



Merry Christmas

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11



The United Reformed Church

KINDLE

Newsletter of the Romford United Reformed Churches at Western Road and Heaton Way

December 2020

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Advent is upon us, a time of watching, waiting and preparation.

This year more than other years we are in a time of waiting, waiting to see what restrictions we will be experiencing and whether families and friends can meet up over the festive season.

Despite the uncertainty of the situation in our country and around the world due to Covid 19, the watching and waiting of Advent is the same. We are watching with and for God and waiting on and for God as we prepare ourselves to welcome the Christ child.

At the first Christmas Jesus was born into an uncertain situation, the land was occupied by a foreign power with a despotic puppet king, life was cheap and fear rife. Two millennia later Jesus is born again into a world of uncertainty, fear and division are commonplace, the wealth inequality that exists means life is cheap.

The marking of Advent and celebration of Christmas 2020 will be different for us all, but the Advent hope and Christmas message remain the same. Emmanuel, God with us is come. Let us rejoice and celebrate.

I hope all of us have a worthwhile Advent and a joyful Christmas.

Alison

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Letters!

As each Kindle appears it is always interesting to read the opening letter, written either by the Minister or an Elder. These letters are always thought-provoking, and sometimes make our Christian journey more interesting. So, this is to thank all those who put pen to paper every month to help us on our way. Please continue to stimulate our thinking, especially at this time of our 'separation'.

Betty

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As Mother Teresa of Calcutta wrote

"Jesus is the Word - to be spoken.
Jesus is the truth - to be told.
Jesus is the light - to be lit.
Jesus is the joy - to be shared.
Jesus is the peace - to be given.
Jesus is the naked - to be clothed.
Jesus is the homeless - to be taken in.
Jesus is the sick - to be healed.
Jesus is the lonely - to be befriended
Jesus is the unwanted - to be wanted.
Jesus is the prisoner to be visited, but above all
Jesus is Love - to be revealed.

Fiona

Sundays in Advent

All services will be on zoom until further notice.



The children and young people will be reading Sunday by Sunday as the worship leader lights the advent candles. You might like to have candles and light them at the same time.

Family Nativity Service. 10.00 on December 13th. Please can everyone attending the service on 13th either dress up as a character from the nativity story or have a symbol that speaks of the story. We will tell the story by spotlighting the characters and

symbols.

Carols by Candlelight 6.00 on 20th December. Please remember to have a candle(s) ready for the service.

Midnight Communion 11.30p.m. 24th December

Christmas Day 10.00am on 25th December

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Advent in Art

Wednesdays 2nd 9th 16th & 23rd December 7.15pm for 7.30pm Zoom

An opportunity to reflect on and discuss some Advent themes using different works of art. Each week we will look at a different theme: light, watching & waiting, people, nativity. All welcome

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83719587235?pwd=TWFKQTFTUlpKVWg2Z2plS25lY1VBUT09>

Meeting ID: 837 1958 7235

Passcode: 774085

Dial by your location

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 837 1958 7235

Passcode: 774085

If you are going to join by telephone, please let Alison know so copies of the pictures can be provided.



It is with great delight that we will welcome the following members to serve as Elders for the next three years, they are Jean Morrison, Joanne Cox, Pauline Collier and Jim Rivers. They will be officially welcomed and for Jo and Pauline inducted at the Communion Service in January. For many of the congregation much of what Elders do is unseen but they are there working for our church.

We thank those who are retiring for at least a year, having a Sabbatical, Alec, Fiona and Gill for all that they have done over the years .Also we thank Ceri for the many years as our Lettings Officer, she will still be a serving Elder and can help the new volunteer settle into the role .

Jill Cottrell will serve as the Treasurer with Fiona supporting her. They have just changed title roles but will continue to work together.

Gill is retiring from the Secretaries role having shared out many of the jobs she used to do. A named person will be elected from the Eldership shortly and we will let you know who is doing what in the next issue of Kindle.

