

Belfairs Methodist Church

Where old friends meet and strangers feel at home

Newsletter

Issue 228

December 2024/January 2025

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Thought for the month

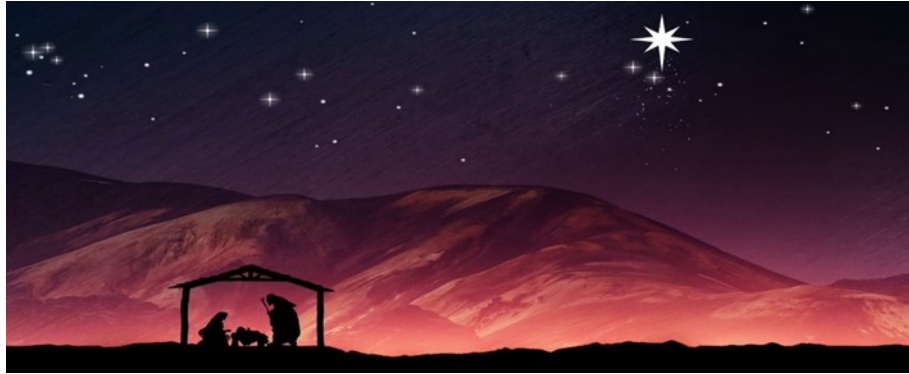
It's time to get ready
It's time to remember
It's time to rehearse the great story
It's time to celebrate your coming
both into our world and into our lives
May the truth, the wonder
and the power of this time
Touch us ever more deeply this Advent.
Amen

The BRF book of 100 prayers



Our mission is to provide an open, welcoming and accepting, living place of Christian worship and service in our community, in which we seek to serve and follow Jesus Christ.

www.belfairsmethodistchurch.org.uk



Once again at this time of year we turn our thoughts to the birth of Jesus; but all too often the wonder of this awesome event is obscured by the trappings of Christmas - holidays, presents, food, television, etc. But it is worth having a much closer look at the wonder of God coming to earth as a baby.

Think of any photos you may have around your house of babies; maybe your children, grandchildren or great grandchildren, or even babies your friends and families may have had?

When we consider the 'life' of a baby, what are the characteristics of babyhood? Total dependence for warmth, food and love; languageless; everything is 'new'; inability to move where you want to; nappies, teething etc. When we think about such things we start to marvel that the eternal Son of God would submit Himself to the state of babyhood.

Christian author Philip Yancey once said; *"The God who roared, who could order armies and empires about like pawns on a chessboard, this God emerged in Palestine as a baby who could not speak or eat solid food or control his bladder, and depended on a teenage couple for shelter food and love."*

- *You, Jesus, were willing to lay aside everything - your glory, your position, your power - for our sake.*
- *You were obedient to your Father in coming to earth.*
- *And in coming to earth as a helpless baby, not only were you trusting yourself to a young, inexperienced couple, but you were making yourself vulnerable to the attack of the devil through Herod. And yet, you trusted your Father to keep you safe.*

The Bible says; 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' [Isaiah 9:6 KJV]

Given this wonderful description, readers of the Old Testament could be forgiven for expecting a glorious, triumphant entry into the world for the Messiah. However, Jesus chose the way of obscurity, of humility and servanthood; yet those who seek Him will find Him to be the glorious Messiah described in Isaiah chapter 9.

What a wonderful example to us today is the incarnation of God, setting forth the pattern that Jesus would grow up to present to us; a pattern for living, a pattern of gentleness, humility and love.

What a challenge for us as Christians!

As this season unfolds for another year, may we not only give physical gifts to others, but also gifts of our own gentleness, humility and love, as we follow the example of the baby in the manger.

May you be richly blessed as you celebrate the birth of Christ.

Blessings,

Revd Steve

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Sunday Services December 2024

1st	11.00 a.m.	Ms Deborah Spinks - Gift service in aid of Little Havens
8th	11.00 a.m.	Rev. Steve Mayo - Holy communion
	5.00 p.m.	Circuit Service at Belfairs - Modern Carols with the circuit worship band
15th	11.00 a.m.	Mr. Phil Gladman and 10 O'clock club - Nativity
22nd	11.00 a.m.	Miss Jess Dalton
	4.00 p.m.	Carols by Candlelight - Rev. Steve Mayo
29th	11.00 a.m.	United service at Wesley - Mrs. Jane Fulford

Other December dates for your diary

1st	Church Christmas post box available (please see article for more information)
7th	Christmas Fayre 10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. (please see posters and article for more information)
12th	Thirsty For?? at 7.00 p.m. - Christmas Café style worship - all are welcome.
22nd	Church Christmas cards available for collection from foyer
24th	Christmas Eve - Christingle service at 4.00 p.m. - all are welcome
25th	Christmas Day - Family service at 10.30 a.m. - all are welcome
31st	New Years Eve

Point of Contact

Below is shown details of the Sunday Stewards, Communion Stewards, Musician, Flower Rota and coffee/tea stewards relevant for this month.

