

Wallington United Reformed



Church



CONTACT

No. 335

December 2020-January 2021

Wallington United Reformed Church



Dear Friends,

As we begin December we are already into this year's Advent - Sunday November 29th was Advent Sunday. For many of us this season of waiting is often swallowed up in the preparations for the festivities that have built up around the Christmas festival - parties, carol singing, meals, visiting, present giving and receiving, and so much more. This year promises to be somewhat different with the Covid19 pandemic. At the time of writing we have just started the lockdown which is due to last until at least December 2nd. How things will look after that date we cannot know at the moment and we can't be sure what limits there will be on gathering and what services we will be able to hold. However we are continuing to plan for a range of Christmas services in the church building as well as continuing with audio services and perhaps adding a video service or two. Christmas is not cancelled and we will be celebrating the giving of the greatest gift of all.

I would also like to emphasise that Advent is not cancelled either and perhaps the absence of some of the other activity that normally fills December might allow us to engage with the season of waiting and preparation. Included with this magazine is an updated daily prayer leaflet with readings for the season of Advent which I encourage you to consider using as a daily discipline in this season.

Advent is a time of preparation - not just for Christmas, but for God coming into our lives. Traditional themes for the four Sundays in Advent draw our attention to four ways in which God comes to us, not just once at Bethlehem, and not just on Christmas Day, but everywhere and always.

The focus on the preaching of the prophets reminds us that God comes to us, and speaks to us, not only through the prophetic

words of the Old Testament, but through the whole of Scripture. When we read the Bible we know that God has something to say to us that will both challenge us and comfort us.

The focus on John the Baptist draws our attention to the need for change and repentance in our own lives not only as a response to God coming to us, but also in order that we might more readily recognise him in the world around us. Whilst we are blinded by our own interests and self-centredness we are unlikely to spot the God who comes in unexpected places.

In recognising the role of Mary in the coming of the Christ, we are brought face to face with one who accepts the invitation to be part of God's saving work knowing that it will make her name respected, but more immediately for her will bring shame and pain. We too are reminded to offer our whole lives in service to God, not because it will bring us favour (indeed it may well bring the opposite), but because God has need of us in bringing his Good News to others today. God comes to us as we are willing to be used by him.

The concentration on the shepherds of the fourth Sunday usually gets swallowed up in a more general nativity. However the birth of the baby Jesus and the angels' message to the shepherds both draw our attention to the fact that God comes in unexpected people and places. He comes as a baby not a warrior king, and the first worshippers are not priests and the respected religious folk but outsiders and the disrespected. God still comes to us today in the unexpected and outsider if we have eyes to see him.

May this Advent season be a time when our eyes are opened to discover God coming to us every day and not just as a baby on Christmas Day.

May that be your greatest gift this Christmas.

Craig Bowman

For Our Wider Church Family

At the present time the lockdown is due to end on December 2nd, although we recognise that it may be extended if the medical situation requires it. Whilst this is not totally unexpected it will be 'inconvenient' for many and prove extremely difficult for some, particularly those who feel isolated, or lack support and those who struggle with being alone. Please continue to keep an eye on all the friends and neighbours around you who may need help.

We ask your prayers for those who are anxious or unwell, whether they are part of a church family, or not, and we remember all those who are housebound or have difficulties at this time.

We ask your prayers:

After 2nd December we are hoping that there will be morning services during December. May God bless you in these days when we are physically distant but gathered together by his Spirit.

In these unsettling and fast-changing times, we are committed to being the church - a community that seeks to care for one another, pray for each other and continue to support one another. While physical restrictions are in place there is still much we can do.

Join in a simple pattern of prayer designed to be used by anyone, at any time and in any place. As well as speaking or reading a prayer, you are encouraged to spend as much time listening – to God, to your circumstances and to yourself.

May you be blessed as you punctuate your day with simple, natural prayer...

Lord Jesus, I offer up my work, my words, my thinking and my resting, may Your kingdom come. Amen

If you have any news of the church family to bring us up to date please contact Alan. 020 8274 2136

Or Email: pastoral@wurc.org.uk

Names will only be shared in the version of Contact which goes to our usual fellowship and not put into the version posted on our website.



Southern Synod Moderator's Christmas Letter 2020

Dear friends,

As I write the papers are saying 'Christmas is cancelled this year'.

What a dreadful thought! And now the recent lockdown makes us worry who can be in our bubble or whether we are going to spend Christmas alone.

