



Together

only physically apart

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk



Carols on the doorstep | Ruby Beech

A couple of weeks ago I saw a Facebook post from Premier Christian radio and the Newcastle Methodist District about an initiative to encourage people to have a short time of carol singing on their doorsteps - a bit like when we joined together to clap for the NHS. The idea was that at **5.30pm on Sunday 20th December** Premier Radio would play a short selection of carols which would also be available on a carol sheet so that people can sing together on their doorsteps. The music can be accessed via TV (Freeview 725), DAB radio (Premier Radio) or on the Premier Radio App. Many people would attend Carol Services or Community Carol Concerts in December and there will be few or any opportunities to do that.

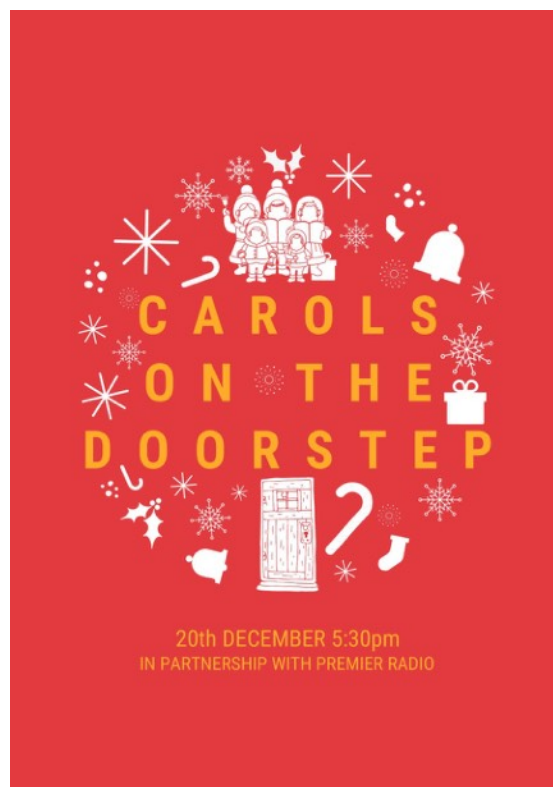
At the beginning of lockdown our street set up a WhatsApp group so people could keep in touch, ask and offer for help and we also held a number of quizzes on zoom. It enabled us to be in touch with people we had only nodded to previously. When I saw the information about Carols on the Doorstep I put it on the WhatsApp group to see if there was any interest - and there was! So many people are looking for an opportunity to join together in some way to celebrate Christmas. It is fantastic to give them the opportunity to do that by singing about the birth of Christ rather than a big shopping frenzy. People on my street were keen to share hospitality too and if we are allowed we will also share hot chocolate, mince pies and mulled wine!

Why not see if the people in your neighbourhood would be interested? You can download posters, carol sheets and invitations from <https://www.carolsonthedoorsstep.co.uk/>

There will no doubt be other similar initiatives but just in case nothing is happening near you why not take an opportunity to reach out and share something of the Christmas story with your neighbours? We have good news of great joy to share.

Have a peaceful and joyful Christmas. Ruby Beech, Barnbygate Methodist Church.

If you need technical support to connect with Premier Radio, do please get in touch. Equally if you can offer support or have a spare portable DAB radio that you could safely lend to someone nearby, please get also in touch with your minister!



Not free on the 20th, not able to get onto DAB or just fancy doing it twice? BBC Radio Nottingham are also broadcasting carols for the doorstep on 16th December. For more information contact gemma.wilkinson@bbc.co.uk.



1. Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our Circuit Service which this week is hosted by name of church and details.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>)

why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

2. Circuit 'Zoom' Coffee Time

Join folk from across the circuit from 11:30am each Sunday morning - you provide the coffee - we'll provide the fellowship! pop in for 5 minutes or half an hour - we'd love to see you!

Please join us afterwards

Come with a drink and a biscuit to share in conversation after the service.

www.zoom.us
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: Tog3ther

Phone: 0131 460 1196
Meeting ID: 885 3100 7185
Password: 48647472



If you'd like help to 'Zoom', please get in touch!

3. Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also online.)

08:10am - Sunday 6th December

Cities of Promise - a place for nature

With the Rev Dr Rob Marshall, Rector of Digswell, Welwyn Garden City.

4. Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

If any of this baffles you - contact your minister and we can support you!

Hope!