The Cross has proved a great talking point for us and for the passers-by. Gill and Jill enjoy chats with them when we change the additions. We hope the Christmas one looks cheerful. For Easter, we hope to tie small plastic jars to the cross which can be filled with water so on Easter morning as we add the flowers they will last longer. It is an experiment so we will review it afterwards.

Please can you trim the flowers you bring to have shorter stems.

Jill Cottrell writes.

Gill and I went down to church and having previously removed the ribbons and harvest leaves and fruit, we decorated the cross with some beautiful poppies which Gill arranged to great effect. The poppies which lots of people had coloured in we attached to the nearby window as we felt the cross would look too crowded with these by the time the wooden crosses were added.

Gill puts a lot of time into thinking what can go on the cross next and preparing whatever is needed, so thank you very much Gill for all you continue to do.

Thank you for the donations for the British Legion, I delivered £100 to them.

Shoe Boxes

Shoebboxes can be delivered as soon as possible to the Entertainer in the Brewery, a thank you to all who have already delivered theirs.

Jill Cottrell writes, Trevor and I collected the shoe boxes from church and delivered them to The Entertainer toy shop in the Brewery shopping centre, the lady who received them was very pleased to have them. A big thank you goes to everyone who filled a shoe box, whether you filled an actual box or did it on line, thank you too to Christine who suggested the idea and to Gill for getting the details and information.

If you can deliver Christmas Postcards to a street in Gidea Park, please let Gill know so she can deliver a pile to you and we can cover the area like we did before. Thank you in advance.

Gill

Envelopes

I hope to be able to distribute the offertory envelopes to those who use them during December, if I don't manage to deliver some they will be available in church as and when we are able to gather for worship again. We are very grateful that people continue to put their offertory aside each week.

Thank you,

Jill Cottrell

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Hope

There was never a day so misty and grey, that the blue was not somewhere above it
There is never a mountain top so bleak, that some little flower does not love it
There was never a night so dreary and dark that the stars were not somewhere shining
There is never a cloud so heavy and black that has not a silver lining.

Found by Olive

This piece is taken from the weekly round-up of news/information from across Thames North Synod. Gill and I both liked the idea and wanted to share it and challenge everyone to take part even if your window is not visible from the road.

Alison

Christmas Challenge

Here in the Luton and Dunstable Cluster of Heart Local Area Group we, like most churches, are faced with a different Christmas. In this strange year when we are not sure how we will celebrate Christmas I have invited members to decorate a window of their house, one that can be seen from the road, with something to cheer people as they pass by, and remind them that although things are different and we may not be able to meet together we are still celebrating the joy of Christmas.



In addition the churches that have a window clearly visible from the road are encouraged to decorate that window with pictures and a greeting and then leave lights on in the days before Christmas so that the light of Christmas shines in the community. Window decorations can be created using black silhouettes cut from card and filled with multi-coloured tissue paper, or cellophane sweetie wrappers, you know the ones, to create stained glass window effects, or trace pictures onto a clear acetate and colour in with permanent markers.



The more adventurous could make window gels by tracing outlines in window glass paint paste onto polythene, and then filling with a 50:50 mix of PVA/water coloured with inks. This dries clear and then can be peeled off the polythene and will stick to the window. Whatever you use it is best to clean the window thoroughly before applying decorations.

Be creative, have fun and show the world Christmas is still happening.

Heather Whyte

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17th Century Nun' S Prayer

Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing old and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody: helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind from recital of endless details; give me the wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches & pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint – some of them are so hard to live with- but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen

Found by Olive



WHITECHAPEL MISSION

(Founded in 1876)

212, Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ
(Tel: 020 7247 8280) (Fax: 020 7392 2707)

www.whitechapel.org.uk
Registered Charity No: 227905

18 October 2020

Mrs Betty Hollinrake



Dear Betty,

We acknowledge with gratitude your donation of Clothing in support of our work amongst people who are homeless and rely on the Whitechapel Mission for the simple necessities of life.

