also enjoyed a trip on a barge at Welshpool.

We are all thankful that he is settling in so well and doesn't seem to be thrown by the many changes in his life. In fact, He doesn't seem to be missing us at all! He enjoys our visits to see him in Shropshire, but is happy and unbothered when we leave. Far better than if he was upset. We're thinking that when Toby comes home for Christmas holidays, he will be here for a rest.



*For those of you who don't know Toby personally, he is a young man with severe and complex disabilities. Until he started at college, he lived all his life with his mum, dad and older sister. Since our move to Poole, Toby happily attended Montacute School, leaving in 2020. He spent his respite time with Diverse Abilities (the Dorset disability charity). Respite is very important for all the family, to give us, as his parents, a break and a rest. It also gives his sister time away from being a sibling carer and makes sure she has quality time with mum and dad.*

*While Toby is used to nights and days away from his family, for respite, his move to Shropshire is a big step, as he has spent his whole life with mum and dad and with familiar carers.*

*While Shropshire is a long way away, it has the best Residential College for Toby. There is nothing remotely suitable any closer to Dorset.*

*Toby is a member of Broadstone Methodist Church and was baptised, along with his sister, at Sandbanks beach in 2017. He is a valued part of both his family and the church.*



## BROADSTONE'S RIBBON OF POPPIES

Over 200 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers from Broadstone Scout Group, with their Leaders, have been busy this term recycling plastic bottles into poppies for a massive display outside Broadstone Methodist Church in the village centre, which was in place for two weeks from 5 November.

Inspired by other displays, the Scout Group made this as a tribute to The Royal British Legion for the work they do supporting veterans and currently serving personnel who have given so much for their country. We spent Saturday 12 November manning a poppy stall in aid of the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

We are hugely grateful for the support of the Methodist Church in this project, not only for being so accommodating in allowing us to use the church frontage for our display, but also for the large number of plastic bottles that you collected. The hot drinks after two hours mounting the display in the pouring rain were also very welcome!

This community project embraces the ethos of Scouting in preparing young people with skills for life, as we encourage them to make a positive contribution to their community. Many of the church members, as we were mounting the display, commented how lovely it is to have a positive 'good news' story about the young people of today.



If this project has inspired you to support your local Scout Group, do please get in touch at [gsl@broadstonescouts.org](mailto:gsl@broadstonescouts.org). Or perhaps you know a friend, neighbour, family member or work colleague who might be interested in finding out more. Volunteering with Scouting is good for your mental wellbeing, enhances your CV and is great fun, for our adult volunteers as well as the young people. Not all roles involve volunteering with the young people, we have many administrative roles behind the scenes that support our leadership teams deliver the fun and adventure that Scouting offers young people and their leaders.

**Gill McDonald**  
Group Scout Leader  
Broadstone Scout Group

# THANKSGIVING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

DAVID ENDICOTT

We have imported Black Friday and hamburgers from the USA but something we have not introduced is Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is celebrated in other parts of the world of course, such as Canada and the Caribbean but not on the same scale as in the US. I am writing this a few days before Thanksgiving 2022 – the activities take place on the last Thursday in November, only a month or so before Christmas. The Nativity season is celebrated in the US but Thanksgiving is, arguably, a bigger event, probably on a similar scale as Christmas is in the UK. There is a lot of travelling to family reunions and parties often with an extended holiday. Thanksgiving is a statutory holiday, but many will enjoy a ‘bridge’ until the end of the weekend.

Black Friday is normally the Friday after Thanksgiving but what a contrast! Black Friday has the image of rampant consumerism whereas the purpose of Thanksgiving is primarily the expression and demonstration of gratitude. Thanksgiving in the USA celebrates the survival of the early colonists in the New World. It started when English pilgrims settled in present day Massachusetts and shared a feast with a tribe of Native Americans to celebrate a plentiful harvest.

Thanksgiving Day services are held in churches all over America. Each year St Paul’s Cathedral holds a Thanksgiving Day service for Americans living in London. Of course, in the UK we have our Harvest Festival where we express our thanks but I do feel that Thanksgiving, as it is celebrated in America, would be one of the better imports from that country!

In both the Old and New Testaments we learn how vital and important it is to give thanks to God.

We read in Psalm 100:4 *Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name.*

So how do we express our gratitude?

*Among other things: We can pray* – we will each have our own ways of giving thanks but we should of course be prayerful in doing so – *with thanksgiving*



*present your prayers to God.* Philippians 4:6. We give thanks each time we take Communion when we commemorate the Last Supper at which Jesus gave thanks to His Father.

**We can serve others** – by doing this we are serving God. *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.* (1 Peter 4:10). In answer to the question *When did we take you in as a stranger, see you hungry, thirsty, needing clothes?*, Jesus replied *Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.* Matthew 25:40.

**We should give thanks** for all our blessings but practise humility in doing so. *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted* (Luke 14:11).

**We can show gratitude** by actions such as talking about our faith to others, by joining in a prayer chain or by joining in singing hymns which Methodists do so well!

There are so many ways of expressing our thanks and gratitude to God but I do believe that it would be wonderful if we were to have an annual ‘official’ national Thanksgiving celebration which the early settlers in America started so long ago.



# THE ADVENT RING

## ANN BEASLEY

Advent, which begins the church's liturgical year, starts this year on Sunday 27 November. Advent encompasses the four Sundays and the weekdays leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of preparation for our hearts and minds for the anniversary of the Lord's birth on Christmas.

The wreath and candles are full of symbolism tied to the Christmas season. The wreath itself, which is made of various evergreens, signifies continuous life. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life we find in Christ.

