

DECEMBER 2020 and JANUARY 2021

TOGETHER



METHODIST CHURCHES

PORTISHEAD
High Street

REDCLIFFE BAY
Queens Road

Minister: Revd Nick Moxon

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From Rev Nick Moxon

We have heard a lot from the government recently giving us guidelines and passing restrictions so that Christmas won't be cancelled. The more I have heard this phrase the more I have disliked it. It is true that Christmas will inevitably be different this year and that is disappointing. We won't be able to spend as much time with our families (if we are able to see them at all - as I write this letter we are still unsure about that). We won't be able to meet up with friends or attend community events and we won't be able to attend church as we have done over the years.

But Christmas will not be cancelled and can't be cancelled. Whilst activities will be unusual the core message of the season remains as true and as strong as ever. The truth around Christmas is the birth of a baby, born into poverty to two young parents who came to bring salvation to all people. The wonderful hope at Christmas is that we celebrate the One who came to live among us as one of us - this celebration cannot and will not be cancelled.

One activity that I am disappointed won't be happening as it normally does is the singing of carols. I have shared before that I would sing Christmas carols all year round if I could. I love the story they tell and the truths they communicate. One of my absolute favourites is 'O Come, all ye faithful'. For me it's a gathering carol - calling us to come together to sing, celebrate and adore Jesus. Even though we may not be able to meet 'in the flesh' this year to celebrate I do pray that we will be joined together by God's presence so that, wherever we are and however we are experiencing Christmas this year, we will be able to join our voices with all the choirs of heaven and earth singing:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

May you know God's hope, compassion, peace, love and joy this Christmas time.

Nick

CHURCH CALENDAR

Hopefully lockdown restrictions will be relaxed from 2nd December. If permitted the following are planned:

December

- 2nd Wednesday_ 8.00pm Bible Study (Zoom)
9.00 pm Prayers
- 6th Sunday 10.00am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
- 10th Thursday 10.00 -10.45 am Zoom Coffee Morning
- 12th Saturday 3.00 pm Outdoor Carols and Nativity Tableau
(Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
- 13th Sunday 10.00am Holy Communion (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Holy Communion (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
6.30 and 8.00 pm Drive in Carol Service (at Sainsbury's)
Churches Together in Portishead
- 16th Wednesday 2.00 pm Wednesday Focus (Redcliffe Bay)
'The greatest story ever told' presented by Tim Lewis
and Sheila Furneaux in music reading and song
8.00pm Bible Study (Zoom)
9.00 pm Prayers
- 17th Thursday 10.00 -10.45 am Zoom Coffee Morning
- 20th Sunday 10.00 am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00 am Zoom Service on line
11.30 am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
6.00 pm Recorded Zoom Carol Service on line
- 24th Thursday CHRISTMAS EVE
5.00 pm Christingle Service on line - booking required.
7.00 pm Holy Communion (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
followed by organ music.
11.30 pm Holy Communion (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
- 25th Friday CHRISTMAS DAY
10.00 am Family Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
- 27th Sunday No Services

January 2001

- 3rd Sunday 10.00 am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00 am Zoom Service on line
11.30 am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
- 6th Wednesday 8.00pm Bible Study (Zoom)
9.00 pm Prayers
- 7th Thursday 10.00 -10.45 am Zoom Coffee Morning
- 10th Sunday 10.00am Covenant Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Covenant Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
- 17th Sunday 10.00am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon
- 20th Wednesday 8.00pm Bible Study (Zoom)
9.00 pm Prayers
- 21st Thursday 10.00 -10.45 am Zoom Coffee Morning
- 24th Sunday 10.00am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Peter Mortlock
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Peter Mortlock
- 31st Sunday 10.00am Morning Service (Portishead) Rev Nick Moxon
10.00am Zoom Service on line
11.30am Morning Service (Redcliffe Bay) Rev Nick Moxon

Services in the Churches:

To meet social distancing requirements, families will need to be spaced 2 metres from anyone else. Seating has been adjusted so that this can be achieved, but the seating capacity is reduced. **We therefore require everyone intending to come to pre-book, by telephoning Pat Lloyd (848374) for Portishead or Sue Mason (849553) for Redcliffe Bay up till 5pm on the day before the Service.** You are required to wear a face mask and keep 2m from others arriving or departing. Sanitiser dispensers are provided and you are asked to apply a small amount to your hands and rub them together. Singing is not allowed, no books or paper notices will be available, but the projection screens will be in use. The service will be shorter – about 30 to 40 minutes and when you leave you may be asked to go out by a different door to avoid too many people bunching, so infringing the social distancing rule. Please take coats into the worship area with you. Outside “socialising” is not permitted.

