

Salisbury Park United Reformed Church
Newsletter

December 2017 and January 2018





Salisbury Park United Reformed Church

Percy Road, Wrexham. LL13 7EA

Morning worship every Sunday at 10.45am



Minister Rev Brian Matthews
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Serving Elders

Mrs Michelle Berry – 01978 361320
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Mrs Judith Dolben – 01978 363955
Mr John Houghton – 01978 750778
Mrs Barbara Jones – 01978 755548
Mrs Yvonne Owen – 01978 513421
Mr Mark Rodgers – 01978 290687



A warm welcome to everyone



A word from our minister

Dear everyone,

I have a confession to make to you all, I cannot get at all excited by new year. My father died on New Year's Eve in 2004 but even before that it was a total non event for me. Perhaps it was because when I first began to learn about the twelve days of Christmas stretching from December 25th to January 6th, Twelfth Night, and new year encroached into that. Or maybe it was because of my awareness that we are on this planet which is orbiting the sun seamlessly all the time, silently and quickly through space. There is no beginning or end with that, new year is entirely a man-made occasion, the calendar is our invention as is our division of the months since we abandoned lunar months many years ago, and that is most probably why I couldn't care tuppence about it. I wish you a blessed life everyday day as they roll on one after the other.

Another confession whilst I am in the mood. My excitement about Christmas is not much greater. No, you do not need to go to Specsavers, you did just read that. What I mean is of course, the Christmas that we have invented, with the commercialisation, the moulding of legends and fairy stories into the accounts, the advent of spacemen and goodness knows what more into school "nativity" plays, the false sense of goodwill as we say sorry through gritted teeth when bumping into someone in the crowded shops, and the idea that permeates that Christmas only goes back to Victorian and Dickensian times. "Humbug," as the man said.

I assume by now that you are waiting for the positive bit, well here it is. What gets me excited about it is the truth of Incarnation, the coming of God among us in the humanity of Jesus who is the Word made flesh, dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth. The circumstances of His birth in Bethlehem because of the brutality of the power structure, the baby to a humble but feisty Mary; the poverty of the birth in the outhouse of the inn due to the doors being shut on this couple; the good news being given first to outsiders, the shepherds, and the story of Gentiles, the magi, being given the announcement. In the very simple accounts in the Gospels there is deep theology and Truth about God and God's purposes for us. It is resounding 'no' to the powerful of the day and a Heavenly 'yes' to the weak and powerless; a loud 'no' to the false worship of the nation state and its temple and a wonderful 'yes' to the wonder and beauty of a birth and God being seen in it; a deafening 'no' to man's idea of greatness and a thunderous 'yes' to the way of the humble and poor in spirit.

The Christmas trees and decorations will be put away, new year will come and go and the world will look forward to Valentine's Day. But for us the real work of Christmas begins:

to find the lost

to heal the broken

to feed the hungry

to release the prisoner

to rebuild the nations

to bring peace among people

to make music in the heart.

(From Howard Thurman.)

Brian

Sunday Morning Worship

December 3rd 2017

Leading Worship – Rev. Brian Matthews

Duty Elder – Shirley Devaney

Morning Tea – Yvonne Owen

Flowers – Advent

Door Steward – Thelma Jones

OT Reading – Isaiah 64.1-9 **Shirley Devaney**

NT Reading – Mark 13.24-37 **Mark Rodgers**

Epistle – 1 Corinthians 1.3-9

Psalm – Psalm 80.1-7,17-19

December 10th 2017

Leading Worship – Rev Brian Matthews (Communion)

Duty Elder – Shirley Devaney

Morning Tea – Mark and Collette

Flowers – Advent

Door Steward – Thelma Jones

OT Reading – Isaiah 40.1-11 **Judith Dolben**

NT Reading – Mark 1.1-8 **Corbin Winter**

Epistle – 2 Peter 3.8-15a

Psalm – Psalm 85.1-2,8-13



December 17th 2017

Leading Worship – Junior Church

Duty Elder – Shirley Devaney

Morning Tea – Glenys and Merfyn

Flowers – Advent

Door Steward – Thelma Jones

OT Reading – Isaiah 61.1-4,8-11

NT Reading – John 1.6-8,19-28

Epistle – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Psalm – Psalm 126

December 24th 2017

Leading Worship – Rev. Chris Howard

Duty Elder – Shirley Devaney

Morning Tea – Gordon and Thelma

Flowers – Advent

Door Steward – Thelma Jones

OT Reading – 2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16 **Carole Blackwell**