*The four traditional advent themes for the four advent Sundays are:*

First candle

**The Candle of Hope** (light on 27 November)

God's people

*Hope is like a light shining in a dark place*

Second candle

**The Candle of Peace** (light on 4 December)

The Old Testament prophets

Third candle

**The Candle of Love** (light on 11 December)

John the Baptist

Fourth candle

**The Candle of Joy** (light on 18 December)

Mary the mother of Jesus

**The white candle** (light on Christmas Day)

is placed in the middle of the wreath.

This candle is called

**The Christ Candle**

It represents the life of Christ.

The colour white is for purity – because Christ is our sinless, pure Saviour.

# RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS

JEAN LARNER

(Jan Attard's dear sister)

So much to do, so little time

Why is it always like this?

Everyone rushing and shopping

As if the world is about to end.

There is too much food piled in the fridge

My fruit bowl is overflowing.

And where can I store the bottles of drink

Chocolates and packets of nuts?

You would think that the shops were going

to close for at least a month or more.

We can't possibly need all that we buy

So what makes us behave this way?

And what does it matter, if, when

Christmas comes

The mince pies are not on the table

And who really cares if the serviettes

Do not match with the cloth perfectly?

Jesus we know it's your birthday

So what is it you want from us?

And do we forget, amidst all the fuss,

To even think of you?

I am sure you approve of the gifts

that we give

And you love to see us all happy.

But there is a limit to how far we need

to go

And it's sad when it puts us in debt.

I know that you'd rather we gave to the

poor,

Not waste money on wrappings

and baubles.

So Jesus I'm sorry for how I behave

And I will do my best to remember

Exactly what Christmas is all about

And come and kneel at the manger.

# CHRISTMAS PAST

## ELIZABETH RUNDLE shares three Christmas memories



Whenever the television programme *Escape to the Country* shows a couple a large hall or expanse of living room, there is a guaranteed response, "This would be lovely for Christmas". For the majority of people Christmas has become just an event for a decorated tree and space for as many family members as possible to gather. Heart-warming as those thoughts are, let me share three important Christmases from my past...

Wilfred and I were married on 29 November 1967. Christmas dinner was 4 weeks away and I had never even boiled an egg...help! I made frantic scuttles around various members of his family, who were all accomplished cooks. They patiently taught me the mysteries of stuffing a bird, roasting without burning and one person generously gave me a Christmas pudding. A joyful discovery – I loved cooking, as much as eating. The Christmas morning service was at 10 o'clock and we walked down the hill (Chapel Street), to Fore Street Methodist Church. Everyone hoped it would be a short service because of all we had to do in the kitchen. As always, the dinner vanished in half the time it took to wash-up and regain some semblance of order in the kitchen. I can't remember a problem with my first full Christmas dinner (but it was in the last century!). And then, at 3 o'clock it was time to watch *The Queen* – in black and white back then. Once Her Majesty's short message was over, we packed presents into bags and walked over to my husband's sister with all the family. We walked home, generally on a dry, chilly night around 1 o'clock the next morning. That became our happy annual Christmas ritual for the next 20 years.

How very different was the Christmas of 1988. Wilfred died 6 weeks before Christmas. Many friends invited me to spend the day with them, but the thought filled me with dread – and more tears. So early on Christmas morning I took myself to Plymouth Methodist Central Hall for their morning service. Over the years we had often enjoyed their evening services. I slunk in the back seat. However,

the minister's wife also came to sit in the back seat and blocked my escape. If she hadn't been there I would not have stayed. But, at the end of the service I was invited to join the team serving Christmas dinner in the large side hall to a group of people who would otherwise be on their own. My job was to make gravy. So successful was my gravy, my next job was the custard. At the end of the meal I helped chop and boil a mammoth cauldron of soup for the 'night-run'. Later in the afternoon about a dozen of us went to sing carols at Derriford Hospital where one of the members at Central Hall was a Sister. At 11 pm with soup, coffee, sweets and cigarettes a minibus set out from Central Hall to scour the city shop-fronts, car-parks, bins and finally bushes and shelters on Plymouth's famous Hoe. What an education. What an example and inspiration that group from Central Hall were to me. A humbling, unforgettable experience. I drove home to Camelford at gone 3 in the morning. I had survived my worst Christmas ever in the company of people who helped me forget about myself.

Plymouth Methodist Central Hall





Camelford Church

My first Christmas in ministry, in 1992, began at 6 o'clock on Christmas Eve when I joined an ecumenical group to sing carols in the wards of the Psycho-geriatric hospital in Redruth (where I was a chaplain). Then I led the midnight service at Paynters Lane End – another good congregation with some rousing Cornish carols. Back to the manse in the wee small hours. My first service on Christmas morning was at Illogan Highway at 8 o'clock. More people in the congregation on Christmas morning than any other time of year as families 'came home' for Christmas. Next it was back to take the 9.30 service at Pool. (I had 5 churches and 3 chaplaincies). At mid-day, I was back to Paynters to help with their first Christmas Day lunch for those on their own. Quite an intimate affair after Plymouth Central Hall, only about 25 people plus helpers. We had turkey and all the trimmings and a few teenagers came to help wash-up. A Steward had brought in a television and we managed to see the Queen – this time in colour!

This time of year highlights our own personal memories, our joys, fears, and heartaches as Christmas Day approaches. But whatever is happening in your life, the central meaning of Christmas never alters – a child was born in Bethlehem, and they called him Jesus. Immanuel, God with us. And the angels' song echoes round the world:

***Glory to God in the highest  
– and on earth peace...***

However, you spend Christmas may that song echo in your heart.

