

CALNE METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025



Items for future editions can be sent to:

Jan Sayers

The deadline for the January 2026 issue is

Sunday 28th December



The Christmas Truce of 1914 was an unofficial ceasefire during World War I, where British and German soldiers came together in no man's land to celebrate Christmas, exchange gifts, and even play football. The Christmas Truce occurred primarily on

December 24 and 25, 1914. This event took place just five months after the war began, amidst the brutal realities of trench warfare. Soldiers on both sides were experiencing the harsh conditions of winter and the grim realities of a protracted conflict that had already claimed so many lives. Henry Williamson, a nineteen-year-old private in the London Rifle Brigade, wrote to his mother on Boxing Day:

Dear Mother, I am writing from the trenches. It is 11 o'clock in the morning. Beside me is a coke fire, opposite me a 'dug-out' (wet) with straw in it. The ground is sloppy in the actual trench, but frozen elsewhere. In my mouth is a pipe presented by the Princess Mary. In the pipe is tobacco. Of course, you say. But wait. In the pipe is German tobacco. Haha, you say, from a prisoner or found in a captured trench. Oh dear, no! From a German soldier. Yes, a live German soldier from his own trench. Yesterday the British & Germans met & shook hands in the Ground between the trenches, & exchanged souvenirs, & shook hands. Yes, all day Xmas day, & as I write. Marvellous, isn't it?

Last Sunday our section service of worship brought together our churches and community for fellowship, and hospitality with a wonderful meal. The message of the service was to reflect on the advent season whilst preparing for the gift of Christmas. Perhaps *to be still* and remember the true meaning of Christmas despite the difficulties each of us may face in the coming weeks. To find that peace that so often eludes us.... *To be present* in the moment... I once read a blog in which the writer observed on his travels to Japan how to say some basic phrases in Japanese such as, "Where am I?" In Japanese because the answer is self-evident, '*you are here*', the question then has to be, "**Where is here?**"

It is said that most of us spend most of the time anywhere but *here in this moment*. Most of us, most of the time, are living in the past or the future, more fully than we are in the present. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "*We postpone or remember. We do not live in the present, but with reverted eye lament the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround us, stand on tiptoe to foresee the future.*" We are therefore not here. We are in the past or in the future. Let us be here in the moment... **now!**

Matthew and Luke, tell their own Christmas stories of the moment the world changed. Matthew tells of the Wise Men, whilst Luke talks of the shepherds. Matthew reminds us of the brutality of Herod and his soldiers, whilst Luke tells of the compassion and kindness of the innkeeper. During our Carols by Candlelight services, we will hear those familiar words of scripture once more as we gaze at the nativity scene in awe and wonder. We become present in the moment.

Emerson once commented that our relationship to the stars, to our lives, would be radically different if the stars came out only **once** every thousand years. The environmentalist Paul Hawken accepts that observation, and comments, “Instead, the stars come out every night, and we watch television.” A star once changed the world forever, signifying the true Christmas message of peace. That message survives even in a troubled and divisive violent world that we live in today.

For a moment in 1914, the spirit of Christmas stilled the sounds of death and destruction, replacing them with a common sense of peace and fellowship. As a young soldier truly *being present in that moment* once wrote, *‘Marvellous, isn't it?’* At Christmas we acknowledge that we are not on our own even amid the messiness of our world and lives, God is present beside us. May we all *be present* in the moments of peace and love the Christ Child brings as we celebrate his birth once more. *The Peace of the Lord be with you*, Happy Christmas, **Craig and Elizabeth**



Forthcoming Services:

7 th December	Our Worship Leaders
14 th December	Rev Roy Fowler including Holy Communion
21 st December	Mr Derek Gard
21 st December	Carol Service 6.00pm
24 th December	Midnight Communion at the Baptist Church 11.30pm
25 th December	Mrs Michele Gard 10.00am
28 th December	NO SERVICE

Calne Food Bank

Calne Food Bank – Please visit their website for details of their opening times -
www.calnefoodbank.co.uk



Refugee Prayer Focus December 2025

Let us remember those who are in the “Holy Land” trying to pray for friends and relatives. Be with them, give flight to their words. May their words and their trust be seen and heard.
Amen



**Sunday
14 December**

**Calne Methodist
Church
3.00pm – 6.00pm**

A relaxed and informal church with a warm welcome for everyone. Crafts, songs, games and a chance to make a mess and enjoy tea together.