Stewards will be available to help you with the arrangements. We hope that everyone will feel our old sense of worship once the service starts.



Online Zoom Service

The Portishead Sunday Service will be broadcast on-line at 10.00 am each Sunday. If you would like to join in please log on just before

10am.to:

www.portisheadmethodist.wixsite.com/worship

Each week an e-mail is sent with a Pastoral Letter and details of the following Sunday's Worship.

For those who don't have access to the internet you will be able to use a worship sheet, which is delivered each week., For those unable to join in at 10 am on Sunday the worship will be recorded and accessible on the website at any time after that point.

On 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month there is a Bible Study from 8.00 – 8.45 pm, and Prayers for 15 minutes at 9.00pm - access through the link above. (These will not be recorded.)

If you would like to be on the circulation for the worship sheet please contact the Church Office or leave a message via "Contact us" on the Redcliffe Bay web site.

This magazine is being distributed, either as an attachment for those on e-mail or a printed copy for those who receive the pastoral letter though their letterbox.

GENERAL NEWS

COMMUNITY DRIVE THROUGH CAROLS.

Sunday 13th December 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm Churches Together in Portishead Community Drive through Carols event, taking place in Sainsbury's car park. Decorate your cars, bring a blanket and take in the excitement and joy of carols old and



new as we engage with the Christmas story in a new way. Suitable for all ages. Please do invite your neighbours and friends. We want this to be a real blessing for the town. Details will be released soon.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

initiatives we are starting to keep people in touch with each other:
Monday Morning Mail – From 30th November there will be an opportunity for you to send an e-mail to a group within the church, sharing what you have been doing over the past week. Being part of this group means that you will also receive news from everyone else. If you would like to be a part of this group please let Fran know.

Fortnightly Zoom coffee morning - on a Thursday morning from 10-10.45am via Zoom You can find the link here:

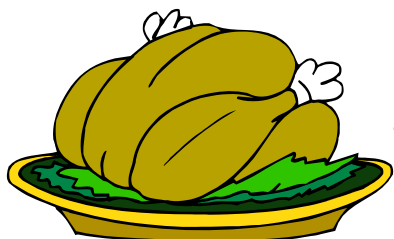
<https://portisheadmethodist.wixsite.com/worship/coffee-chat>

MYSTERY BOOK AND JIGSAW DELIVERY. High St. has a number of reading books and jigsaws at church which we would like to share with anyone. If you are interested in receiving a book and a jigsaw please get in touch with Fran in the office. We will then drop off your mystery items and pick them up when you've finished with them.

OUTDOOR CAROLS AND NATIVITY TABLEAU

If permitted by lockdown rules there will be an event for both Churches in the car park at Redcliffe Bay at 3.00 pm on Saturday 12th December. Pre booking is requested, and if overbooked there will be a second session at 4.00 pm. To book please phone Ray Burgin Tel. 844115 before mid day on 12th.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH



The Christmas Day lunch is taking place as a delivery service, so we will be preparing veg as usual on Christmas Eve and then cooking and plating up on Christmas Day, with a team delivering meals. If you know anyone who would appreciate receiving a meal please let Fran know so

they can receive an invitation.



INTER FAITH WEEK

An open letter from the Rev Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Conference and Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, to mark Inter Faith Week 2020.

Dear Brothers and Sisters of all Faiths,

We greet you all at the beginning of this Inter-Faith Week 2020 with good wishes of peace. This is an occasion when we celebrate our friendships and also when we consider what we share in common.

The Methodist people are known to be friends of all and enemies of none. That friendship we would like to extend to you again this year, with respect, and indeed love.