Of course, the real Christmas is never cancelled and that is a great relief for the whole world. Like many ministers I am at home this year, shut in my study answering emails, doing Zoom meetings and making phone calls. It's a very different type of ministry we are engaged in. We need to remember Christ's coming more this year maybe than at any other time.

Friends have said they cannot wait to put up decorations: the sparkle and ribbons, the lights piercing the darkness of a December afternoon, the hope of presents and a great big tree all lit up. In truth, this year we *really* need Jesus. We need the Lord to give us hope where we have lost it.

It always seems amazing to me that God should choose a helpless baby to pierce the darkness of the Roman empire and the hardness of humanity's hearts. But God did. A baby who has come for over 2,019 years and will come to us again this year – despite a pandemic. We may choose the tinsel and sparkle of Christmas, but Christ chooses our hearts.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:8-12

As we approach Advent and Christmas, we know that this year we are living in challenging times. We may not be able to sing of love coming down at Christmas in our churches, we may not be able to be with family and friends and the brokenness of

the world continues. Yet Jesus, the Christ- child, the Light of the world, will still come to us. Christ is still the source of our hope and joy. Nothing can stop our Lord coming to meet us where we are.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Luke 2:10

Christ is a never-ending source of love, light and wellbeing. Not only are we the cracked clay pots in which Jesus places the light of the world, we are the vessels God uses to spill out the light of love into the world. Full of this light we know we don't have to be afraid of the future. For God is with us. With us in pandemics, injustice, bereavement, pain and fear. Christ is never cancelled from our lives. All we have to do is shine.

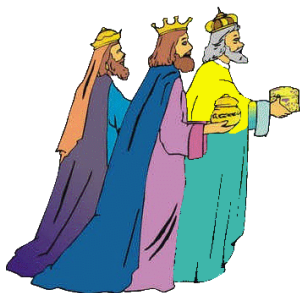
I wish you and your families, a very blessed Christmas.

Bridget

Commitment
for **Life** *Commitment for Life* is a way in
which local congregations are enabled
to participate in actions for justice
around the world.

December

A Christmas prayer



Come, Jesus, come.
You enter this world as a babe
You bring light into darkness
You offer hope in hopelessness
You share peace in troubled times
You challenge empires and kings.
You usher in the Fullness of Life.
Come, Jesus, come. **Amen**

Our Christmas Collections are going to support :-



Sutton Night Watch is a registered charity (1171903) which was set up to support and raise awareness for the homeless people within the London Borough of Sutton and surrounding areas.

A group of volunteers give up their time to run the kitchen and food/clothes bank.

There are full-time premises now open in Manor Road, Wallington, which, along with the above support, will offer further services for all users, including online access to job/health services, showers, clothes washing facilities and a full-time kitchen.

There is confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, people living with manic depression or bipolar disorder and will help to support those diagnosed with an anxiety condition. There is information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

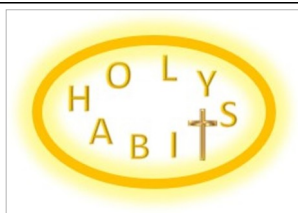
Sutton Night Watch had hoped to adjust their opening hours and structure to allow a more flexible regimen for service users, however as the government advice changed rapidly, they had to adapt quickly too. The opening hours have had to move back to the Monday – Friday, 8am -12 Midday structure.

They are keeping a very close eye on the ever changing instructions from the government and as soon possible more support will be offered from the Manor Road, Wallington premises.

For the present time, Sutton Night Watch are handing out hot food and food parcels to service users

You can help Sutton Night Watch & celebrate Christmas 2020 by donating a star to the Christmas Star Appeal. Check the details on their website..<https://suttonnightwatch.com/> There are some beautiful wooden stars, which will be hung by a ribbon, embellished with an individual name, family name or company name of your choice (up to 10 characters).

If you would like to claim your star after Christmas please contact our offices, if a star is not claimed it will be hung in our Garden of Hope, celebrating our donators and supporters.



Holy Habits returns! *Biblical Teaching.*

In November the Holy Habits discussion group met again. Yes, with a difference, it took place, via Zoom, but did provoke some interesting discussion points.

Did you know that the Book of Ester is unique? Not for what it says, but for what it doesn't say! It does not mention God anywhere in the book...!!

There was a short quiz to start each week...very enjoyable...and not all hard questions (phew!).

Our thanks to Phil for his hard work.

Look out for another 'Holy Habits' in 2021.