Sunday 1st December

Sunday Steward a.m. - Mike Spaul

Musician a.m. - Sue & Mike Spaul/MIDI

Flowers - Advent - arranged by Anthea

Coffee/tea stewards Ann Kendall & Sue Spaul

Sunday 8th December

Sunday Steward - Jan Andrews

Musician a.m. - MIDI

Musician p.m. - Circuit worship band

Communion Stewards - Neeltje Charles & Geoff Box

Flowers - V A C A N T - arranged by Marion

Coffee/tea stewards Mike Spaul & Phil Gladman

Sunday 15th December

Sunday Steward a.m. - Pat Crabb

Musician a.m. - Mike / MIDI

Flowers - arranged by Jan Andrews

Coffee/tea stewards Jan Pope & Jackie Heinrich

Sunday 22nd December

Sunday Steward a.m. - Phil Gladman

Musician a.m. - Patrick Dromgoole

Musician a.m. - Patrick Dromgoole

Flowers - Margaret Bailey - arranged by Margaret

Coffee/tea stewards Sue Spaul & Margaret Bailey

Sunday 29th December

United Service at Wesley

Christmas Services



**Sunday 8th December at 5.00 p.m.
Modern Christmas songs of worship**

**Sunday 15th December at 11.00 a.m.
Nativity Service**



**Sunday 22nd December at 4.00 p.m.
Carols by Candlelight service
Rev. Steve Mayo
(followed by refreshments)**

**Christmas Eve at 4.00 p.m.
Christingle Service
(followed by refreshments)**



**Christmas Eve at 11.15 p.m.
Holy Communion at
Wesley Methodist
Rev. Steve Mayo**

**Christmas Day at 10.30 a.m.
Family Service
Rev. Steve Mayo**



Sunday Services for January 2025

- 5th 11.00 a.m. Rev. Zena Smith
- 12th 11.00a.m. Rev. Steve Mayo - Pastoral Visitors Dedication - Holy Communion
- 19th 11.00 a.m. Mrs. Dani Mayo - Parade including GB re dedication
- 26th 11.00 a.m. Mrs. Maureen Gutteridge

Other January dates for your diary

- 1st New years day
- 4th Coffee Morning -
- 9th Thirsty For?? at 7.00 p.m.
- 23rd A.C.T.I.O.N at 2.00 p.m. all are welcome



Point of Contact

Below is shown details of the Sunday Stewards, Communion Stewards and musicians relevant for this month.

Sunday 5th January

Sunday Steward a.m. - Jan Andrews

Musician a.m. - MIDI Box

Coffee/tea stewards Ann Kendall & Sue Spaul

Sunday 12th January

Sunday Steward a.m. - Pat Crabb

Musician - Patrick Dromgoole

Communion Stewards Jim Halstead & Dawn Howard

Flowers - information not available at the time of print

Coffee/tea stewards Mike Spaul & Phil Gladman

Sunday 19th January

Sunday Steward a.m. - Mike Spaul

Musician a.m. - Mike/MIDI Box

Coffee/tea stewards Jan Pope & Jackie Heinrich

Sunday 26th January

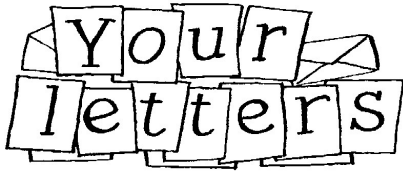
Sunday Steward - Phil Gladman

Musician - Patrick Dromgoole

Flowers - information not available at the time of print

Coffee/tea stewards Sue Spaul & Margaret Bailey

Letters Page/Church family news



Coffee Morning Saturday 16th November, 2024

Firstly, Pam and John wish to thank all those who attended, assisted and donated at yesterday's coffee morning. Secondly, thank you for the additional donations from those who were unable to attend. Finally, the sum raised was an amazing £276, to be shared between the MND Association and the Church. As usual, the donation to South Essex Motor Neurone Disease Association will help to provide assistance and equipment, to local people who are suffering with this awful disease. Thank you all, once again!!

Pam and John



Choir Practice

The choir will be taking part in the Carols by Candlelight service on Sunday 22nd December at 4.00 p.m. and we will be rehearsing for a few weeks prior to this and if you would like to join us you will be very welcome. The rehearsal times are as follows:

Friday 6th December at 7.00 p.m.

Friday 13th December at 7.00 p.m.