John Wesley, the father of Methodism, taught us to acknowledge the work of God in all peoples of faith. To recognise the finger of God, to rejoice in God's work, and praise God with thanksgiving for God's presence and work amongst people of all faiths.

We share with you a life of dedication to our traditions and faith. This year in particular Methodist People have been reflecting on the fact that in spite of all the suffering and struggles we have faced collectively as a Kingdom and worldwide that the best of all is that God is still with us. This we choose to affirm in faith and hope of a better future.

With renewed friendship and every blessing,

The Rev Richard Teal,

Carolyn Lawrence.

COUNSELLING SERVICE CONTINUES TO OFFER VITAL SUPPORT

Wellspring Counselling has been caring for people across North Somerset since 1994. The service provides affordable, professional counselling for adults as well as donation-based counselling for young people aged 11 to 18.

Wellspring has counsellors available to help adults with a wide range of concerns, including anxiety, depression, relationship issues, abuse and bereavement. All counsellors are professionally trained, have regular clinical supervision and engage in Continued Professional Development.

Since the pandemic hit and the country first went into lockdown in March, Wellspring has adapted its services and is currently working

with clients remotely, offering the option of video calls or telephone sessions during the day or evening. The continuation of this much-needed service has been a lifeline for many who have been struggling with their mental health in these difficult and unprecedented times.

If you think counselling could benefit you please call the reception team on 01275 810879 or email

reception@wellspringcounselling.org.uk

For more information visit www.wellspringcounselling.org.uk

REFLECTIONS FROM BRAZIL: the Amazon mission boat

Earlier this year before lockdown, Carolyn Lawrence visited the Methodist Church in Brazil. Here, she shares some of her reflections on a trip to see how a boat brings support to isolated Amazon villages.

The Project Mission Amazon, known as the Boat Methodist Hospital is a social project of the Methodist Church of Brazil to the Amazon Missionary Region (REMA) which provides assistance in areas of health, education and spiritual teaching to riverside and indigenous communities along the river. The boat we visited, 'Manfred Grellert', was donated to the Methodist Church in 2001 by World Vision. Since then many have heard and responded to the gospel and have also received miracles. The boat is welcomed with open arms in all the communities it visits. Over the 19 years that the mission boat has been operating they have served well over 150,000 people and the leaders are trusting God for his provision for this to continue.



There are around 24 million people living in the remote Amazon region of the country and there is a lot of poverty amongst these communities, many of whom rely on fishing, hunting and subsistence farming for their living. Illiteracy stands at 25% and for every 1000 children, 39 die before they are one year of age. This difficult situation is often made worse by natural events such as

floods (the rainy season is November to April), drought (the dry season is May to October), disease and conflicts between those who come to exploit the land. There are more than 30,000 riverside villages in the Amazon, most of whom have no evangelical presence.

The goals of the mission boat are to:

- Announce the gospel and salvation in Jesus Christ.
- Contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of riverside and indigenous families through health care.
- Contribute to raising the educational levels of people in the communities of all ages.
- Provide environmentally friendly practices, to reflect on environmental issues and change the way of thinking and acting of families in relation to sustainable development.
- Train community leaders.
- Reduce the frequency of disease caused by lack of basic sanitation and drinking water.

It was a wonderful privilege to visit the mission boat and to hear about the valuable work done by Pastors Max and Jessica, the boat's captain, Paulo and their teams. The boat is taken out six times a year for up to a week at a time and last year, between March and December, reached over 10,000 people! Not all the volunteers on the teams are Christians but everyone usually joins in the regular devotionals on the boat when they are out on mission trips and some volunteers have become Christians themselves as a result of these trips.

Pastors Max and Jessica gather groups of volunteers from Brazil and overseas with skills as evangelists, health care, dental care, children's outreach, discipling, leading of classes on environmental issues and teaching. As people in these communities have responded to the gospel, they have planted churches and established and trained local leaders to pastor those coming to faith.

Sadly, since Covid-19, the boat has been unable to visit these communities and has been undergoing necessary maintenance, but the team have managed to get to some of the remote villages by chartering a plane to take essential supplies and check on the health and well being of the communities they serve.