Please convey our gratitude to the members of the Romford United Reform Church.

As the Whitechapel Mission cares for an increasing number of our most vulnerable guests during the coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency, we remain committed to the health, safety and well-being of all. Our guests who are experiencing homelessness don't have the option to "stay at home" to avoid risk to themselves or others — so we are reliant on friends like you who choose to give generously.

We are closely monitoring the coronavirus (COVID-19), as well as proactively seeking and following the latest guidance from the Government and other community partners. And we are thankful for our supporters who help make it possible to continue our work.

We continue to offer our essential services (over 100,000 free meals served during the pandemic). Our response balances the consideration that our guests are highly vulnerable to many challenges. I believe we have a duty to care and not prematurely suspend potentially life-saving services. We are seeing new faces, with new worries — people who are desperately in need of the food, shelter, advice and hope offered at The Whitechapel Mission. People in need continue to be welcomed at our Whitechapel Centre.

Thank you again for your very generous support. It really does make a difference to the lives of people who are homeless, whom we serve in your name.

With grateful thanks,

Tony

Tony Miller MBE
On behalf of The Whitechapel Mission
Receipt Number: 27261

Daycentre

practical approach to helping people who are homeless, with food, clothing, showers, advice and counselling
020 7247 8280
mission@whitechapel.org.uk

Lifeskills Centre

changing lives programme aims to equip people with the skills to sustain a tenancy and to get back to work
020 7392 2715
lifeskills@whitechapel.org.uk

Education Centre

citizenship programme showing the effects of drugs and alcohol on real lives whilst gaining a knowledge of poverty, deprivation and exclusion
020 7392 2702
education@whitechapel.org.uk

Whitechapel House

residential project offering affordable housing to London's key workers

Remembrance Day 11th November 2020

It was disappointing not to be able to be part of the Remembrance Day Service in the church on Sunday 8th November, but we watched the ceremony from the Cenotaph in Whitehall with millions of viewers across the country. So, it was with gratitude that we joined with other church members, gathering in front of the church on Remembrance Day, 11th November, to pay our respects and remember those who had made the ultimate sacrifice during world conflicts. We stood (suitably distanced) On the lawn in front of the church, and made the focus of our gathering the cross, which Gill and Fiona had beautifully adorned with poppies. Our Minister, Alison, led the ceremony at 11.00 by reading two famous poems (Age shall not weary them and When we go home) at the beginning and the end of the two minutes silence. It was a very moving occasion, and we were so glad to be part of it. Tom and I were especially pleased to meet many of our friend whom we had not seen since the original lockdown, and to catch up with their news. (And we were blessed with a fine warm day.)

Betty

It felt good to be able to do this, to acknowledge the sacrifice made by so many in countless conflicts. Thanks to Alison and all who just happened to be passing by!

Jill Cottrell



Drivers

Car drivers generally get a very bad press, but I have a very different view! I drive a vehicle, and when out and about on my wonderful scooter the kindness shown to me and my scooter when crossing junctions is amazing. While stopping at the kerbside the drivers stop at a decent distance and 'wave' me across. They are so patient while I start up and travel in front of them, always giving them a thank-you wave in return. To have the ability to be able to go into town and other places like the park, especially during the lockdown time that we are in now, makes such a difference to everyday life. Thank you to all drivers.

Betty

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Snowball

I made myself a snowball
As perfect as could be.
I thought I'd keep it as a pet
And let it sleep with me.
I made it some pyjamas
And a pillow for its head
Then last night it ran away
But first----it wet the bed

By Shel Silverstein



Memorial Stones

On what turned out to be our last service before the 2nd lockdown, we laid stones in the memorial garden in memory of Christine Jackson, Harry Berry, Daphne Murphy and Beryl Sweet. Alison led the short service of dedication whilst members of the church family watched from socially distanced places. We remembered the 4 people, for whom the stones were laid, giving thanks for all they meant to us and for their faith. They are all missed by those who knew them.

