

# CALNE METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024



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**Items for future editions can be sent to:**

Jan Sayers

The deadline for the January 2025 issue is

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

I love the Christmas season. I dress the tree, and do the decorations, the little things that transform our home each year. I do not want Christmas to ever change, even when I am gone.

I made Elizabeth promise me that this would continue despite any future sadness. I do not want to ever stop hearing this story. I never want to stop seeing that image of the baby Jesus in the manger.

I want to feel that again and again and again. I yearn for it. It is so comforting to me. I never ever want my Christmas to change.

But I am a realist too, and undoubtedly for some, this cosy warm feeling is replaced at this time of year by want and need. Perhaps by bitterness and regret, or hatred, loneliness, sadness, and even by cynicism.

Two years ago, in a Christmas sermon I talked about a bell sounding, about Clarence the probationary angel in the film *'It's a wonderful life'*. Clarence, who finally achieves his wings as a bell rings. Clarence helped a 'lost' George Bailey realize what life would be like if he had never been born. If he had changed his life to the way he wanted to live it. I doubt few will remember that particular sermon, but its message is still true today.

Because even in the real hard times, the way we live, speak, and behave affects the lives of others in ways we can only imagine. What we do and say can change things for the better in others, through the loving grace and beauty of the Christ child.

Somewhere in the distance I again hear the small sound of a tinkling bell.

It is the bell of irony. And that small bell reminds me of the irony of our faith, that on the very feast of the nativity of Christ Jesus, when we so much want nothing to ever change, we are in fact, celebrating the greatest moment of change in human history.

We are in fact, celebrating a moment when God enters into history and nothing can ever be the same again.

Incarnation means change. It means God coming into our time and into our space, and into our lives. God forcing a way into our comfort zone and shaking things up.

God challenging us to confront change, to become active in doing something with and for, God in the world around us.

For those in the dark and lonely places, now is the time to take that first faltering step and believe. To really believe that Christ can change all things in your life.

To actively change things for the better, that nothing is impossible with God.

It might not work out in the way you expect, it never does, but you can never be alone or afraid again, when you truly give yourself to God.

So, this Christmas how do I suggest we celebrate this wonderful moment of change in life?

I suggest that you wrap up in Christmas just like I am going to do. That you enjoy those visions of angels, the manger, and the baby. The animals and the shepherds.

To believe, just like Mary and Joseph, who also took a huge step of faith a very long time ago.

Let it be comforting and traditional, familiar, warm, and loving.

There is time enough tomorrow, for us to step out once again to pick up our gifts and work with God.

To face change and make changes for the glory of God.

But for this special time of the year, let us relax into the peace that is holy.

Into a time, where time itself seems to stand still. Where the winds and tides of change, are momentarily held back, by the sounds of angelic voices drifting through a starry, cold night.

And a bell rings somewhere to signal hope for all people, ***even those that are lost!***

Stay Safe and well.

Remember, however dark it may become..... the Light of God will light your way.

***It is a wonderful life.....***

God be with you all, and a very merry Christmas, and healthy and happy new year.

**Craig**



## Forthcoming Services:

1 <sup>st</sup> December	Rev Craig Manley including Holy Communion
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Worship Leaders
15 <sup>th</sup> December	Michele Gard
15 <sup>th</sup> December	Carol Service 6.00pm
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	Derek Gard
24 <sup>th</sup> December	Midnight Communion 11.30pm
25 <sup>th</sup> December	Rev Craig Manley 10.00am
29 <sup>th</sup> December	Sector Service at Warminster United Church – please see a steward if you want a lift.



## Pastoral News

We think of those for whom Christmas and the New Year brings hard memories, for those who feel alone and all who find the winter months particularly hard especially with the cost of energy and food.

We pray for those who have had operations recently, may they recover well; for those waiting on medical results; for those who have on going health issues and often find simple everyday tasks difficult and for those bearing the responsibility of looking after family members.

Throughout December we particularly pray for Vera Steadman's pastoral group: Ursula and Edward Barham; Eleanor Bujalska; Molly Green; Jean Haddrell; Margaret and Richard Heath and Stephanie Tucker.

It is part of our Christian commitment to care for and support each other so if you have any joys or sorrows that can be shared in our pastoral news please let Ursula know.

May you know peace and joy this Christmas.

# Advent 2024 - Calne Methodist Church Hush the noise!



Our theme for Advent is based on the Methodist church material for Advent

Christmas is loud, isn't it? So much expectation. So many voices. Telling us how to celebrate, what to wear, what to eat and drink, what to watch and what to buy.