As we talked to Pastor Max about the mission boat he reminded us that you need the gospel to transform lives. He said, 'Other religions are not afraid to share their faith so neither should we be as Christians. We shouldn't judge people but we do need to talk about Christ. The gospel will touch their lives.'

Both Pastor Max and Bishop Fabio talked about the importance of social action and evangelism going hand in hand and this mission boat is a wonderful example of that in practice reaching people along the Amazon with the love of Jesus in word and deed.

This important ministry also reminds us that we are called to reach out to people in our own communities especially at this time when many are going through difficulties and facing anxiety about health, finances and jobs. It is a real blessing and privilege for us to be able to share the hope and love of Jesus as we remember that God is always with us.

Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, 2020 - 2021.

BIBLE SOCIETY Q&A

This article represents the author's personal view. It accords with Bible Society's values, but is not intended to express their position as an organisation.

Question: Is Christmas really a pagan festival?

Answer:

Christians haven't always been keen on Christmas. Oliver Cromwell famously banned it during his time as Lord Protector (1653-58) – markets were ordered to stay open on Christmas Day, and in London soldiers went on patrol seizing Christmas dinners. Even earlier, on December 19, 1643, a solemn ordinance condemned 'the sins of our forefathers, who have turned this feast, pretending the memory of Christ, into an extreme forgetfulness of him, by giving liberty to carnal and sensual delights'.

Cromwell and his Puritans might have been good examples of Mr Scrooge and the Grinch, but they weren't the only ones. All through history, there have been Christians who've been uneasy about seeing Christmas as an excuse for a party – and ministers today who urge their congregations to remember 'the real meaning of Christmas' are following in their footsteps.

But what is that 'real meaning'? Look back into history, and it's complicated. There have been midwinter feasts since the dawn of recorded time. Yule was kept as a festival by Germanic peoples before they were ever Christians. The Romans had Saturnalia, which



was a riotous time for everyone, slaves and free, to let their hair down and enjoy themselves.

But that's not the same, of course, as saying that Christmas has 'pagan roots', as we commonly hear nowadays. The Church has been deeply embedded into the culture of historically Christian countries for many centuries, so it's a bit of a misleading question. The question Christians began to ask was, 'When is the right time to celebrate the birth of Christ?'

Of course, no one knows exactly when Christ was born, so the answers were, well, a bit creative. In his book, *Hark! The biography of Christmas* (Lion, 2017), Paul Kerensa points out that the early Church Fathers had various suggestions: Clement of Alexandria in AD 200 thought it might be 20 May or 20 or 21 April, for instance. Or he might have been born on 25 March, because that was the first day of spring and Jesus came to bring a new creation. Or – and this is complicated – the Jews had a tradition that prophets had an 'integral age', so their lifespans were perfectly designed to have their conception (or possibly birth) and death on the same date. So Tertullian of Carthage, using John's Gospel, calculated that if Jesus was conceived on 14 Nisan (25 March in the Roman calendar) he would have been born on 25 December. And this just happened to be the date of the popular Roman 'natalis Invicti' festival (the 'birth of the Unconquerable Sun'), on the winter solstice in the old Julian Calendar.

It's not surprising, then, that the Roman-centred Church should have taken it over for Christian purposes. In AD 350, Pope Julius made it official – and Christmas was born.

Is Christmas Christian – or pagan? At one level, it's obviously Christian. European countries have been culturally Christian for at least a thousand years, and some for much longer. But midwinter festivals go back even further than that.

So how should Christians respond to what's seen as the increasing 'secularisation' of Christmas – cards without nativity scenes, rampant consumerism, religion squeezed off the TV schedules? Perhaps the answer isn't to complain about it – 25 December is an artificial date, after all – but to make the very most of the opportunity it brings. We ought to be able to out-compete the world on this. After all, we have

the best stories, the best music, the best venues – and the best message. Christ is born to be the saviour of the world – and we don't need to know the date to be joyful about it.

This article was written Mark Woods, who is Bible Society's Editor, 16 December 2019.

Rev CHRIS JUDSON

Rev Chris Judson, Team Pastor in the Portishead Anglican Church will be leaving after Christmas to take up the role of Rector of the Huntspills and Mark Churches. She will be known to many for her involvements in local activities, in the 10 years she has served in here, including Churches Together in Portishead. We send her our best wishes in her new role.