No need to book – just come and join in!

Children must be accompanied by an adult please.

A Calne Partnership of Churches activity

Advent and Christmas Theme 2025

We are using the Methodist Church theme this year.




'Gifted' will remind people of their inherent worth and beauty – not because of what they've done, or what they can give – but because of who they are.

Gifted:

- is for everyone in our churches and beyond: both believers rejoicing at God's gift of Jesus, and those who might find the season more wearying than wonderful.
- reaches out to people longing for transformation but feeling stuck. For those searching for something more, something real – but unsure where to look.

Gifted is the Methodist Church's open invitation, speaking the good news to people that they matter. That they are Beloved. Created with infinite care. A gift to the world, just as they are.

Date	Leader	Weekly Theme	Object
7 December	Worship Leaders and Choir	The Orange in the Stocking	
14 December Includes Holy Communion	Rev Roy Fowler	Give Hope	
21 December	Derek Gard	With love from God	
25 December 10.00am	Michele Gard	The Best Gift	



Pastoral News

We praise the Lord for Advent and the coming of Jesus. It was fabulous after the sector service with the number of people who stayed for the Advent meal. There was a wonderful atmosphere and it was good to share fellowship with members of other churches.

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 because they have lost a loved one or they are finding the cost of energy and food very hard to bear.

We pray: for those who are having operations in December and January 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 all those who come to Warm Spaces. May they know peace and joy this Christmas.

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.

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.



December Dates for your diary

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

Tuesday 2nd 9th 16th & 23rd

Coffee and Chat

Time: 10.00am - 11.30am

Venue: Church Hall

Wednesday 3rd 10th 17th

Warm Spaces

Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm

Venue: Church Hall

Saturday December 6th

Christmas Craft Fair

Time: 11.00pm till 2.00pm

Venue: Church and Church Hall

Thursday December 11th

And January 8th 2026

CHAT (Come Hear and Talk)

Ladies Group

Time: 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Venue: The Manse

Sunday December 21st

Carols by Candlelight Service

Time: 6.00pm

Venue: Calne Methodist Church

Refreshments after Service

Sunday January 18th 2026

Partnership Service

Time: 6.00pm

Venue: St Mary's Parish Church

Crazy Christmas Wishes by Donna Ashworth

May your house be quite crazy this Christmas
May your tree be awash with reflection
May the messiness render your life a success
May you see that the gift is connection
May you want for no prize in your stocking
For you know the true joys don't sit there
They walk through the door with a pink winter's nose
And throw their scarves on your chair
May your mind be quite noisy this Christmas
May your brain be at task day and night
Remembering how their laughs filled up the room
And the moments they held you so tight
May you wake up with eyes that are open
to seeking life's joy everywhere
May you fail to see flaws or the things you forgot
May you recognise love doesn't care
May your heart be quite crazy this Christmas
May your inner child come for the ride
May you laugh with abandon and love that way too
May those ripples be felt far and wide



Donna Ashworth is a Scottish poet and author known for her widely shared poetry, which gained significant popularity during the COVID-19 lockdown. Her work often focuses on themes of mental health, resilience, and self-acceptance, with a mission to provide comfort and connection through words. Ashworth has published numerous bestselling collections, including *To the Women* and *Wild Hope*, and uses social media to share her poetry with millions of followers.

Submitted by Michele Gard

“Christmas Carol” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Ring out, ye bells!

All Nature swells

With gladness at the wondrous story,—

The world was lorn,

But Christ is born

To change our sadness into glory.

