

**St Paul's Methodist Church,  
Woodfield Road, Northgate, Crawley**

Ministers:

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*St Paul's Newsletter*

*28Nov-12 Dec 2021*

A message from Deacon Jenny

Dear Friends,

As I begin to prepare our Advent course for this year and begin to think about Christmas services and nativity plays, I started to read Isaiah 11.

*"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse... I am about to create new heavens and a new earth... I will rejoice and delight in my people... they shall not labour in vain..., everyone who thirsts, come and you that have no money come, my steadfast love shall not depart from you..."* Isaiah 11

This Advent may be a little more 'normal' than last year. As I read the words of the prophet Isaiah, I was reminded of how God is a loving, creative presence in the world. Last year perhaps more than any other I needed to be reminded that we need to look at things through the eyes of faith and to seek out God who is at work within our hurting world.

Even when the world seems dark and in despair, when things seem lifeless or hopeless the Scriptures declare God remains, a creative and loving presence. The season of Advent calls us to look for God and also to look to ourselves. How can we do God's will in this world and within our communities? How can we nurture with hopefulness any shoots of new life that are emerging from all that we have been through during the pandemic? Christmas is a time where we remember that Christ was born; God came down to earth as a human baby, to live among us. Jesus the light of the world entered a world of darkness.

Do we sometimes feel that we live in a world where darkness is prevalent? During Advent we remember how light shines in the darkness....and defeats it.

Because of this there is no doubt for me that Advent is a season of hope, as much for us today as for the people of Israel waiting, yearning, and even demanding salvation from God. Today, in the midst of economic news that is hardly encouraging; in the midst of continuing wars in far-off lands; in the midst of the devastation of natural disasters, in the midst of injustice and abuse, in the midst of a global pandemic, a star still shines in the darkness. It shone then, and it continues to shine today. And this year we can celebrate Christmas as boldly and as confidently as ever, assured that this festival is good not just for us but for our world too.



Every Blessing, *Jenny*

## What's on at St Paul's

<b>Sun 28 Nov</b>	<b>10:30am</b>	Advent Sunday worship with Deacon Jenny Baptism of Theodore Matthew Butler
	<b>11:20am</b>	Baptism of Savannah-Lily Shorey- Hills
<b>Wed 1 Dec</b>	<b>11am</b>	Wednesday Fellowship. Table games
<b>Sun 5 Dec</b>	<b>10:30am</b>	Worship & Communion led by Rev Melvyn Cooke
<b>Wed 8 Dec</b>	<b>11am</b>	Wednesday Fellowship. Music, words and pictures celebrating Christmas
<b>Sun 12 Dec</b>	<b>10:30am</b>	Worship with Deacon Jenny Parnell Baptism of Tommy David Patrick Sargeant
	<b>3:30pm</b>	Pizza Party for all - see panel ad below
<b>Wed 15 Dec</b>	<b>11am</b>	Wednesday Fellowship with Rev Gill Baalham

## For kids and young people

**YPSG** (Young People's Singing Groups) Friday evenings in term time  
Children aged 6-11, school year 2-6, from 6.30-7.00  
Children at secondary school from 7.00-7.45  
All children in these age groups are welcome.

## Deacon Jenny's Advent Course

This exciting course runs for 4 weeks at 7:30pm starting next Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December. The course will be looking at Mary's song, Zachariah's song, the Song of Solomon and the Angel's song through music, art, the Bible, prayer and a call to action.

The course is for both St Paul's and Horley Methodist Church and will be presented on Zoom so that the participants from both churches take part together. If you want to join the Zoom sessions, email [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com) by Monday 29th and you will receive the Zoom link. If you are unable to access Zoom, course notes are available for you to use privately.