ON THE WEB

In Christ Alone <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKJfs8C14yc>

A performance by the National Methodist Choir of Great Britain.

See also Matt Beckingham's YouTube channel :

(www.youtube.com/mattbeckingham)

For 22 Christmas Hymns and Carols:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gk7c5GJUGBs>

PRAYERS



Please pray for Becky Cox, the new Chaplain at Gordano School, where she is already busy.

Please pray for Joanna Pritchett, Centre Manager - Gordano Area Christians Against Poverty, the people she is helping to find a pathway out of debt and those who are suddenly struggling financially due to lockdown.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021

(formally Women's World Day Of Prayer) Due to the coronavirus restrictions & after much prayerful thought it has been decided to cancel next year's service. This was due to be held at St Joseph's

Catholic Church on 5th March. If anyone would like a service booklet please let me know and I will deliver one to you.

Sheila Tel.842014



PORTISHEAD

Office:01275 844917

website: www.portisheadmethodistchurch.co.uk

On Twitter : [Follow@PortisheadMC](https://twitter.com/Follow@PortisheadMC)

CHRISTMAS SERVICES IN CHURCH

Covid regulations permitting there will be an 11.30 pm Service of Holy Communion on Christmas Eve and a Joint Family Celebration at 10.00 am on Christmas Day. Please pre-book. The Christingle Service will be a Zoom Service on-line, but please register in advance to receive a pack.

CHRISTMAS GIFT TREE

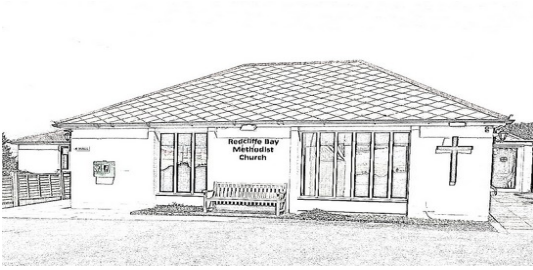
Once again High Street has a Christmas tree laden with gift tags to enable local people to support those who will be in need over Christmas.

SHOEBOXES

A big thank you to everybody who has supported the Shoebox appeal. I know many of you have 'packed your Shoebox' on line. Thank you for doing that, those boxes are being processed as this goes to press. Also a big thank you for those of you that have managed to fill your own boxes, and to those of you who generously knitted donated and gifted. These boxes are currently awaiting collection. However as soon as the necessary buildings can be opened they will be on their way. In time I should be able to give you a numbers update. Thank you again.

Many blessings

May



REDCLIFFE BAY

Website: www.redcliffebaymethodistchurch.org.uk

REMEMBRANCE

As lockdown prevented a service in church Jenny created a special Remembrance display on the bank in the lower garden. An extra invitation on the gate encouraged passers by to visit it.



PRAYER CHAIN To take part, or if there is a prayer need, please contact Sue Mason Tel. 849553.



WEDNESDAY FOCUS

Although meetings remain cancelled for the rest of the year. Tim and Sheila are (legislation permitting!) coming on what would have been our carols afternoon to present 'the greatest story ever told' in words and music. It will be at the slightly earlier time of 2pm on Wednesday 16th December. Please book places with Philip Baldwin (pbmusician@btinternet.com) Tel. 843593

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION

Covid regulations permitting we will have a Service of Holy Communion at 7.00 pm on Christmas Eve after which Philip will play some appropriate music. As usual pre booking is requested.

POSTSCRIPTS

Thank God for the church ladies with typewriters or word processors. These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: Jesus Walks on the Water.

The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir.

They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church.

Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm . Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Please pass copy for the February issue to:
Ray Burgin, 11 Hillcrest Rd. Portishead BS20 8HS
Tel. 844115 e-mail rayburgin@hotmail.co.uk
by SUNDAY 17th January

Pastor George was opening his Christmas cards one December morning. Out of one the cards came a single sheet of paper on it was written only one word: 'Fool'. The following Sunday, in church, Pastor George announced to the assembled congregation, 'I have known many people who have written notes to me and forgotten to sign their names. But this week I received a note from someone who signed his name and had forgotten to write a letter.'