# KNIT AND NATTER

TERRY MILLARD



Nativitree

With the economic down turn the future looks bleak and uncertain this Christmas. Here at Broadstone Methodist Knit and Natter Group, we know the importance of keeping warm. So we have been extra busy knitting items to help people stay warm this winter, from hats and scarves to bed socks and blankets.

The Broadstone Methodist Knit and Natter Group extends a warm welcome to anyone who is feeling down this winter and wants to join us in a relaxed friendly atmosphere over a cup of tea or coffee, (kindly sponsored by Lesley Shand Funeral Directors) every Monday (except bank holidays) in the Sanctuary at Broadstone Methodist Church. You can bring your own project or you can join in one of our charity projects, where wool and needles are provided. All skills welcome.

We hope to spread a little Christmas cheer and have entered for the first time into the St John's Church Magical Christmas Tree Festival. where you will see a 'knitted item' tree and a 'Nativitree'.

Lastly, but not least, I warmly wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

Items waiting for a good home



# CHRISTMAS PAST

## MARGARETE TUCKNOTT remembers her childhood Christmas

Its 1948 and Christmas is coming!

The place, a semi-detached house near the top of a long road in Brighton. The war is over but food rationing is still with us. I'm five years old and I'm excited about Christmas. My father is a taxi driver, for one of the first taxi companies (Streamline Taxis) in Brighton and he is busy, not arriving home until the early hours of the morning.

I knew that my older brother and I would receive Christmas gifts but we did not have the expectations that children have now. It was all a mystery and for me, of course, Father Christmas delivered them.

My Grandmother was one of thirteen children and my mother one of seven so lots of family support and gifts to come!

During the week before Christmas my father would have taken one of our chicken from its pen ready for Christmas dinner - I can see my mum now, apron on, plucking it in the kitchen. Money was short and this was the only way we had meat for Christmas dinner. On Christmas Eve I helped decorate the tree in the dining room and remember the carols on the radio. I



still have one or two of those decorations which must be 80 or more years old.

The front room (only used on special occasions) was having an extra clean and the fire was being laid ready for the next day. Ah! I remember how cold that room was, it took until late evening to warm the room up!

My father is out working and I am reluctantly in bed - this is the longest night I have ever known. Someone creeps into my room, I pretend to be asleep, no bedside lamp and it's cold so I stay in bed but I can vaguely see something bulky lodged on the chair beside my bed.

I try to get to sleep - I can't of course - how can I pass the time? I know, I will sing every carol that I can think of! I have been practicing in my Grandmother's Sunday School class and at Infants school. I've got through quite a few before my father opens the door and says that's enough!



At last it's morning and it's beginning to get light about 6am. I can see a pillow case full of parcels. I'm out of bed and drag the case into my parents' room, wake them up and end up sitting in between them ready to open them.

It's not until years later that I understood my father did not get home until the early hours and barely slept what with my carol singing and my early rising. He never said a word about it.

The gifts were small but precious, my mum produced a very tasty lunch, the puddings had been made in October and were served with custard, no brandy butter etc. We loved cold Christmas pudding the next day, and on Boxing Day we were granted our wish – no bread and butter for tea! We had tinned peaches oranges, chocolate biscuits, Christmas cake – all things we had not had for a long time.

Seeing pictures in the embers of the coal fire, cooking chestnuts and seeing how many of the tangerine pips would burst in the fire kept us amused. We had to be ready for the King's speech on the radio.

We walked across Brighton to see family members, no telephones then to keep us in touch. They were not easy times, life was hard but we were happy, glad to be together, my mother worked miracles in how she managed to provide all we needed on our small income, my father worked hard, was very creative, and made our toys and many other things. Things were improving slowly after the war. Sometimes it's the small blessings that matter in life and they are the ones that are the most precious.



# DID YOU KNOW?

LINDA CHESTER

## The Christmas Pudding

Did you know that on Christmas Day 1066, William the Conqueror was crowned and his coronation banquet included a specially made 'pudding'. King William enjoyed it so much that he gave his chef the Manor of Addington as a gift (Addington is a village in Kent close to the M20).

The pudding contained more herbs and meat than fruit, but gradually, over the centuries, plums and dried fruit were added and meat was left out.

As you sit down to your Christmas pudding you can feel part of a thousand years of British tradition.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Stable

For some of the poorest children in the East End of London, a stable was the only 'school' they had. This 'school' was started by a young Irish man, living in London and studying to be a doctor. He had ambitions to be a medical missionary but when he discovered the sad plight of the homeless children, he knew God was calling him to work for the children in London instead. So it was in 1867, the first 'Home for destitute boys' was opened by Thomas John Barnado. Over the years other 'Homes' opened for boys and then girls. Without any family of their own they learned to live together in a new family.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Smallest Christmas Card

Possibly the smallest Christmas card ever sent was a grain of rice starch on a paste board 3.25 ins x 2 ins. It was sent to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in 1929. His Royal Highness would briefly become King Edward VIII, brother to King Charles III's grandfather. Written in Indian ink on the grain of rice it is preserved in Queen Mary's collection.

To His Royal Highness,  
The Prince of Wales  
Sincere Christmas greetings  
from the  
Joseph G Gillott Pen Co.  
London, England  
Season 1929

# CHRISTMAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES:



## GERMANY

CHRISTINE MAGUIRE

On 22 December we'll be leaving St Pancras at 9am to travel all the way to Berlin by train, arriving about nine hours later, to celebrate Christmas with our daughter, Catherine, and her husband, Jens.

One feature of Christmas time in Germany which is now well-known in England is the Christmas Market. No doubt we'll be visiting the one in Gendarmenmarkt in the centre of Berlin. Glühwein is the universal drink, served in special mugs which have the name of the city and year and an appropriate design. The price of the drink includes €1 which lets you keep the mug (we have quite a collection!) but you can return it for a refund. Another feature of a German Christmas which we adopted in the 19th century, thanks to Prince Albert, is the Christmas Tree. However, trees in Germany don't tend to appear in the home until the 24th and stay only until Epiphany.