NT Reading – Luke 1.26-38 **Barbara Jones**

Epistle – Romans 16.25-27

Psalm – Psalm 89.1-4,19-26



December 31st 2017

Leading Worship – Barbara Jones

Duty Elder – Shirley Devaney

Morning Tea – Susan Rowlands

Flowers – Mrs Pat Taylor

Door Steward – Thelma Jones

OT Reading – No set reading **John Houghton**

NT Reading – No set reading **Yvonne Owen**

Epistle – No set reading

Psalm – No set reading

January 7th 2018

Leading Worship – Rev Chris Howard

Duty Elder – Judith Dolben

Morning Tea – Shirley Devaney

Flowers – Barbara Jones

Door Steward – Gordon Burgess

OT Reading – Genesis 1.1-5 **Paul Fewings**

NT Reading – Mark 1.4-11 **Gordon Burgess**

Epistle –

Psalm – Psalm



January 14th 2018

Leading Worship – Rev Brian Matthews (Communion)

Duty Elder – Judith Dolben

Morning Tea – Mark and Collette

Flowers – Glenys Jones

Door Steward – Gordon Burgess

OT Reading – 1 Samuel 3.1-10 **Collette Rodgers**

NT Reading – John 1.43-51 **Sharon Langford**

Epistle – 1 Corinthians 6.12-20

Psalm – Psalm 139.1-6,13-18

January 21st 2018

Leading Worship – Rev Colin Richards

Duty Elder – Judith Dolben

Morning Tea – Michelle and Christine

Flowers – Judith Dolben

Door Steward – Gordon Burgess

OT Reading – Jonah 3.1-5,10 **Lydia Rodgers**

NT Reading – Mark 1.14-20 **Hannah Rodgers**

Epistle – 1 Corinthians 7.29-31

Psalm – Psalm 62.5-12



January 28th 2018

Leading Worship – Sue Allen

Duty Elder – Judith Dolben

Morning Tea – Gordon and Thelma

Flowers – Sheila Cherrett

Door Steward – Gordon Burgess

OT Reading – Deuteronomy 18.15-20 **Michelle Berry**

NT Reading – Mark 1.21-28 **Christine Anderson**

Epistle – 1 Corinthians 8.1-13

Psalm - Psalm 111

Dates for your diary

Christmas Fayre – Saturday 2nd December from 1pm

Christmas Meal – Friday 15th December from 6.30pm

Craft Club

Starts back in January. Second Thursday from 11am

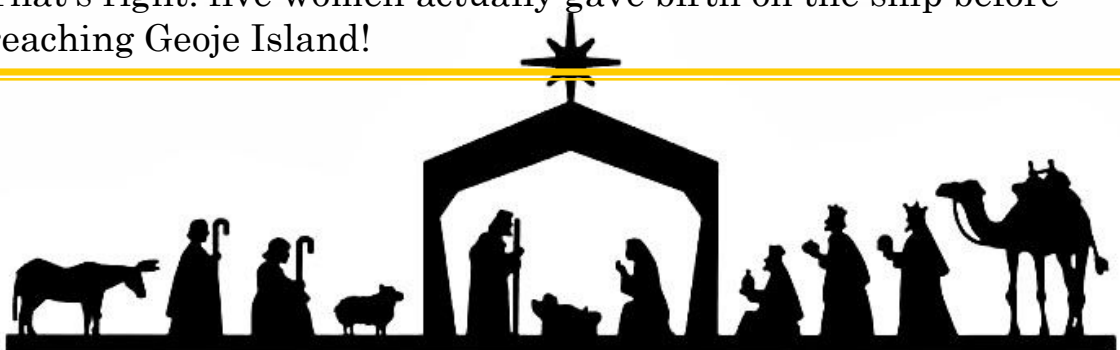
A true story at Christmas time

In December 1950, after the start of the Korean War, thousands of North Koreans were gathering at the Hungnam docks, hoping for one of the Allied ships there to get them to safety. Unfortunately, by the time they got there, there weren't many ships left and it didn't seem realistically possible to rescue everyone. Thankfully, the SS Meredith Victory, a small ship stationed in Hungnam, was captained by Leonard LaRue, a firm believer that one shouldn't concern himself with silly things like "reality" where human life is at stake.

