

Notices for Sunday 20th and 27th December 2020
Ponteland Methodist Church
Minister – Rev Jona Sewell (Tel. 822057)
LET THE LOVE OF JESUS BE KNOWN

20th :- 4th of Advent and Christmas // Christ is Born
27th :- 1st of Christmas // Glory to God

MESSAGE FROM JONA

We know that Christmas will be very different this year and acknowledge that there will be a sense of absence: an absence of people, an absence of gathering, an absence of traditional services and rituals, an absence of family and friends. It would be easy to focus on what's missing and let that be the dominant thought at this time. However, instead of focussing on what is absent, I want to encourage us to think about what it means to be 'present'.

Christmas is a time when we remember how God became present in a very real and special way by becoming a vulnerable baby. We remember how Jesus grew and formed relationships and was with people in a deep and meaningful way. We remember how the child became a man who promised people would be comforted by the Spirit when he was gone. At this time of year, we also remember how God is still present with us by the Spirit and offers us the same comfort and hope that the early followers discovered.

God is always with us, He is present, what is often missing is our awareness and our being present to God! We can become present to God by praying, reading, listening to music, or by just stopping, letting our minds rest and turn our focus to God. When we become more present to God then we also become more present (ie aware) of each other and the world around us. So if you find you are struggling this Christmas then please do not feel embarrassed about it, many people will struggle, please pick up the phone and call someone, even me, and let's be present in supporting each other.

As I wish you a blessed Christmas, I sincerely hope and pray that you can become present to the God who is with you, that you can experience the comfort and peace of the Spirit, and be present to the needs of your friends and neighbours.

This week there won't be a 'Circuit Discussion Group' on Wednesday evening. Instead we're going to share in a light-hearted fun team quiz with questions covering all things festive! This will be followed by a short Christmas reflection and should last no more than an hour. Why not join us? Info below....

Christmas Quiz & Reflection Dec 23, 2020 19:30 Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87454748119?pwd=M2dBNDZTdWZSQk5PRDBzT2JMTXJNZz09>
Meeting ID: 874 5474 8119 Passcode: 777679

Dial by your location:-

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

Jona

LECTIONARY

Dec 20th :- 2 Samuel 7 : 1-11, 16, *Canticle: Magnificat* (Luke 1 : 46b-55) *or*
Psalm 89 : 1-4, 19-26, Romans 16 : 25-27, Luke 1 : 26-38.

Dec 25th :- Isaiah 52 : 7-10, Psalm 98, Hebrews 1, 1-4, (5-12), John 1 : 1-14.
or Isaiah 9 : 2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2 : 11-14, Luke 2 : 1-14, (15-20).
or Isaiah 62 : 6-12, Psalm 97, Titus 3 : 4-7, Luke 2 : (1-7) 8-20.

Dec 27th :- Isaiah 61 : 10 > 62 : 3, Psalm 148, Galatians 4 : 4-7, Luke 2 : 22-40.

(The Bible questions will return next year)

CHRISTMAS BOXES

Thank you everyone for your very generous donations for the Christmas boxes. We've been able to create 30 boxes which will be a huge blessing to families and local people this Christmas.

Please don't panic if you don't see toys that you donated in the picture which is in an attachment with the email version of these notices. We will take those along with hampers when delivering. It was hard to find boxes big enough!

We had some money left over so will also be doing some boxes at Easter. Thank you again so much for your generosity. We were blown away. Merry Christmas to you all and hope to see you all soon.

Kathryn and Fiona

FOODBANK (West Road)

32,038 3-day emergency food supplies given out in 2019. **26,228** in first 6 months of 2020. Christmas can be a stressful time for many - what presents to buy, how to keep safe going to the shops, what size of turkey to buy, who to have visit on Christmas Day! For many in our area these are not the problems they have. If you would like to see the real problems of many in Newcastle you can follow this link:-

<https://newcastlewestend.foodbank.org.uk/about/real-stories>

The folk having to visit the Foodbank often go without their own food to let their children eat, and certainly don't have enough to buy presents. This time of year, many charities are competing for our money, so this is a gentle reminder that **Peter Michell** (Church Treasurer) is still available to receive any donations. December to February is the most testing time for those running the Foodbank so please don't 'get weary in well doing'. Maybe you would like to set up a monthly Direct Debit?