Instead, this Christmas we're inviting everyone to hush the noise. To listen for the love song that the angels bring, this and every year. They sang it for the first time more than 2,000 years ago, on the midnight clear. They're just waiting for us to join in.

## Week 1: December 1 - Rev Craig Manley

TITLE	OLD TESTAMENT	GOSPEL	OBJECT
Hush the noise	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Luke 21:25-36	

## Week 2: December 8 - Worship Leaders

### To Prophets Shown

TITLE	OLD TESTAMENT	GOSPEL	OBJECT
To prophets shown	Malachi 3:1-4	Luke 3:1-6	

## Week 3: December 15 - Michele Gard

### Babel Sounds

TITLE	OLD TESTAMENT	GOSPEL	OBJECT
Babel sounds	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Luke 3:7-18	


**Week 4: December 22 - Derek Gard**

**The Love Song - Including All Church Nativity**

TITLE	OLD TESTAMENT	GOSPEL	OBJECT
The love song	Micah 5:2-5a	Luke 1:39-55	

**Christmas Day: December 25 - Rev Craig Manley**

**Hear the Angels sing - page 31**

TITLE	OLD TESTAMENT	GOSPEL	OBJECT
Hear the angels sing	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-20	

We look forward to seeing you all as we explore this theme.  
Derek 26/11/24



**Refugee Prayer Focus December 2024**

Lord help us not to give up when we pray. Help us to keep focused and to keep ourselves informed so our prayers don't become fuzzy. Help us to keep our eyes open and remember there is a lot going on in the world; Help us not to focus on one part of the world but keep alert.

In the name of Jesus who taught us to pray; Amen

A Poem submitted by Vera Steadman – **please read and then read again starting at the bottom.**

**Refugees**

**By Brian Bilston**

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

## Prayer Lunch

There is a short time of prayer every Wednesday at 12.30 pm in the Alan Bristow Room. The prayer meeting is open to all, and before the meeting everyone at Warm Spaces is asked of any concerns they would like to be prayed about. The meeting is entirely confidential. Afterwards you are invited to join everyone at Warm Spaces for lunch.

If you have any questions, please speak to Edith, Vera or Eleanor

# Calne Food Bank

Calne Food Bank – Please visit their website for details of their opening times - [www.calnefoodbank.co.uk](http://www.calnefoodbank.co.uk)

They are currently asking for: **Tinned vegetables Tinned tomatoes Instant noodles Small Pasta Sauces**

Please make sure that any food donated is in date.



## Dates for your diary

**All are very welcome to come along and join in.**

**Tuesday December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup>.** (Not 24<sup>th</sup>)

**Coffee and Chat**

**Time: 10.00am - 11.30am**

**Venue: Church Hall**

**Wednesday December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, not 25<sup>th</sup>.**

**Warm Spaces Free food and drink for all**

**Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm**

**Venue: Church Hall**

**Wednesday December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Poetry for all with Stephen Steadman**

**Time: 7.30pm**

**Venue: Church Hall**

**Refreshments included**

**Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Craft Event**

**Time: 11.00pm**

**Venue: Church**

**Refreshments included.**

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

**Advent Lunch**

**Time: 12.15pm Venue: Church Hall**

**and**

**Carols by Candlelight Service**

**Time: 6.00pm Venue: Methodist Church**



## Poetry Evening Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm in the Church Hall



Poetry for all

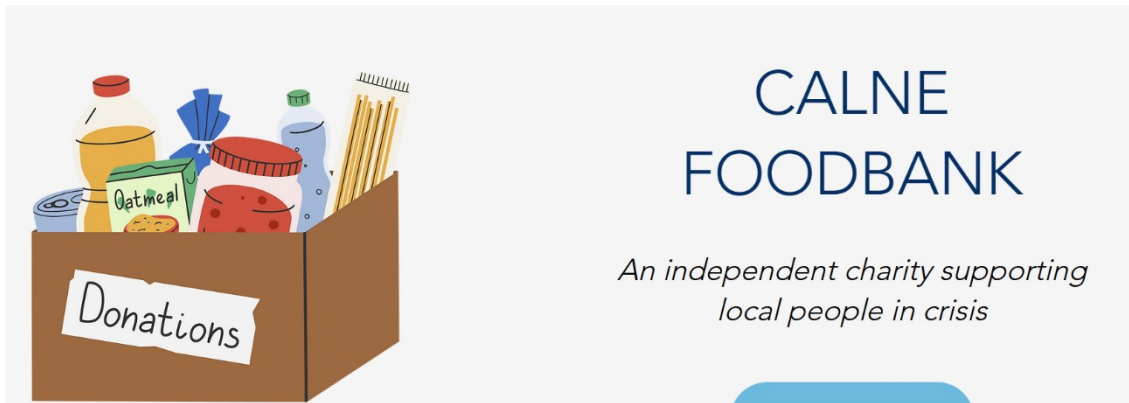
A night of sharing poetry with original poems and long loved classics.  
Refreshments included.