Friday 20th December at 7.00 p.m.

We look forward to this time of preparation as we get ready to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ .

Mike Spaul





BELFAIRS CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Saturday 7th December

10am - 1pm

As most of you know, Belfairs Christmas Fayre will soon be here.

There will be various stalls and refreshments including Bacon or Sausages in rolls will be available.

Thank you to those who have volunteered to help running stalls. Without your help, we would not be able to have the Fayre.

Naturally I will also need help on Friday between 11am- 2pm to set up the stalls. If you have any items to donate, like books, cakes, toys, bric a brac, new or nearly new clothing and tombola items, please can you bring them along on Friday 6th December between 11am- 2pm.

Apart from raising much needed funds for the church coffers, the Christmas Fayre provides a great opportunity to open the doors to people from the community so a chance to reach out to strangers.

Looking forward to your support.

Neeltje Charles



December birthdays

For all of you who celebrate birthday/anniversaries, or remember loved ones during this month, the following is for you, although of course everyone can read it!

D eepen your peace within us Lord

E very moment of each day

C arry us in your loving arms

E ndless be God's blessings upon us

M ay God guide us safely

B e our rock of refuge

E very day of our lives

R icher may we be through the gifts of God.

Ed.

CIRCUIT SERVICE.
SUNDAY 8th December 2024
Belfairs Methodist Church at 5p.m.

**“Modern Christmas
songs of worship”**



**Led by the Circuit worship band
and others.**

**All are welcome to join us,
refreshments to follow.**

CHRISTMAS CAROLS & SONGS QUIZ

Can you guess these from their initial letters?

1. AIAM [Away In A Manger]
2. CROAOF
3. DDMOH
4. TFN
5. FTSM
6. GRYMG
7. GKW
8. HTHAS
9. HYAMLC
10. IDOAWC
11. JB
12. JTTW
13. LD
14. TLDB
15. MBC
16. MAW
17. OLTOB
18. OIRDC
19. RTRNR
20. SCICTT
21. SHLOABOS
22. SN
23. TTDOC
24. WWYAMC
25. WSWTFBN

Supplied by Anthea Meek

January birthdays

For all of you who celebrate birthday/anniversaries, or remember loved ones during this month, the following is for you, although of course everyone can read it!

J esus' joy be a spring within you

A s deep as the deepest ocean

N ow and evermore may God bless you

U ntil all darkness ends

A s a shaft of sun in a woodland clearing

R efuge in the storm, shelter you, for with

Y ou, we can lack nothing.

Ed.

Autumn Thoughts

It was the time of year our countryside was calling,
Before winter set in with cold weather warning
A chance to enjoy Autumn's last glorious displays
Trees red and gold shimmering in the sun's last rays.

An hotel was booked for a couple of nights
At a familiar location in which we delight.
No cases were needed, hold-alls would do
Change of clothing, nightwear and wash bag too,
Walking boots, glasses and maybe a mac
Kindle and iPad, phone, drinks and a snack.
The car packed and ready, the road clear ahead
Off to the South Downs we finally sped.

We stopped on our journey at a spot that we knew.
A high point that gave a magnificent view.
Field, farms woods and hamlets, a stream weaving through
And a wonderful expanse of the clear sky so blue.
We saw in the distance, in perfect formation
A flock of birds, to warmer climes their destination
Their journey would be long and hazardous no doubt
Amazing instinct and survival is what it's about.
Their sat nav is in built, they carry no luggage
Not like us humans who need so much baggage.

Our short trip was uplifting and one to treasure
But I'll remember those birds on their journey forever.

Pat Crabb



Christmas Cards

Once again the Christmas Post Box will be available in the foyer from 1st December for you to send cards to members and friends who attend Belfairs.

The cards will be sorted and available for collection after the morning service on Sunday 22nd December. Please make sure that you only send cards to people who attend Belfairs, as we regret we cannot deliver cards for you. The cards, when sorted, can be collected from the tables in the foyer and we would ask you to check to ensure that your cards are collected. Perhaps you could make a donation in the offertory bag of a percentage of the savings made by sending your cards this way.

There will also be a board in the foyer where you can place one greeting card for ALL your friends at church. You will find envelopes provided for your donation to 'Little Havens' which will enable you to not only remember your friends but to support this charity **Please put your envelopes in the Sunday Collection - DO NOT** leave it on the board in the foyer.



Please remember you are free to put your prayer concerns on the board at the back of the church. If it is not for you, please make sure you have the named persons consent .

Please add your name and date to the request on the reverse of the white cards provided which are by the board. These will be removed after two months, but can be updated if necessary (please make sure you re-date the update).

If you have any questions or queries, please speak to Sue.