Our thanks to Graham for providing and engraving the stones.



Jill Cottrell

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Refugees

They have no need of our help
 So do not tell me
 These haggard faces could belong to you and me
 Should life have dealt a different hand
 We need to see them for who they really are
 Chancers and scroungers
 Layabouts and scroungers
 With bombs up their sleeves
 Cut throats and thieves
 They are not
 Welcomed 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

(now read from bottom to top)

I found this poem and thought it was very clever, showing two points of view at once! *Jacqueline*

A Christmas prayer

Loving Father
Help us to remember the Birth of Jesus
That we may share in the song of the angels,
The gladness of the shepherds
And worship of the Wise Men.
Close the door of hate
And open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
And good desires with every greeting
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
Which Christ brings,
And teach us to be merry with clear hearts.
May Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children:
And Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts
Forgiving and forgiven
For Jesus' sake AMEN

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Found by Olive

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Ruth found this little story for us

Story time.

Once upon a time Grandad decided to celebrate his own birthday by inviting all his own grandchildren to have with him a great party. He found out their favourite food, and made a great banquet for them all; he'd even bought them each a present, even though it was his birthday; and he'd rented the latest children's DVD release so they could watch it together.

The great day came, the moment arrived, and Grandad's doorbell rang. There were the children! He opened the door and they piled through, all the way to the dining room where the amazing spread for them was all laid out. They were so keen to start eating that by the time a rather breathless Grandad joined them, they were already tucking in. None of them had even bothered to wish Grandad a happy birthday; they were so excited, they seemed to have forgotten that part. They had not even given him a present.

They wanted to open their own present though, and as soon as they had done that, they took the DVD and dashed into the lounge to watch it. Two hours later, when it finished, they all grabbed their coats, shouted goodbye and dashed out the front door, back home. Hardly anyone had spoken to Grandad; no-one had seemed to notice it was meant to have been his birthday and Grandad was left feeling rather sad and empty.

'Well, that's a stupid story', said one of the children listening. 'That would never happen in real life'.

'It is a stupid story', said the teacher. 'You're right. But sadly, it could happen. In fact, it does. Every year a birthday is celebrated by millions of people all over the world, and so many never give a thought as to whose party they're being invited to'.

Maybe, just maybe, this year in the midst of a pandemic as we celebrate Christmas but very differently, people may just give a thought as to why we celebrate Christmas.

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.

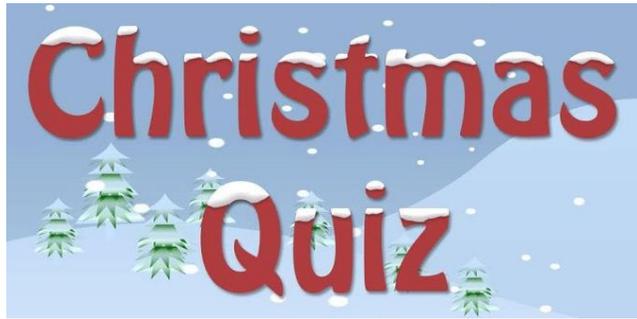
Let us each pray to that end.

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It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.