## Christmas Card Tree



As in previous years we will have a branch in the foyer for you to place a Christmas card to our Church Family. This year we are going to send our donations for the cards you haven't sent to the Nasio Trust and Doorway. You can make your donations by BACs or cheque made payable to Calne Methodist Church, making it clear that they are for the Christmas Card Tree, or you can put your cash donation in one of the envelopes in the basket.

**A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE  
A DONATION AT THE CHRISTMAS SPICE  
CONCERT - WE RAISED £533.04 FOR THE  
NASIO TRUST AND DOORWAY**



**WE ARE COLLECTING CHRISTMAS GOODIES FOR THE CALNE FOODBANK PLEASE DONATE SOMETHING IF YOU CAN**



**Christmas Messy Church**

**Calne Methodist Church**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

**From 3.00pm**

All are welcome to this family friendly worship.

If you enjoy crafts and getting messy this is the church for you.

The afternoon includes a craft session, a time of worship and all of us joining together for tea.

Come and enjoy.

A Calne Partnership of Churches Activity.



## The Sound Of Christmas By Alan Titchmarsh

You've heard of Ebenezer Scrooge?  
(The chip upon his shoulder, huge),  
His humbug, no mere man could match it.  
Don't believe me? Ask Bob Cratchit.  
For each and every Christmastide  
With aspect dour and comments snide  
He'd trudge the snowy streets of town  
His features mean, his eyes cast down.  
Avoiding greeting cheerful people  
While bells rang out from tower and steeple  
Celebrating time of Yule  
He'd mumble "Take me for a fool?"  
Tis humbug all these celebrations  
Don't want friends. Have no relations.  
Look at Cratchit, and his brood;  
No coal, no clothes, no drink, no food.  
What right have they to be so merry?  
No turkey, pudding, beer or sherry.  
He moaned into his gin at night  
And pulled the bedclothes right up tight.  
His sleep had been curtailed of late  
By visits from a curious spate  
Of spectre, spirit, apparition  
And he no slave to superstition.  
The moon a shining silver crescent  
Shone on the ghost of Christmas present;  
Following on so swift and fast  
From previous ghost of Christmas past.  
But on this night like beating drum  
The ghost of Christmas yet to come  
Rapped hard upon the frosted pane  
Until an entry it could gain  
And sat upon his threadbare quilt  
The wax upon his candle spilt;  
The flame it flickered, flared then died  
And Scrooge upon his bedstead cried:  
"Tell me ghost, why do you come  
At dead of night with beat of drum?"  
The ghost said nothing, did not linger  
Pointed with a bony finger  
To a vision in the snow  
That lie upon the street below.  
Scrooge descended icy stairs  
Drawn on by distant ghostly airs

Of trumpet, fiddle, drum, bassoon,  
Harp and organ joined in tune  
That echoed through the frosty night  
As moon and stars shone fair and bright.  
“What is it, spirit?” Scrooge enquired,  
His curiosity now fired.  
The mean expression left his face  
And there instead a look of grace;  
A smile, a chuckle joined the sound  
Of Irving Berlin, Holst and found  
The old man smile and softly say  
‘Oh!, Gloria in Excelsis Deo’.  
People gathered now to see  
The miser’s unremitting glee  
As from a small box on the ground  
There came the most angelic sound.  
The ghost of Christmas yet to come  
Had caused old Scrooge to sing and hum  
Forgetting now his daily toil  
As through the air rang ‘Once in Royal’.  
From being a miserable miser,  
Ebenezer Scrooge was wiser.  
Leroy Anderson and Rutter,  
Now became his bread and butter.  
He sees the future, cons it, checks it,  
Passing swiftly over Brexit...  
Turns away from chances botched  
To revel in ‘While Shepherds Watched’.  
A stranger to Roget’s Thesaurus  
He sang the ‘Alleluia’ Chorus,  
Heard the wondrous Christmas story,  
‘Angels from the Realms of Glory’.  
He saw his former life was folly,  
Decked the halls with boughs of holly.  
Soon he would forswear the gin  
As his three ships came sailing in.  
Bob Cratchit now was not boracic,  
Thanks to listening to Classic  
On the wireless Scrooge gave him.  
‘God bless us all!’ said Tiny Tim.  
Scrooge himself was henceforth altered,  
His new-found joy it never faltered;  
Festive music we all know  
Can give us all a Christmas Glow.