Our Sunday Sermon | Mark 1:1-8 | Barrie Morley

Like you perhaps, we had to cancel Summer holidays this year. Being typical Brits it is hard not to see the sea for months on end, so, when the sun shone strong and bright in late September we made a quick dash to the 'Costa del Lindum' for the day. We headed for 'San Leonardo' and finished with an el fresco local dish at 'Marbela Thorpae'. (Now how many languages have I mangled there?). If you've not got it yet, we began at Chapel St. Leonards and moved on to Mablethorpe for Fish and Chips in the open air. It was a lovely day. We enjoyed a slow coffee outside, ate an Ice Cream as we walked beside the sea, watching a young family enjoying sand and water, all in unbroken sunshine.

BUT, the very next day, still in September, the BBC news carried a piece featuring a man who told us that we really MUST shop early for Christmas this year! It reminded me of something that happened in my first appointment as a Minister. In a County Durham village there were no less than six places of worship. They ranged from Pentecostal, through Independent Methodist, Salvation Army, Methodist, High Church Anglican, to Roman Catholic – but we all got on well. One evening the local vicar, whose worship included incense and vestments, came to speak at the chapel mid-week fellowship. In conversation he was told that one of the village churches were holding their Carol Service on December 2nd! Even forty years later I still remember the look of incredulity and incomprehension. To him, Carols were not sung before late on Christmas Eve. He had a point. We Free Church folk can have a nasty habit of rushing from the first Sunday in Advent straight onto Christmas carols. Last year in at least one Circuit church the tree was in place in Advent and the carol service was held on December 15th. But here now in early Advent I'd like to encourage us to linger a little longer in the darkness, looking, longing and hoping for the Light still to come.

Advent is a wonderful season for expressing the longing we feel at this dark time, praying for the light, and affirming our Christian hope. Paul spoke of three Christian virtues which can never be destroyed....Faith, Love, and Hope.

We preach Faith, try to practice Love, but Oh Boy, how we need hope today! As Christians waiting for the coming of God's kingdom, we of all folk should be a people of hope. Christmas is a time for celebrating what has already happened, Christ has come and he has changed the world, and changed our lives. However it is still good to celebrate it at Christmas, and also to anticipate it during Advent. My wife Joan has a sermon she called "What if?"

What if Jesus had never come? How different life would be for us. Certainly, those whose lives have been changed by Christ will say, "If he hadn't come things would be so much worse for me."

But still we find we have things to hope for. Obviously the whole planet needs Hope this December. Every one of us is hoping that this dreadful Covid 19 virus will soon be in retreat as vaccines are rolled out. People are hoping that when it's under control they'll still have a job or a business left. You may well be hoping that you can see your family again soon, or just go shopping without wearing a mask. Some will want to return to the Theatre or cinema or sports stadium again – or find the Village Hall opened up once more for their hobby and fellowship. And...good as Zoom and YouTube are, don't we want to return to church together for fellowship and singing?

All sorts of hopes. But for Christian believers Hope is not just whistling in the dark. It's more than cheerful optimism. Hope for Christian believers is on good and sure ground. Christ has come. But still in the quiet darkness of Advent 2020 we have time to ponder what has happened and all that we hope to come.

May I add another thing that is important to me and probably to you? In our hymn books we have a wealth of wonderful Advent hymns that help give words to our longings and our faith; our Christian Hope. There are hymns old and new, cherished and passed down the years. Some are no longer found in the latest books but are still precious for some of us. We may not be able to meet to sing them, but still we can enjoy them and let them nourish our souls at home. May I share 3 verses from Hymns and Psalms 236? Words bursting with Advent faith and hope:

"Hark what a sound, and too divine for hearing, stirs on the earth and trembles in the air; Is it the thunder of the Lord's appearing, is it the music of his people's prayer? Surely he cometh and a thousand voices, speak to the saints, but to the deaf are dumb' Surely he cometh and the earth rejoices, Glad in his coming, who has said 'I come. Through life and death, through sorrow and through sighing, he shall suffice me for he has sufficed, Christ is the end for Christ is the beginning, Christ the beginning for the end's Christ."

So I'll end now by focusing on one final reason to linger in Advent in your thoughts and prayers – and this may be the most important reason of all. Our Hope is a FINAL Hope – sometimes called the 'second Advent'. We focus not just on the Saviour's coming 2,000 years ago at the first Christmas, but, on our faith that the future too is in God's hands – a future when Christ will reign. All of us have our own way of expressing this hope. For me it is summed up in the message of the Bible which is, "In the beginning God – and in the end God". This is expressed in the first Bible Book, Genesis which says, 'In the beginning', and in the last book Revelation that says that the last word belongs to God also. 'The light shines...and the darkness has not overcome it.'