For families with young children, Christmas really begins with the visit of St. Nicholas. Children are encouraged to clean their shoes and then put them outside the front door on the evening of 5 December. The next morning they hope to find their shoes full of little presents.

On Christmas Eve families get together at about 3 o'clock. They decorate the Christmas tree and then sing carols such as *Stille Nacht* and *Tannenbaum*. If there are young children, they will be listening out for the doorbell because they are expecting Father Christmas. The parents will have arranged for someone to dress up as Father Christmas (*Weihnachtsmann*) who first has to check that the children have been good. Then, before they receive their presents, they have to recite a Christmas poem or sing a song – Jens remembers this as being quite a stressful time as the poems have to be learnt off by heart! Whereas Christmas Eve is the traditional time for the Christmas meal of goose, red cabbage, potatoes and kale, some families prefer to have just smoked fish, and potato salad with *Wurst* (German sausage) so that the children have more time to enjoy



their presents. Incidentally, Jens tells us that carp is a popular alternative to goose, but turkey is almost never on the Christmas menu.

Obviously, Christmas puddings and mince pies are unknown in Germany, but Jens is now quite a fan of both. So, after enjoying the goose, we will be foregoing the traditional red fruit jelly or vanilla pudding and instead we'll be taking one of Christine's home-made Christmas puddings. Inevitably there will be *Stollen* or *Lebkuchen* at some time.

In contrast to Christmas Eve being family time, on Christmas Day it's traditional to go to the theatre and that's what we'll be doing – going to see Jens singing in *The Flying Dutchman* at the *Komische Oper*. Carol concerts are not very common but unsurprisingly what is performed in many venues throughout Germany is Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Handel's *Messiah* being relatively unknown.

So, some familiar features, along with interesting differences, but altogether a delightful family time, and one to which we are very much looking forward.

# CHRISTMAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES:



## SOUTH AFRICA

DEACON GILL JUDGE



Christmas in South Africa looks more like this



than this



More like this



than this



More like this



than this

# CHRISTMAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES:



## BRAZIL

REV BETTO VIANA

Advent is here and the preparations for Christmas have begun! Preparations in our homes to receive guests or to become guests. Preparations in the workplace, on the streets, in our churches and community spaces. Preparations in the Palace with the new King's first speech. Preparations in our heart to receive the new-born King of all kings. For some, the preparations will be minimal for many reasons: loneliness, financial hardship, poor mental health, a different faith or simply a different tradition. And talking about traditions, people always ask me to talk about Christmas in Brazil. I have to say...it is a little bit different from over here! As a tropical Christian country Brazil has its own way of celebrating some aspects Christmas.

### Nativity Scenes (or Presepios)

The Nativity Scene is a vital part of the Brazilian Christmas. It can be seen everywhere during the Christmas season. Most of the churches and households prefer the nativity to the Christmas Tree. Whether they are outside of churches, homes, or even simply in the middle of the towns and cities, *presepios* are extremely popular in Brazil. Here in the UK, we have Christmas Tree Festivals, in Brazil we have Nativity Scene Festivals! It is a typical holiday tradition for Brazilian families to be visiting various *presepios*, noting the care and attention to detail put into each one.

Ceara Presepio



### The Shepherds (Os Pastores)

Accompanying some of these Nativity scenes are Christmas plays that tell the tale of the Nativity. Translated as *The Shepherds*, the Brazilian tales tell the story of the Nativity as it is commonly told in the Bible. However, the Brazilian play adds a small twist, including a woman or a shepherdess who attempts to steal the baby Jesus. Let's say this is our attempt to copy your hilarious pantomimes!

### Christmas "Fruit Trees"

Christmas trees have become more popular recently and people decorate them as we do here in the UK with bobbles, ornaments, lights, and garlands. It is not uncommon for Brazilian cities to feature very large trees in the middle of a town or city, making it a noteworthy attraction for all to see. However, because pine trees or fir trees are not native to Brazil, and not very easily transported, many Brazilians opt to decorate banana trees, coconut trees or other tropical fruit trees.

### Christmas Bonus

Because Christmas is just as popular for commerce during this time, all Brazilian employees are offered (by law) a Christmas bonus to help with their holiday shopping. Interestingly enough, this is seen as a great time for Brazil to boost its economy. Therefore, the salaries of Brazilian employees are *doubled* during the month of December! We call it the 13rd salary! (Oh, how I miss that... I will have a word with Tony!)

### Christmas Eve

Brazilians begin their Christmas celebrations on Christmas Eve. It is traditional for families and friends to gather that night and enjoy a large meal, which is typically served sometime around 10 at night (if you are not going to church), or after midnight (if you are going to church). With Christmas being at the peak of Summer, most of this Christmas dinner is cold food, with a large variety of tropical fruits, salads but also BBQ. Turkey is not a big tradition in Brazil. We prefer chicken, pork, beef and fish (basically anything but turkey...cannot understand what you see in turkey...perhaps the size is appealing?!).

Talking about size, the country is so big you won't find one traditional Christmas meal, but several! Lots of rice,



Sao Paulo City Center

which I can assure you is not boring but deliciously cooked with all the garlic one can find and 'decorated' with raisins, sweetcorn, peas and many herbs. Borrowing from many cultures over the world, Brazilians also enjoy Italian panettone bread and German pudding during Christmas period. Whether they celebrate at home or at church, most Brazilian families take this time to dress well. I mean, red-carpet-Oscar-event dressing up well! That I don't miss...(hours waiting for the women of the family to perfect the make-up and climb their heels...no, thank you!)