## Car Parking



Can I remind people that we are allowed to park at Calne Police Station for Sunday morning worship. To do so we must display a relevant permit.

If you do not already have a permit or have changed your car please let me know and I will produce one for you.

To recap, the Police have agreed to us parking on Sunday between 10am and 12.30am and parking permits will need to be used.

We need to keep a register of users and permits will need to be used and displayed at the front of your car.

If you would like to take part in this scheme or need to update your details please let Derek know your name, car make and registration number. Your registration number will be displayed on the permit but no name.

Failure to display a permit could lead to your vehicle being clamped and fined.

Please email me or alternatively let me have your details on a piece of paper on Sundays.

I will endeavour to have new and amended permits to you in January.

Derek 26/11/2024

### Christmas Funnies 2024

- What do snowmen eat for Christmas? Ice cookies
- What do you call a child who doesn't believe in Santa? A rebel without a Claus
- How much did Santa pay for his sleigh? Nothing, it was on the house
- Who is never hungry at Christmas? The turkey — he's always stuffed
- Which of Santa's friends is the most chilled? Jack Frost
- What was Santa's favourite subject in school? Chemis-tree
- What's as big as a Christmas tree but lighter than a feather? A shadow
- How do you get Christmas trees ready for a night out? They get spruced up
- Why did Santa go to the doctor? Because of his 'bad elf'
- Which one of Santa's Reindeer has the best dance moves? Dancer
- What athlete is warmest in winter? A long jumper
- Why doesn't Santa eat junk food? Because it's bad for your elf
- Why can't penguins fly? Because they're not tall enough to be pilots
- How do Christmas trees get their emails? They log-on



## King Witlaf's Drinking Horn By Tennyson (submitted by Brian Bassett)

Witlaf, a king of the Saxons,  
Ere yet his last he breathed,  
To the merry monks of Croyland  
His drinking-horn bequeathed,--

That, whenever they sat at their revels,  
And drank from the golden bowl,  
They might remember the donor,  
And breathe a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,  
And bade the goblet pass;  
In their beards the red wine glistened  
Like dew-drops in the grass.

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,  
They drank to Christ the Lord,  
And to each of the Twelve Apostles,  
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs  
Of the dismal days of yore,  
And as soon as the horn was empty  
They remembered one Saint more.

And the reader droned from the pulpit  
Like the murmur of many bees,  
The legend of good Saint Guthlac,  
And Saint Basil's homilies;

Till the great bells of the convent,  
From their prison in the tower,  
Guthlac and Bartholomaeus,  
Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,  
And the Abbot bowed his head,  
And the flamelets flapped and flickered,  
But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers  
He clutched the golden bowl,  
In which, like a pearl dissolving,  
Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels  
The jovial monks forbore,  
For they cried, "Fill high the goblet!  
We must drink to one Saint more!"

## Minutes of the Annual Church Meeting 3.11.24

Attendance: Michele Gard, Derek Gard, Miriam Crighton, Jacky Purtell, Simon Purtell, Julie Gibson, Stephanie Tucker, Ursula Barham, Janet Boswell, Edith Pearson, Eleanor Bujalska, Richard Heath, Lynda Ruming, Molly Green, Rob Sayers, Ruth Whittard, Robin Legge, Ingi Farrar, Alan Farrar, Edward Barham, Carolyn Cameron, Jan Sayers and Rev Craig Manley

1. Apologies – Caroline Foster, Vera Steadman, Lyn Cooper, Doris Haddrell, Kerensa McCondach and Jill McCondach.
2. Opening Prayers including those we have lost in the last year – Michael Burns and Bryan Tovey.
3. Minutes of the last meeting – agreed and signed
4. Matters Arising – None.
5. Applications for AOB – None.
6. Appointment of the Stewards Team – Derek Gard, Julie Gibson, Lynda Ruming, Richard Heath and Jan Sayers – agreed. Thanks to Jacky Purtell for her time as a steward.