## Loaves and Fishes closed this week

Please note that the *Loaves and Fishes* café will be closed for the coming week due to staff sickness. We hope to re-open on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

## In your prayers

Following the tragic deaths of 27 people in the English Channel, please join with Rev Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, in offering this prayer:

*Holy God, your Son, Jesus Christ, stilled the storm on the Sea of Galilee. We pray for those whose lives were ended in the English Channel. Men, women and children seeking a better life only to find death in the chilly depths. We pray for those still determined to make that journey no matter what the risks.*

*O God, help us, in the West, to urge our political leaders to find a better solution to the migrant crisis as people try to escape from persecution, war and poverty. May we campaign for more safe corridors so that the people smugglers cannot continue to prey on the desperation of others.*

*May we open our hearts to the refugees in our midst remembering that the Holy Family journeyed to Egypt to escape the murderous intentions of Herod. We ask these prayers in and through the name of Jesus Christ. Amen*

**Continue to pray for** all you know who are in any need of our prayers.

*Please send prayer requests to [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com) and remember to obtain the permission of the person to be named*

### **Sharing Christmas greetings at St Paul's**

While Covid cases are still high, we're sorry but once again there will not be an internal post system for exchanging Christmas cards at St Paul's.

As we did last year, we would like to send out a communal Christmas card to everyone in the St Paul's family, particularly those still staying at home. Please send a short Christmas greeting, or just your name, to [ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com) for inclusion. Let's have lots of names on our Christmas card.

To send cards to your friends please use Royal Mail or hand them over in person; **please do not** put cards in the wooden pigeonholes.

The old internal post system was one of our major fund-raisers for *Action for Children*. We don't want to let them down this year so details of alternative ways to donate will be sent by email or on paper if you receive this newsletter through the post.

### **Keeping Covid at bay**

Thank you to everyone for helping to protect everyone from this virus by wearing face coverings when you enter the building and during worship. We know it's unpleasant wearing the face coverings and trying to sing through masks, but by being so compliant and supportive, you are helping stop the spread of this virus, as cases rise in our area.

As we approach Christmas, please continue to wear face coverings on entering the building and in the communal areas, such as the Welcome Hall and corridors, unless you are exempt for medical reasons. If you are visiting Loaves and Fishes, please wait until you are seated to remove your face covering. Anyone wanting to enter the building to carry out tasks related to the church must notify Nicola by emailing [crawleymethodistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:crawleymethodistchurch@gmail.com). This ensures that areas that have been visited are cleaned in preparation for the next group and that you can be contacted in case of the need to trace as has been necessary recently.

Again, thank you so much for all your support. *Carol*



## Sermons and scissors

*Rev Darren Middleton explains why he is training to be a hairdresser*

In July this year, whilst on Sabbatical, I decided to train in hairdressing and barbering at GHQ Training Academy, Plymouth. It struck me that, as we emerged from lockdown, next to seeing family and friends, hair was high on the agenda - people wanted hair salvation!

As a Presbyterian in the Methodist Church I am challenged by our missional drive to be new people in new places. If we are to make a difference within our communities and be the presence of God's love in Jesus, then we need to get out from behind our church walls.

There is no surprise to my four congregations that I am engaging a new challenge, having also been a West End dancer. Hairdressing is the perfect tool to engage the wider community. The salon is a place where people come from all backgrounds and places to have some personal time that is solely for themselves. A space is given to each client to be themselves and talk, or not! Part of the service that a hairdresser gives is to listen. The salon experience is a holistic one - pampering for the hair, nurturing for the soul.

I didn't realise just how compatible sermons and scissors are but in fact, in reality, they are synonymous. Especially if one considers a sermon something that is lived in the community and not just spoken from a pulpit.

My hope is to give this experience to people who need it but can't afford it; those who cannot go to a salon for whatever reason - the homeless and the outsider, the refugee, those suffering with mental illness and those who need to be loved and given space to just be. In commercial salons this service is not possible due to the need to make a profit. My vision is to have a salon that is not profit driven but people focused; having the ability and resources to give people the experience to grow in confidence, well-being and joy. God is calling me to provide a different kind of service - one that engages hair and heart



**The next newsletter** will go out for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December. I would welcome contributions from any of you please; recipes, book reviews, news of birthdays and other celebrations and even some deep thinking! Just get them to me by Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December. *Joyce*

## Contacts

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### General enquiries, prayer requests and newsletter items

[ask.stpauls@gmail.com](mailto:ask.stpauls@gmail.com)

**St Paul's website** [www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk](http://www.crawleymethodistchurch.org.uk)

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