#### **Missa do Galo**

*Missa do Galo*, also known as the Mass of the Rooster, is a very important event during Brazilian Christmas. The Catholic tradition of midnight mass is not specific to Brazil and is in fact recognized all over the world. The Brazilian midnight mass adds a bit of excitement, as it is traditional for fireworks to be set off when the clock strikes midnight. The Brazilian mass has earned its name due to the fact that it can sometimes last through the entire night, or until the rooster crows.

#### **Midnight Toast**

Resembling a New Year's Eve midnight toast, Brazilians choose to toast one another in celebration when the clock strikes midnight on Christmas Eve. Music and drinking are a big part of the festive celebrations, giving everyone a chance to relax and dance all night long this joyous time of year with friends and family. It is then typical to begin opening presents once all the other festivities are out of the way.

#### **Secret Santa**

While the tradition of Secret Santa is popular here too, it is the core of Brazilian Christmas gifting. You will not find an enormous number of presents under the Christmas tree in most Brazilian households. Most people will receive one present, children might be a bit luckier, but Secret Santa is our way to include many people and offer gifts that are not expensive. Known as *Amigo Oculto*, friends and family give one another gifts anonymously. They can choose to reveal or not the Secret Santa. And other times, you buy a general gift (a cap is decided) and only at the

party you will get the piece of paper with the name of the person you are presenting...not for the fainting heart! It's great fun and this way they ensure everyone is included in the present-giving festivities, as well as making Christmas more affordable for larger families. But don't worry, children's presents are still known to be brought by Santa Claus.

#### **Papai Noel**

Brazil's image of Santa Claus fits the popular image we know and love around the world. Clothed in red and white robes, it would seem Santa Claus uses some of his North Pole magic to keep himself cool in the hot weather of Brazilian summer. Or he will just wear shorts, t-shirts, sunglasses, sandals and lots of suncream. The absence of snow or below-zero temperatures (well...until climate change brought the white stuff last year for the despair of many Brazilians in the South) means that we don't have chimneys. Papai Noel can't come in the house via the roof so, he needs to find his way through the door or an open window...all very creepy if you want my honest opinion! The good thing is that Santa Claus may also be referred to as *Bom Velhinho*, or the "Good Old Man", so no real threat (we hope!).

#### **Christmas at the Beach**

Christmas day celebrations for Brazilians look a bit different than in the movies. Because Brazilian celebrations happen during the night, families are essentially given a free day to spend with one another on the 25th. And most of the country around the coast will choose to hit the beach on the 25th, enjoying the holiday and spending time with their friends and family.

#### **Epiphany (Dia de Reis)**

Brazilians also tend to recognize the Epiphany in a big way, especially the Catholic Church. The day is called 'Dia de Reis' (the day of the Kings) and is often revered as the true heart of the season, making it a sacred day with parades and great storytelling on the streets.

What are the things I enjoy here that we don't have in the Brazilians Christmas? We don't have Christmas cake or, my favourite, Christmas pudding. We don't have Carol Services or carol singing traditions. We don't have Christingle either! I think we are all very British in our house... I'd miss Christmas without those things! Even if our family is always set to keep the traditions we have, I wonder if we would be courageous enough to try something different this year. Perhaps that would help us focus on the real event, the only thing that wouldn't change no matter where you find yourself in the world, the fact that God has moved into our neighbourhood!

***Feliz Natal  
and a happy New Year from***

***Betto, Suzie,  
Raphael and Julia***

# ECO LIVING

**MIKE BROOKE** continues his regular Eco Church column



It's easy to ask questions of others but not always so easy when putting oneself under the microscope. I felt it was only fair to undertake the challenge myself and explain why I am so passionate about climate change and the impact we have upon our planet.

## Question 1

**Climate change and global warming are now recognised as major threats to life on earth.**

**Does this worry you and why/why not?**

As far as I can recall, I have always had a strong interest in the world around us. Whether that was because my father was a geography teacher or whether it was a natural part of my make-up I can't say, but I studied both physical geography, meteorology and human geography at University, and subsequently followed in my father's footsteps. During the summer of 1963 I read Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" (published September 1962). Challenging the way much of our farmland was being managed, the book highlighted the devastating impact the removal of hedgerows and excessive use of pesticides was having on our wildlife. Shortly after, scientists extended their research into the relationship between human activity and changes in some of the world's major ecosystems. Droughts, famines, deforestation, desertification, and floods regularly made the headlines. It became very clear that the main driver for these extreme events was man's impact on climate. The fact that our activities can have such a devastating impact is extremely worrying because, as the world's temperature continues to rise, so these violent and relatively infrequent events are becoming even more intense, more frequent, and more widespread. Sadly, the so-called need for continuous economic growth and the desire to have 'dominion over the earth' has meant the concept of guardianship has been lost. The future is bleak.

## Question 2

**I'm only an individual and anything I might do will have very little impact?**

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement?**

**Please give reasons.**

At the close of COP 27 George Monbiot tweeted "there was 'no progress' on stopping climate breakdown. COP27 is another terrible failure." While the world's leaders argue, negotiate, and often do nothing, individuals, when they come together, can achieve a lot. Even on one's own it is possible to make a small but positive contribution. To borrow a well know phrase from a supermarket advert "Every little helps." As Robert and Christine Maguire wrote in the first article: Although a single individual's action won't halt the rise in global temperatures, the collective efforts of all of us will have a significant effect.

## Question 3

**Have you made any changes to your lifestyle that could help reduce the impacts of global warming?**

**Please give as many examples as you like.**

The simple answer is "Yes" but at the same time I don't think I am doing enough.