Prayer Space

Prayers

Written by Barrie Morley

"Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord, O Lord hear my prayer."

In the depths of Winter, the darkness of December, the gloom of lock down and frustration of restrictions we come to worship you, Father.

We feed our souls on the faith of the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble -therefore we shall not fear though the earth be moved."

This time of Advent is a source of comfort and strength to us, a season of hope. We trust the God who has come in Jesus, is with us now through the Holy Spirit, and in whose hands is the final triumph of divine love.

Thank you that although separated from each other in body, through modern technology and skill we can go on sharing fellowship and worship.

Join us now in heart and spirit, and inspire our worship and praise of you we pray. AMEN

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to join the prayer chain and receive prayer requests or have a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin...

Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com.

It is for those in any church or none!

MHA Friendship Appeal

Most of us look forward to Christmas and spending time with family and friends, but for many older people the festive season can be difficult and this year will be especially challenging with essential social distancing measures in place.

That's why MHA have launched a Digital Christmas Friendship Appeal, you can make a real difference to loneliness and isolation for those in later life by sending a resident in their care a digital Christmas card and message.

To join in head to www.mha.org.uk/Christmas

Deadline for submissions is 10th December
PLEASE HELP!



Reflective songs...

Like a candle flame (StF 176) [LINK](#)

There's a light upon the mountains (StF 188/HP 246) [LINK](#)

Praise to the God who clears the way (StF 183)

On Joran's Bank' (HP 84) [LINK](#)

Click 'LINK's to access YouTube clips of each song.

Bubble Church Resources



Our face-to-face Bubble Churches have had to close again, with the second lockdown (for the entirety of November) but some have made the transition to Zoom. If you would like to join a Zoom bubble (online) then contact your minister or why not telephone another church member and have your own mini telephone bubble using these discussion questions...

1. What does Advent mean to you?
2. What is your favourite Advent hymn and why?
3. What do we, as Christians, mean by Hope, especially, during Advent?
4. When have you felt a real sense of hope?
5. What are you hoping for at the moment?
6. How can we be practical bringers of hope in our community?
7. How can we share the hope in which we believe, at Christmastime?
8. What are you going to do as a result of what you've read and heard?
9. What can you share with someone from this week's service?

For more information checkout the Bubble Church guide with risk assessment on the Circuit Website: <https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/bubble-church.html>

Next time...

Next week we continue our Advent journey with a service from the church family at **Charles Street** for the third Sunday in Advent.



For Advent this year the Methodist Church nationwide are launching a campaign on 1st December. The message is centred on the truth that God is with us at all times. It will feature 24 stories sharing people's experience of God being with them over the year. If you have a story that you would like to share, please be in touch.

Families:

by Katie Hibberts

families4SMC@gmail.com

FAMILY ACTIVITIES!

Advent can feel like a long wait until Christmas! Watch this video with your children and chat about the importance of this season of Advent. (https://youtu.be/zy_sElib8YA)



Suggest that having to wait for something can make what we are waiting for extra special.

People were waiting for Jesus to arrive for a long time. Not just days and months but years and centuries. Jesus was a special baby. He was God's son sent to earth to show how much God loved us. He did this by teaching us about God and allowing himself to be punished for all the wrong things that we have done (we remember this at Easter).

Jesus was very special and, because people had been waiting for his arrival for such a long time that made, that made his birth at Christmas extra special. When we have to wait for Christmas to arrive during Advent it gives us a chance to remember exactly how special Jesus is!

Why not have a go at making your own set of advent candles out of cardboard tubes? One of the candles stands for Hope. As we await - 'hope-fully' - Christmas day, what else do you hope for



Can you contribute to TOGETHER?

We're looking to produce this Newsletter as a Circuit and would like to widen the team as far as possible. Perhaps you could contribute a prayer, a short article, an encouraging piece. Maybe you would be willing to be part of the editorial team? Perhaps you'd like us to advertise something in your church.

If you would like to join the team or make a one-off contribution, please get in touch with Revd. Peter Hibberts by email (peter.hibberts@methodist.org.uk) or telephone (01636812166).

Contributions must be received by Monday of each week for Tuesday editorial and Wednesday distribution.