Appointment of the Church Council – Stewards plus Robin Legge, Miriam Crighton, Stephanie Tucker, Eleanor Bujalska, Caroline Foster, Derek Gard, Lyn Cooper, Ursula Barham and Simon Purtell – Jacky Purtell will continue to serve on the Church Council. Amy-Rose Legge is standing down and Carolyn Cameron will continue to look at the Church Council papers and make comments on them but will not be able to attend meetings as they are held on a Thursday evening.

Appointment of Communion Stewards – Stephanie Tucker and Julie Gibson – agreed.

7. Appointment of representatives at the Area Meeting – Miriam Crighton and Derek Gard – agreed
8. Area and Connexion – In September 2025 we will have three ministers in the Area instead of the four we currently have as we do not have enough members across the Area to apply for a new Methodist minister and so the sectors will need to be reorganised which will mean that ministers will have more churches to cover. The Area Exec is looking at ways of supporting the ministers and their churches through the employment of Lay workers who will have a remit for pastoral work, compliance and property. All the churches are being asked to look at their viability and any links they have with other churches. The Area is also currently without a Treasurer since Michael's death which is causing several issues and which the Exec are working to resolve. The Area Exec are now meeting monthly in an attempt to progress these urgent matters. Craig shared that he is also now in charge of Warminster United Church, is the District Scrutineer Superintendent, is the District Safeguarding Superintendent and is on the Connexion Vocations Committee.
9. Partnership of Churches representatives – Derek Gard and Lyn Cooper. This partnership is strengthening and we are very lucky to have Michele Gard to lead the Partnership Messy Church here.

10. Pastoral report - agreed - Thanks to our Pastoral team of Miriam Crighton, Lyn Cooper, Eleanor Bujalska, Vera Steadman and Ursula Barham. We are very grateful to others who visit people in need. Prayer Lunch is an important part of this too. There are 36 members and 16 adherents.
11. Finance Report - agreed. Simon explained that we are in a better position as freewill giving is up.
12. Property Report - agreed and thanks given to all who work on the upkeep of the Church. It was agreed to go forward with the new carpet tile sin the vestibule.
13. Safeguarding Report - agreed. All of our training and DBSs are up to date - Thanks to Jan for all that she does for the church.
14. Fund Raising - After discussion it was decided to support the Nasio Trust as our overseas charity and to continue our support of Doorway. Events run for them will have a 50/50 split of funds raised. Prostate Cancer was also suggested as an additional charity and Molly mentioned the recycling of cards which her previous church had done to raise money for Cancer Research which will be investigated. The Carol Service will as before have a collection for a specific charity and the Coffee and Craft Events will continue to raise money for the Church itself.
15. Church timings in Summer 2025 - we will try this year to meet for worship at 9.30am during June, July and August and then review this. This should enable Ministers and Local Preachers to do an additional service on a Sunday which might help the plan, enable the congregation to do additional things with their Sunday and might allow Steeple Ashton to worship with us online if they have a Local Arrangement they cannot fill. The service at Langley Burrell will be an exception at 11.30am. We will use the hall in January and February for worship starting after the Covenant Service - but we will continue to heat the Church.
16. Application to register the Church for Same Sex Marriages - there was a vote which three members were against, but it was carried by the majority. Craig however stated that like any marriage in the church the couple involved would have to show him that they wanted to do this because of their Christian values and beliefs.
17. AOB - none
18. Date of the next meeting - 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025

The meeting ended with the blessing.





# **CHRISTMAS CRAFTS**

## **CAKES &**

## **COFFEE EVENT**

**SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2024**

**METHODIST CHURCH AND HALL**

**SILVER STREET, CALNE**

**11.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.**

**TRADICRAFT GOODS - FAIRLY TRADED PRODUCTS  
BOOKS, JEWELLERY, CRAFTS,  
HOMEMADE CAKES, PRESERVES & MUCH MORE  
FAIRTRADE TEA & COFFEE  
REFRESHMENTS**



**PLEASE SIGN UP IN THE HALL IF YOU CAN HELP ON THE  
DAY OR PROVIDE A CAKE. WE ARE ALSO COLLECTING  
ITEMS FOR THE TOMBOLA.**



## **Advent Lunch**

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

**12:15 In Church Hall**

**Stuffed Turkey Roll\*  
with  
Roast Potatoes & Vegetables  
+  
Christmas Pudding / Trifle  
+  
Tea/Coffee**

**(\* Vegetarian Option Available)**

Sign-up sheet available in Church Hall early November

**\*\* Please advise Caroline of any food allergies**