Mother Theresa

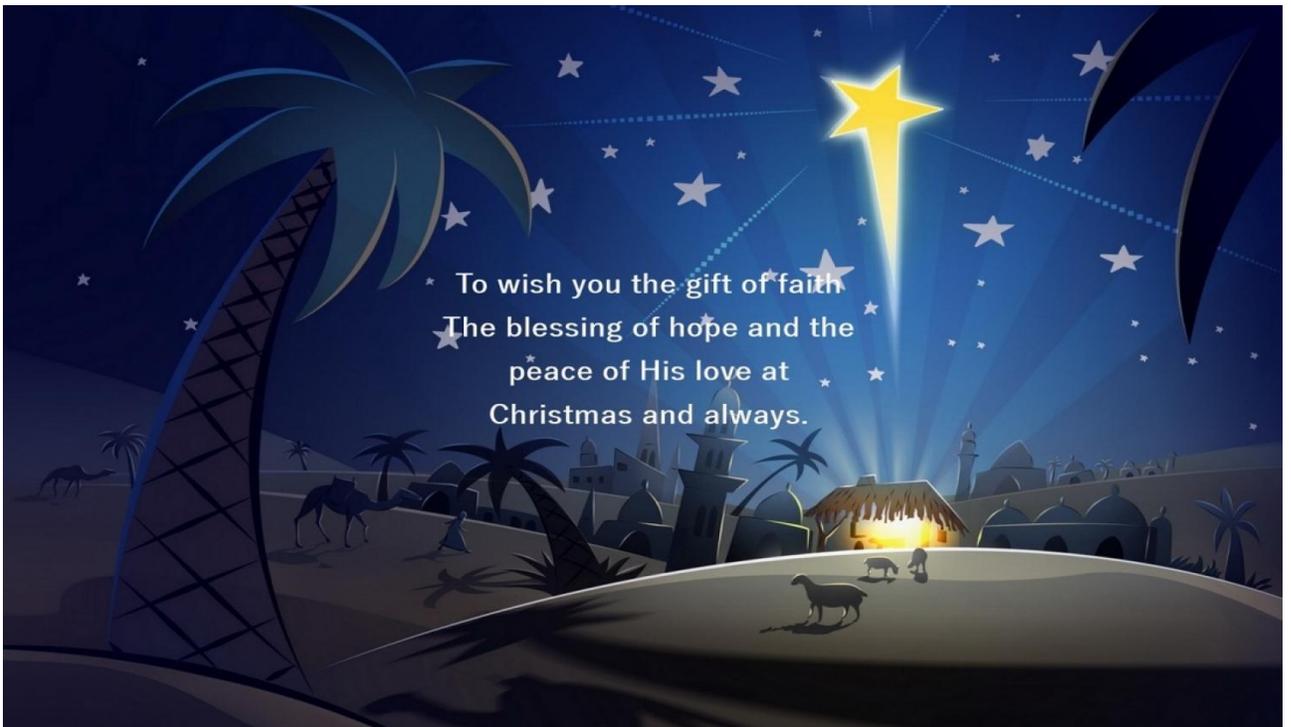
1. When was the first Christmas card printed?
2. Which country donates the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square?
3. The first royal Christmas broadcast – which monarch made it?
4. What year was 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' written?
5. What birds are popular on Christmas cards and why?
6. Shakespeare wrote a play for Elizabeth I, as a Christmas present. Which one is it?
7. Stephen I was anointed king of which country in the year on Christmas Day, 1000?
8. What did Scottish nationalist students take from Westminster Abbey on 25th December 1950?
9. Where did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus travel after leaving Bethlehem?
10. Who is the patron saint celebrated on the 26th of December?
11. When does the Russian Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas?
12. Who banned Christmas carols after the English Civil War in 1647?
13. What are the two most popular phrases on Christmas gift cards?
14. What ancient people started the tradition of exchanging gifts?
15. Where does the tradition to hang gifts on the Christmas tree come from?
16. What are the names of Santa's reindeers?
17. Which actor got the starring role for *Jingle All the Way*?
18. Which Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale inspired the movie *Frozen*?
19. Who recorded *Blue Christmas*?
20. What carol can you use to demand figgy pudding?
21. What is wassailing?
22. Which saint introduced carols in churches?
23. What were mince pies made with, in Victorian times?
24. What fruit is usually placed in stockings?
25. What is 'Smoking Bishop'?



Answers next month

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To wish you the gift of faith
The blessing of hope and the
peace of His love at
Christmas and always.

A Christmas Blessing

The blessing of peace,
the beauty of hope,
the spirit of love,
the comfort of faith.
May these be your gifts
this Christmas season.

from Jill Hunt

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