Peter's contact details are **01661 871885, 18 Pinegarth, Ponteland NE20 9LF**
or peter_michell@hotmail.com

Andrew Pay

CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

Pearl Stears sends her Christmas wishes to all who remember her.

Douglas and Barbara Hogg pass on their good wishes to all in our Church and have settled in well with Adrian and Dawn in Hutton Rugby near Yarm although they repeatedly emphasise how much they miss people from the Church. Bev, Jona and Geoff have their forwarding details if you need to write or speak to them.

GRAEME DANBY

Graeme contacted me last week and said it was the first Spring this year that he had been unable to perform for us in Church for as long as he could remember! He has made available a Christmas song for us all to enjoy. It can be found on YouTube using this link <https://youtu.be/nooNzoP2XrQ>

Both he and Val send all their Love and Blessings to us all.

Geoff

CIRCUIT 'YOUTUBE' SERVICES

This Sunday's Carol Service is jointly led by our four Ministers and includes contributions from our Churches and members. The service for the 27th is led by Rev Juliet Wriglesworth.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from REV STEPHEN LINDRIDGE, DISTRICT CHAIR

Please see the attachment sent with this email or the paper copy if you have no internet access.

PRAYERS

Come, O most gracious Redeemer, and dwell within us and reign where you have the right to reign. By your Holy Spirit take possession of our souls and lead us in the ways of righteousness and peace. *Amen*

In the darkness of the night, may we catch a glimpse of the distant light. In the cacophony and clamour of life, may we hear the whisper of God's voice. In the anguish and pain of death and disaster, may we feel the breath of hope. In the convolutions and disagreements that weigh upon us, may the Word of God lighten our load. In the loneliness and aloneness of a busy world, may we know the presence of our creator God.

For the earth is the Lord's and so are we.

Amen

Come to us, O Christ, as the wind that blows the autumn leaves, as the song that soothes the troubled child, as the melody that lifts the anxious spirit. Fill us with affection for you that is unbounded, desire for you that is unrestrained and a yearning for you that throws caution to the winds, and this for your own love's sake.

Amen

Architect of all we know, we stand in amazed silence, for we were not there when you spoke all that is into being, and the heavens rejoiced.
Was it in a burst of wonder and glory that everything came forth from nothing?
With your compasses and levels you drew the edges between life and death and set in motion the ticking hearts of atoms.
O maker of me, your thoughts and plans unfurled, creatures teemed into the corners of all the world, more than we can ever name or know.
And all of this a house for us!

Amen

CHRISTMAS CRACKER JOKES

Yes folks, it's that time of year.....
(If they raise a smile, thank me – if they make you groan, blame Jim Falcus!)

"What is a dog's favourite Christmas carol' Bark the Herald Angels Sing!
What's orange and sounds like a parrot? A carrot.
What's brown and sticky? A stick.
Alternative dictionary definitions:- Vanish = a bit like a van
How will Brexit affect Christmas dinner? No Brussels
A man walks into a bar..... Lucky chap!
What did Santa Claus say to his wife as he looked out the window? It looks like Reindeer!
How does King Wencelas like his Pizza ----- Deep and Crisp and Even.
Why don't you ever see cows hiding in trees? They're really good at it
What happened to the German baker's Christmas loaf when he put it on the window sill to cool? It was Stollen
Why is it whenever I dial a wrong number it's never engaged?

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Wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Covid free New Year! *Geoff*

**For the first issue of 2021, please send your notices to Geoff Lisle by
Thurs 31st Dec, 1pm.
Either by phone:- 01661 822532, by post:- 42, Ridgely Drive. NE20 9BL
or by E-mail :- Geoffandangela@btinternet.com**