'Twas the month after Christmas'

'Twas the month after Christmas and all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.

The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste
All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a number!
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber)

I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauce and beef nicely rared,

The wine and the rum balls the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt---

I said to myself, as I only can
"You can't spend the winter disguised as a man!"

So -- away with the last of the sour cream dip,
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip.

Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
Till all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie -- not even a lick
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.

I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore ----
But isn't that what January is for?

Unable to giggle, no longer a riot
Happy New Year to all and to a good diet!

Author Unknown

(This did make me smile, Ed.)

Christmas fun

Match the words to the correct pictures to complete the crossword. Then find a secret message.

boos

Candle

Candy cane

Card

Chimney

Christmas tree

elf

gingerbread

holly

hug

hugs

ingredients

present

reindeer

Santa Claus

snow

stockings

stockings

windch

10

15

16

17

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The secret message is _____
lead home

Supplied by Anthea Meek

You will never be **good** enough for everybody,
But you will always be the best for someone who
really **appreciates you**.

Yes, I am a strong person, but every now and then, I also
need someone to take my hand and say everything will be
ok!

I don't care what you earn, where you live, what you drive, whether
you are fat or thin, tall or short, beautiful or average, rich or poor.
If you're my friend, you're my friend. I accept you for who you are,
and that's ALL that matters.

In case you haven't been told lately You are loved.
You are important. **And you matter.**

Don't start your day with the broken pieces of yesterday.
Every day is a fresh start. Each day is a new beginning.
Every morning we wake up is the first day of our new life.

Surround yourself with people who illuminate your path. Who push
you to dig deeper. Who make you happy. Who make you laugh.
Who pray for you and support you, even in the hard times. Those are
your people.

Anyone can give material things, but giving attention, loyalty, effort
and honesty is priceless.

Meaning of Friend

F - fight for you

R - respect you

I - include you

E - encourage you

N - need you

D - deserve you

I am blessed today. I will focus on all that is right in my life.

Welcome to Eco Church

Job 12:7-10 (NIV) 'But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.

Along with many other Methodist Churches, and churches from other denominations, Belfairs Methodist Church would like to become an Eco Church. The first step is trying to obtain a bronze award.

To do this, we all need to make a commitment, and conscious effort, to improve the way we live our lives, in respect of our planet.

Over the next few months, we will try and put a piece in the newsletter, concentrating on one of the areas that that we need to focus on. They are not in any particular order and so we decided to start with our own lifestyle choices as, part of our commitment to Eco Church, is encouraging people to look at their individual carbon footprint.

What is a carbon footprint? The calculation of the carbon emissions you produce, as a church or individual, is known as your carbon 'footprint'. A carbon footprint not only takes into consideration the energy used to heat and light your home, but includes travel and where we invest our money, whether we have a few pounds or many. It is helpful to understand your carbon footprint in order to make reductions in your carbon emissions.

There are a number of free carbon footprint calculators available for individuals and households such as the [WWF Footprint Calculator](#) and [Carbon Calculators – Climate Stewards](#). (If you are reading this on our website, you can click the links and they should take you straight to the webpage. If not, visit our Eco Church page).

This will form an important baseline measure, the first time you complete it. By calculating your carbon footprint each year, you can make comparisons and see progress on your carbon reduction.

Lifestyle Choices

We worship a God who loves the Earth he created and calls us to care for it. While it's important to take action together as a church, we also have an individual responsibility to take action in our daily lives so that we tread lightly on the Earth and use our voices to speak up for nature.

The Creation Care scheme is a bit like Eco Church for households. Use the online survey to consider seven areas of your lifestyle and work toward awards. The scheme provides ideas for next steps, and recognises where progress is made

[About | Creation Care](#)

As a church, we plan to produce a Policy which will include the following statement. We hope that you will all commit to this policy within your daily lives.

Commitment and link to Environmental Policy

'We recognise that we can have an impact on the world through the choices available to us and our use of money and resources. We will strive to support our church family and wider community in bringing about positive change and care for God's Earth. We will seek to encourage our church community and beyond to live gently on the Earth and be prepared to challenge systemic injustice.'

We will also set up an Eco Church page on our website, which will include links to various resources and cover the other aspects of Eco Church. We understand that it is not always possible to change some of our lifestyle choices i.e. the church banks with NatWest PLC who is NOT an ethical banker, and it is too disruptive to change banks however, we can make changes where we are able to and where our reliance on big companies allows us to i.e. changing to LED lights or using a renewable energy company.

All we are asking is that you look at your lifestyle choices and encourage others to look at theirs too.

At this time Mike Spull and Tina Gowers are contact points until our "eco warrior" is found (anyone interested? please let us know)



Mike Spull and Tina Gowers