I have for many years recycled as much material as I can. Our blue bin is always full and I am careful to ensure all plastics coded 1,2,3,4, and 5 are included. If we have food scraps, for example potato peelings, apple cores, badly bruised fruit, or mouldy bread, then these are composted along with any weeds, dead leaves and grass cuttings. Currently there are four large compost bins in operation which provide mulch for plants over winter and also put back nutrients into our raised vegetable beds. We have recently installed solar panels; something Annette frequently refers to as "Mike's little project". Because

our roof was deemed unsuitable by the companies that provided us with quotations it was decided to mount them in the garden where the extreme pruning of a rather overgrown hedge provided the necessary space. It's a good feeling knowing we are producing some of our own electricity, and at the same time, reducing our carbon footprint. Since the installation at the end of September we have generated 247 kwh, saved the equivalent of 81 kg of coal and reduced our CO2 output by 246.6kg. Think what impact the Church has had since the installation of its solar panels.

#### Question 4

**Is there a case for local churches to become involved with the issues around climate change and global warming?**

**If so, please explain.**

I think the church would be failing in its duty if it were not involved. God gave us the ability to have 'dominion' over the earth and all living things. With this power comes responsibility; the responsibility to use the earth carefully, look after it for future generations and to protect it from harm by adopting sustainable stewardship. The church is, or should be, at the heart of any community so there is the opportunity to lead from the front. Unfortunately, it has shirked this all-important responsibility for far too long. It is now time to take on the responsibility full on.

#### Question 5

**What could our church do that could make a difference?**

In gaining our Bronze Eco Church award I have come to realise how much we are already contributing: solar panels, LED lighting, double glazing, using feeders for birds, regular prayers, and the occasional service. By aiming for a gold award we would be addressing some of our own shortfalls but we need to look beyond our own four walls. We are working with other Broadstone churches and there are moves within the Methodist Church to develop Eco-Circuits and Eco-Districts.



## OUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Broadstone Methodist Church's Christmas tree is a main feature of the centre of Broadstone's Christmas decorations. This year we had a special 'switch on' ceremony of the Christmas tree lights with carol singing around the tree.

However, it has been suggested that for future years, instead of purchasing a tree each year, a suitable tree should be planted in front of the church. Different views have been expressed about this proposal as illustrated below.

**For**

An ideal 20th Anniversary planting for the next twenty years.

A gift for the future. It may start small, but we will watch it grow, and the young and those yet to be born will benefit and look back.

It is good for the environment to plant trees.

It is good for the environment not to buy a new tree, transport it in and out, and throw it away each year.

Such a decision would be a good talking point in the community, showing how we mean what we say about looking after the planet.

It could be seasonally decorated and enjoyed throughout the year, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day, etc. not just at Christmas.

Either we change or the climate changes. The more we change, the less the environment changes.

**Against**

Any tree purchased for planting is likely to be relatively small for several years and it would not be possible to use all the new Christmas tree lights purchased earlier this year.

The idea of a permanent tree is very problematic as it would restrict use of the frontage when we have just spent a lot of money opening it up.

Choirs singing outside, the Easter Cross, Acts of Remembrance, Vigils and so many other outside activities will be affected.

In time it would take light from the front of the building and obscure the flower beds and the Cafe Church Banner.

It would also make it awkward to repeat this year's amazing Cascade of Poppies.

Research needs to be carried out to identify and cost a suitable tree. The precise location for the planting would need to be determined. Meanwhile, Mike Brooke would like to hear your views on the principle of planting a tree for 'life' in front of the Church rather than purchasing, setting up and disposing each year. Please contact [mikebrooke1947@googlemail.com](mailto:mikebrooke1947@googlemail.com).

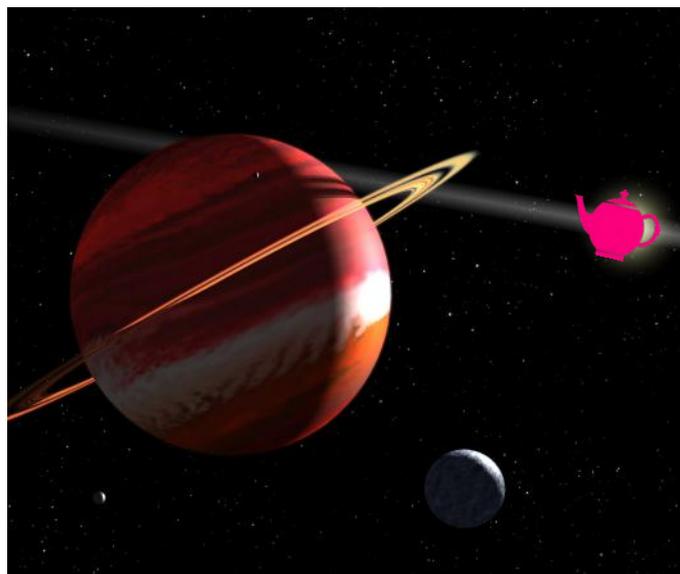
# BERTRAND RUSSELL'S TEAPOT

TIM SPENCER

A few years ago, when I read *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, I was expecting a real challenge to my Christian faith; something along the lines of "How can you possibly believe in God when ...." Complete the sentence in many and various ways. What I actually got was a catalogue of non-arguments. In the early pages the author states that atheism is not a belief (that there is no god) but "the absence of belief". He then spends 400 pages demonstrating an unshakeable belief in absence. In so doing he shows a religious zeal that would match any fundamentalist. No evidence is explored except that which suits his argument. He knows what he believes and what he wants the reader to believe. Why the need for evidence when the verdict is already reached? So self-defeating is the book that if I hadn't already believed in God when I started reading it, I think I probably would have done by the time I had finished.