Gift Day

Should have been

Sunday November 22nd

Although we couldn't meet up on the day itself, we did manage to have a Gift Day (or fortnight) via bank transfers.

A big thank-you to those who have already donated to our gift day appeal. So far we have received just over £3,000 from 12 separate donations. These will be added to our freewill offerings totals and the Gift Aid reclaim which we will make next year will increase this amount by another £700. We are very grateful for this response but we are still facing a huge hole in our finances. It's not too late to donate. We really do need your contributions however and whenever you are able to make them.



Meanwhile if you have any Smartie tubes which we were filling for Christian Aid earlier in the year, please do let us have them by 13th December if you can. Proceeds will be passed to Christian Aid before Christmas.

Elaine

Diary Dates				
December		As we wait to see what December brings.		
Sunday	6th	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...	
Sunday	13th	10.30am	Morning service...	
Sunday	20th	4.00pm	Carols by Candlelight...in church and with an audio service.	
Sunday	27th	10.30am	Morning service...	
January	2021		We may be able to meet together...audio services will also be available.	
Sunday	3rd	10.30am	Morning service...with the Sacrament of Holy Communion...	
Sunday	10th	10.30am	Morning service...	
Sunday	17th	10.30am	Morning service...	
Sunday	24th	10.30am	Morning service...	
Sunday	31st	10.30am	Morning service...	

PLEASE NOTE... Articles for the February 2021 issue of Contact should be given to Janet or Robin Willis by **Friday 22nd January 2021** unless a later date has been agreed by prior arrangement. Contributions are very acceptable by e-mail contact@wurc.org.uk

Over the past few months we have had the Puzzle Corner in Contact. Sudoku Answers for November:

Women of the Bible:

1. Mary
2. Eve
3. Jezebel
4. Sarai
5. Esther
6. Delilah
7. Ruth
8. Mary Magdalene
9. Elisabeth
10. Rachel

3	8	2	6	9	7	4	1	5
4	7	9	2	5	1	8	6	3
5	6	1	8	3	4	2	9	7
7	3	5	4	1	8	9	2	6
2	1	4	7	6	9	5	3	8
6	9	8	5	2	3	1	7	4
9	4	7	1	8	6	3	5	2
8	5	3	9	7	2	6	4	1
1	2	6	3	4	5	7	8	9

Puzzle Corner

A sudoku puzzle consists of a 9 by 9 grid. This grid is subdivided into nine 3 x 3 boxes.

		2		5			6	
8	7		3		6	9		1
3		9	8	2				5
					4	8		
	3			7	8		9	
		1	6					2
5				8	2	6		9
	2	7	1					3
	9			3		2	1	

Some of the cells in the grid are prefilled with a number between 1 and 9, while many other cells are blank. Your job is to determine the correct number to be entered in each of the empty cells.

The numbers 1 to 9 must appear just once in each row, column, and 3 x 3 box.



An Angel to
Colour

Christmas Fun



ACROSS

- 1 O come, all ye
—
5 Gifts
8 ___ get
together
9 ___ night, holy
night ...
11 Tree decorations
13 We celebrate
His birth
15 Present
decorations

DOWN

- 2 What Santa
brings
3 Used to tie a
present
4 Heavenly beings
6 Dasher,
Dancer, etc.
7 Christmas
songs
10 Place for lights
and ornaments
12 Jolly old St. Nick
14 Makes a white
Christmas

Birth of Jesus Wordsearch

D	C	J	O	S	E	P	H
L	O	R	D	Y	R	A	M
R	F	A	T	H	E	R	T
O	A	N	H	V	S	I	A
W	I	G	O	U	R	G	E
G	T	L	S	I	I	A	R
O	H	E	P	O	H	M	G
D	J	S	T	A	B	L	E

Faith, Father, God,
Great, Hope, Jesus,
Joseph, Magi, Lord,
Love, Mary, Spirit,
Stable, World

EVERY WEEK AT WALLINGTON U.R.C.

Times of Worship

Sunday	10.30am	Family Service + Junior Church with crèche facilities
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Activities you can find on our Premises

Monday - Friday 9.15am-1.15pm *Holmwood Pre – school*

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday	2.00-5.30pm	Harp Drops (mothers and baby activities)
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Thursday	11.00-12.00noon	Senior Mothers Exercise
	1.00-3.00pm	Lace Making
	2.00-4.00pm	Faith Angels

Friday

Saturday	8.45-9.15am	Fitness Class
	10.15am-12.30pm	Zumba

All activities are waiting until at least the beginning of 2021