Despite the fact that the Meredith Victory was designed to hold 60 people at most, LaRue ordered all 14,000 North Korean refugees to get on his boat. All the refugees did manage to get on board but they were packed so tightly in the cargo holds and on the ship's deck that they couldn't even sit down.

There were also no sanitation facilities or heat available on the ship, and that's how the floating sardine can was forced to navigate the mine-infested Korean waters without proper bomb-detecting equipment. The *only* weapon on the ship was Captain LaRou's service pistol. Mercifully he didn't need it because after two gruelling days at sea, the 14,000 refugees finally reached safe heaven on Geoje Island ... on Christmas Day.

The most remarkable thing about this story wasn't that none of the passengers died in the bowels of the cold, dark ship, but that they actually ended up with more people than they started with. That's right: five women actually gave birth on the ship before reaching Geoje Island!



Some questions around Jesus

Why was Jesus born in Bethlehem?

Because his mother was there at the time! But this is a moment when human plans and divine purposes interweave. The human thread was the famous “census”, bureaucracy is not a 21st century invention. If the population must be counted, we can't make exceptions for one village carpenter and his teenage bride.

But Bethlehem was where great King David had been born, and the prophets had foretold that from Bethlehem one day would come the Messiah. This is why later, when people met Jesus of Nazareth, they wondered how he could be the Messiah.

If Joseph was not the father of Jesus, why is his family tree in the Bible, and not Mary's?

If you read the first chapter of Matthew, the first 17 verses tell you exhaustively about Joseph's genealogy, and then Matthew immediately goes to describe how Jesus was born of a virgin – and not related to Joseph at all. So what was Matthew up to?

Matthew was writing his gospel for the Jews, to show them that Jesus was the Messiah. And so he wanted to establish Jesus' legal genealogy – which would have been important to the Jews. Legally, Jesus belonged to Joseph's family, and Matthew was saying what a pure line this was – it stretched back to the royal family of David. Women's genealogies were not viewed as of the same importance, hence the lack of interest in Mary's family.

As for Jesus actual (though not legal) father, that was God – for He was “conceived of the Holy Spirit”. Nowhere in the Bible is Joseph referred to as “the father of Jesus”, despite the numerous references to Mary as “the mother of Jesus”.

The verse in Matthew runs, according to the best Greek texts: *Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.* That says it all.





Carole's poetry corner

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls,

But do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas puddings,

Preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime,

But do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity,

But do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata,

But do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child

Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband

Love is kind, though harried and tired

Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens

Love doesn't yell at the children to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way

Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who can't

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things

Love never fails

Computer games will break, cashmere jumpers will wear out, golf clubs will get lost

But giving the gift of love will endure

Happy Christmas!

Turkey Treats (Poet Unknown)

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
“I’m glad we bought a fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree”
On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard
As we tucked into our turkey, a most delicious bird.
On the third day, we entertained the people from next door
The turkey tasted just as good, as it had the day before.
Day four, relations came to stay
Poor Gran is looking old
We finished up the Christmas pud
And ate the turkey cold.
On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes flurried
But we were nice and warm inside
For we had our turkey curried.
On the sixth day, I must admit
The Christmas spirit died
The children fought and bickered
We ate turkey rissoles, fried
On the seventh day of Christmas
My true love he did wince
When he sat down at the table and was offered turkey mince
Day eight, and nerves were getting frayed,
The dog had run for shelter
I had served up turkey pancakes with a glass of Alka Seltzer
On day nine our cat left home
By lunchtime dad was blotto
He said he had to have a drink
To face turkey risotto
By the tenth day, the booze had gone
(except our home made brew)
As if that wasn’t bad enough
We suffered turkey stew
On the eleventh day of Christmas
The Christmas tree was moulting
The mince pies were as hard as rock
And the turkey was revolting
On the twelfth day
My true love had a smile upon his lips
The frosts had gone, the turkey too
And we dined on fish and chips



(Submitted by Carole Blackwell)