In his attack on faith, he cites Bertrand Russell's teapot. The atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell proposed that if you claimed there was a teapot in orbit around the sun, then as long as you claimed it was small enough and distant enough to be undetectable (before the days of powerful telescopes) then it would be impossible to disprove the theory. His point being that there is no reason to believe in such a teapot until and unless someone can actually prove it exists and that that burden of proof should be on the teapot believer because you can't prove a negative. Russell used this argument to claim that the burden of proof for the existence of God is on those who believe.

Of course I can't actually prove God exists although I find myself snowed under by the weight of evidence. There are many other things I can't prove. For example, I can't prove that my grand-parents ever loved me or that I ever even met them. Yes I can provide some old black and white photographs but how could I actually prove that I'm even related to the people in them and how would it help me if I could? I have fond memories of them, and their part



in shaping the person I have since become. That is all the proof I need.

Now let's pursue the teapot analogy a bit further. Suppose there was a man who claimed that he had been somehow miraculously visited by the teapot and that the tea it dispensed was no ordinary tea but had such a profound and beneficial effect on him that his friends could barely believe the change they were seeing. "So what?" you might think. "What's one more crackpot in a world with no shortage of crackpots, albeit a reformed one?" (Though the wise response might be to find out more to see if the affect could be repeated.)

Now imagine that the affected person was not alone but was from a community of teapot believers, some of whom had their own testimonies of the teapot, including being cured of addictions or experiencing an intense love. Then suppose that this was not just an isolated community but part of a worldwide phenomenon. And what if this wasn't something that had just started last week but had been going on for about 2000 years. In that scenario wouldn't it be worth finding out more?

# THE SHEPHERD a meditation

ANN BEASLEY



It was busy in the town,  
That night  
People thronging all around  
That night.

Not for us  
The temple rituals  
Too busy with the lambs  
For the temple rituals

Jacob lay sleeping  
Later he'll take  
The lamb to the temple  
Now, he was sleeping

A bright light  
Suddenly  
Fills the skies  
Suddenly

Jacob awakes  
He's afraid  
I comfort him  
I'm afraid.

It must be the messenger  
Of that I am sure  
Bringing **that** Good News  
Yes, I am sure

Go into the town  
The voices said  
What the noisy town?  
Yes, the voices said.

We left the sheep  
They'd be safe, we knew  
We had a feeling  
We had a job to do

We found a shed  
As the messenger said  
A common shed  
Like us, we said.

There was the sight  
So great to behold  
On that wonderful night  
As the prophets foretold.

We knelt on the floor  
It was calm and serene  
The Christ child lay sleeping  
Two oxen between.

The lamb moved in his arms  
Jacob placed him down  
No need now, for the sacrifice  
No need to go into the town

Were they waiting at the temple?  
We wondered no more  
We couldn't move  
Just knelt to adore.

The Son of God was born  
The Saviour of the world.  
The Sacrifice was here  
Once, - for all

Lamb of God, Our Lord.

**Blessing** sung by the Choral Group at the Anniversary Service

Renewed by our worship here,  
may Faith, Hope and Love be yours;  
you are witnesses for the living Lord,  
His Spirit goes with you.

As you leave from this House of Prayer,  
take Peace for your journey home.  
Do not be afraid, you are held by Love,  
You are God's precious child.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Words and music © Elizabeth Rundle



## Broadstone Methodist Church

Café Church in September focused on the issue of homelessness, and we welcomed guest speakers from Routes to Roots and Bournemouth Housing Association. One of our speakers had personally experienced homelessness and we heard how he had turned his life around with the support of friends and local organisations. It is so important to have somebody to turn to when circumstances make everyday living more and more difficult.

<https://www.routestoroots.org/charity/about-charity-routes-to-roots>

In November, Café Church was led by Rev Elizabeth Rundle and Rev Linda Chester and attendees were treated to 'Special Moments' from trips to the Holy Land.

On 15 January, there will be a *Churches Together in Broadstone* Café Church with input from Ministers from each of the churches. This is likely to be a Question Time and so watch out for further details.

*Café Church starts at 4.30pm with tea, chat, and cakes. Each session is very different, but the overall programme aims to incorporate informal discussion on topical, interesting, and difficult issues. If you have ideas for topics for future sessions, please contact Annette Brooke.*

All are welcome to attend.

## STEPPING STONES

Stepping Stones holds monthly meetings for older people and for people with dementia and their carers. The meetings always include tea and cakes, plenty of chat and a choice of activities. The November meeting took place on Armistice Day and included a short Act of Remembrance. The other activities included singing First World War songs, colouring and quizzes relating to Remembrance and some very competitive dominoes games. A small choir will join the meeting on 9 December to lead carol singing and there will be plenty of mince pies! The following meeting will be on 13 January.

We currently have spaces for more people to join the sessions, which are held every second Friday in the month, 2.30 to 4pm, in the Church's coffee lounge.

Contact Annette Brooke 01202 696523 for further details.

## CHRISTMAS PUZZLE

The following lines are taken from Christmas Carols and Hymns.

Write down the first line of the Carol or Hymn. Can you think of them all?

The first letter of each first line spells out a greeting.