Sing, earthlings, sing!

To-night a King

Hath come from heaven’s high throne to bless us.

The outstretched hand

O’er all the land

Is raised in pity to caress us.

Come at his call;

Be joyful all;

Away with mourning and with sadness!

The heavenly choir

With holy fire

Their voices raise in songs of gladness.

The darkness breaks

And Dawn awakes,

Her cheeks suffused with youthful blushes.

The rocks and stones

In holy tones

Are singing sweeter than the thrushes.

Then why should we

In silence be,

When Nature lends her voice to praises;

When heaven and earth

Proclaim the truth

Of Him for whom that lone star blazes?

No, be not still,

But with a will

Strike all your harps and set them ringing;

On hill and heath

Let every breath

Throw all its power into singing!

Submitted by Derek Gard

The Best Christmas Jokes Of All Time – Probably!

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?

Nothing – it was on the house.

A gingerbread man went to the doctor's complaining of a sore knee.

"A sore knee?" the doctor said. "Have you tried icing it?"

Last Christmas I bought my friend a lie detector as a gift.

"Oh... I love it!" she said.

"We'll see," I said.

How did the bauble know that she was addicted to Christmas?

She'd been hooked on Christmas trees all her life.

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Tinsilitis.

Why was the snowman embarrassed when he was spotted rummaging through a bag of carrots?

He was caught picking his nose.

How did Scrooge win the football game?

The Ghost of Christmas passed.

Why are mummies such big fans of Christmas?

Because they enjoy wrapping.

I have this incredible ability to predict what's inside a wrapped present.

It's a gift.

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?

They're always dropping their needles.

Why did the red-nosed reindeer help the old lady cross the road?

It would have been Rudolph him not to.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite.

Why did no-one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen on eBay?

Because they were two deer

Derek

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART IN THE ECLIPSE PLAY AND CONCERT

— more photos soon on the website.



Thank you to Rev Christine Fowler for sharing these Advent poems with us.

Journeying Through Advent.

Journeying:

There shone a star at the start of creation
Beaming so brightly through time and through space;
Sign of God's presence, divine conflagration
Opening the way for the whole human race.
Then a new star marked the birth place of Jesus,
Herald of hope at the coming of God.
Hearing again now, the story has caught us,
We follow footsteps the shepherds once trod.
That was the star that shone over Christmas
Leading the Magi, to love and to grace,
Leading us still, to the God who has sought us,
Looking with longing, from each child's face.

CF

Christman Eve: Arriving.

It was unobtrusive the Coming.
Seen and yet not seen
Hidden by lack of concealment,
distinguished by being ordinary.
Our fancy dresses it with heavenly music, light and
tinselled angels:
But that was not the way of it at the Coming.
Lord God, this is the miracle!
Not vision, star or angel.
But that is could have been just any child, in any land
and at any time.
This is the miracle
That looking into the eyes of any child, or woman or
man,
We may look straight into the eyes of God.
We stumble on his coming unaware. Anon.

**1. Having spent 7 Christmases in sunny climes, I
offer this.**

Christmas in the sunshine
Heat instead of cold
Flowers instead of freezing
Skies that shine like gold.
Christmas in the tropics
Seasons not so clear
But the Christmas story
That is what we hear.
Inner space is timeless
God is everywhere
Cries of new-born babies
Are the same from here.
When we nurture wonder
And in love abound

There will be new stories
In our Southern lands.
So sing the Christmas story
Carol South and North
Sing in different seasons
Nature's song of birth
Raise your praise to heaven
Lift both joy and pain
For the Christmas child
Comes to earth again.
CF



CHRISTMAS CRAFTS CAKES & COFFEE EVENT

**SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER, 2025
METHODIST CHURCH AND HALL
SILVER STREET, CALNE
11.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.**

**CRAFT STALLS,
HOMEMADE CAKES & MORE.
FAIRLY TRADED TEA & COFFEE
REFRESHMENTS**