- 1 Blessed Saviour Christ most holy,  
in a manger thou didst rest.
- 2 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail the incarnate Deity
- 3 Sound his praises,  
tell with gladness he liveth again.
- 4 Beneath the angel strain have rolled  
two thousand years of wrong.
- 5 Sing that Bethlem's little baby can  
be salvation to the soul.
- 6 And there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay.
- 7 Who to Messiah fly  
shall find redemption nigh.
- 8 I love Thee, Lord Jesus!  
Look down from the sky.
- 9 Angels, singing 'Peace on earth',  
told us of a Saviour's birth.
- 10 Prove it is true, Mary's child,  
go to your cross of wood."
- 11 Worship we our Jesus;  
but wherewith for sacred sign?
- 12 All in Jesu's praise agree,  
carrying on his victory.
- 13 Love is smiling from thy face!  
Strikes for us now the hour of grace.
- 14 God did in Christ himself reveal  
to chase our darkness by his light
- 15 If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wiseman I would do my part.
- 16 Some softening gleam of love and prayer,  
shall dawn on every cross and care
- 17 Now ye need not fear the grave;  
Jesus Christ was born to save.
- 18 Justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring.  
Wrong shall be ended when Jesus is king.
- 19 God with man is now residing,  
yonder shines the infant light.
- 20 The one Eternal God,  
whom earth and heaven adore.
- 21 The silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love.
- 22 While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy.
- 23 So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of his heaven.
24. The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Seal your Answers in an envelope, write on your name, address and 'Christmas Puzzle' and put it in the Church post box (right side of Church porch) by 31 December.

**Small Prize to first correct solution opened 1 January**

# CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACTIVITIES



Please see details of all our other Christmas services and events on page 22

## WENDY HOUSE

Our popular Wendy House toddler group (for babies and toddlers up to 3+ and their parent or carer) has restarted. It runs every Thursday, in term time, from 10am to 11.30am.



Story Time

## THIRSTY THURSDAY

For school age children with a parent or carer, every Thursday in term time, after school until 4.15pm.

*Refreshments, football, crafts, Godly play, and recently, bird feeding and bulb planting.*



## JUNIOR CHURCH

Children are welcome to our Sunday morning services. They join in the first part of the service and then go out to their own sessions where they take part in activities related to a bible passage.



## CRIB SERVICE

We are having a special Crib Service at 3pm on Christmas Eve

Exploring the Christmas story in a fun and interactive way with the opportunity to dress up if you want to.

All are welcome



Meets once during each school holiday.

All ages welcome with an accompanying parent or carer.

The next one is on **22nd December, 10am to 12.30pm**

*Light lunch included.*

Do come and join us at the Church for crafts and Christmas related activities.

For Wendy House, Thirsty Thursday, and Messy Church, please enter by the back entrance of the Church from the car park. For the other events please use either entrance.

# CHRISTMAS AT BROADSTONE METHODIST CHURCH

**Friday 16 December**

**11.00am Carols and Cakes**  
in the Coffee Lounge

**Sunday 18 December**

**10.30am Christmas Celebration**  
**6.30pm Carol Service**  
led by Rev Karen James

**Thursday 22 December**

**10.00am Christmas Messy Church**

**Christmas Eve**

**Saturday 24 December**

**3.30pm Crib Service**  
**11.30pm United Midnight Communion**  
with United Reformed Church

**Christmas Day**

**Sunday 25 December**

**10.30am United Christmas Day Service**  
at United Reformed Church

## THE BROADSTONE CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:  
*FANTASIA ON CHRISTMAS CAROLS*

MORTEN LAURIDSEN:  
*O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM*

A SELECTION OF AUDIENCE & CHOIR CAROLS

MUSICAL DIRECTOR: SIMON EARL  
ORGANIST: JOHN RADFORD

7.30PM SATURDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022  
BROADSTONE METHODIST CHURCH  
TICKETS £15 (UNDER-18s: £8)

from Bob Williams at [bobwilliams100@sky.com](mailto:bobwilliams100@sky.com)  
or on the door  
including refreshments

The Broadstone Choir; Charity number 1107077;  
<https://the-broadstone-choir.mailchimpsites.com>



Broadstone Methodist  
Craft Fayre



Saturday 11th March 2023  
10am to 3pm

If you would like to book a stall  
please contact the BMC office for  
details.

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

Broadstone Methodist Church,  
Broadstone  
Phone: 01202 600696  
Email:  
[methodist.church1@btinternet.com](mailto:methodist.church1@btinternet.com)

SAVE THE  
DATE!

# SUNDAY WORSHIP

Weekly at 10.30am

(Holy Communion as announced)

with Junior Church and  
Crèche at the same time

All are welcome

Tea and Coffee served after the Service

Broadstone Methodist Church

## COFFEE LOUNGE

for Fellowship and Refreshments

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
and Saturday each week**  
apart from Bank Holidays

**10.00am–12.00 noon**

We look forward to seeing you and enjoying  
chatting (at a safe distance) over a cuppa!

**Bible Study on Zoom**  
Wednesdays at 7.30pm

### 'Talking of God with Others'

Details of Dates and Zoom link  
from Deacon Gill Judge or Joan Jackson.

## THIRSTY THURSDAY

(Term-time after-school club)

**3.00pm**

**in the Bradbury Hall**

## Knit & Natter

Mondays 10.00am–12 noon  
in the Sanctuary

## Thursday Afternoon Group

2.30-4.30pm

in the Coffee Lounge

*Currently monthly on first Thursday*

## Badminton Group

Mondays from 7.30–9.30pm  
in the Bradbury Hall



Next Session

**Thursday 22 December**

**10.00am - 12.30pm**

## STEPPING STONES DROP-IN

Second Friday of every month  
2.30 – 4pm  
in the Coffee Lounge

The next issue of



will be published on  
**Sunday 2 April 2023**

Articles, photographs and other contributions  
should be submitted to the editors by

**Sunday 5 March 2023**

## CARERS' GROUP

Second Thursday of every month  
2.00 – 4pm  
in the Coffee Lounge

WISHING  
YOU A  
JOYOUS  
CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR

