

Newsletter

December 2021

This is our monthly newsletter. The newsletter can be received by anyone who has an e-mail address. To subscribe to this service please send your e-mail address to: northstaffscircuit@hotmail.co.uk.

Dear Friends

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.**

Charles Wesley (H&P 81)

Words that I suspect we will sing at least once as we journey through this season of Advent.

St Theresa of Avila once said: "It's not with many thoughts or words that He hears us but in the silence of our longing." But what is it that we're longing for? When we sing those words of Charles Wesley what is going through our minds? Is it thoughts of all that preparation we still need to do to put food on the Christmas table and presents under the tree? Is it anticipation of the almost magical element of the festive season, the things we missed out on last year – beautiful lights, evocative music, children's faces captivated by everything from decorations, to Santa Claus, to the nativity play? Is it a sentimentality that comes from the image of an innocent baby? Or the deep pain of the realization that someone close won't be with you this Christmas? Advent hymns and Christmas carols perhaps more than most other church music can stir our emotions, our memories, our 'feel good factor'. But how seriously do we really take the message that their words bring?

'Come, thou long-expected Jesus' is anticipating more than the birth of a fragile baby whose first bed was a manger. This baby came to set God's people free, a victory he won through death on a cross. An act of such total and infinite love that it releases us from our fears and sins and enables us to find rest, peace, in the Lord our God. But that can only happen when we let go of our inbuilt securities and comfort zones and let the Babe of Bethlehem into our hearts. And, once there, we must allow him to grow, to become the adult Jesus who teaches and challenges and guides us to the things of his world and not ours. Then, and only then, will we discover the true depth and meaning of the Christmas story.

The turkey and the cards and the tinsel are part of what this time of year is for us, but amidst the hustle and bustle I encourage you this Advent to find some time each day to contemplate the significance of the words 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus', and to reflect in the silence of your own longing what that may mean in your life. And I pray that we will each come to Christmas Day with a yearning desire to welcome the Christ child, and all that he offers, into our hearts and lives in a fresh and powerful way.

Every evening
it's the same:
put the key in the deadbolt,
turn and lock;
check the windows;
put out the cat;
leave a light on....

All those routines
to feel safe
and fall asleep in peace.
But some night
in the midst of my security,
you will tiptoe into my house,
rearrange the furniture,
cracking the combination
of my heart,
and ransacking
all my fears;

then,
softly whispering
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,
you will slip out,
leaving the door
standing
wide open
that I might
follow you
into the kingdom.

Come, Lord Jesus! *(Thom M Shuman)*

I'd like to wish you all, your families and your friends, a very peaceful and Christ-filled Christmas. And may God's joy and love go with you as we move into 2022.

Every blessing

Liz

North Staffordshire Circuit (11/22)

Preaching Plan December 2021

					December			
					5	12	19	26
					2nd Sunday of Advent	3rd Sunday of Advent	4th Sunday of Advent	1st Sunday of Christmas
Lectionary Year (C) (Principal Service)					Malachi 3:1-4 Canticle: Benedictus Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6	Zeph. 3:14-20 Canticle: Isaiah 12:2-6 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18	Micah 5:2-5a Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45(46-55)	1 Samuel 2:18-20,26 Psalm 148 Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52
Please Pray For:					St Luke's	Silverdale	Wolstanton	Audley
Baldwins Gate (10)	LS	9.30	StF MWB	GNB	Rowley	Cartwright	Singleton HC	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Wolstanton (100)	LS	10.30 6.00	StF MWB		Singleton B	Singleton HC	Barnett 6.30 PM Singleton C	Singleton Circuit
Cross Heath (23)	CL	11.00	StF MSB	NIV	Legge HC	Cartwright	LA C	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Higherland (43)	CL	10.00 3.00	StF	MM	Legge HC	LA Nativity 11.00 am	X Legge C	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Madeley (21)	CL	10.30	H&P MSB	SoF 1234	R Jones	Legge HC	Davies C T	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Silverdale (56)	CL	11.00	StF	MM	Café Church LA	Chadwick	Legge HC 6PM Legge C	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Audley (39)	JV	10.30 3.00	StF MWB	SoF 1&2	X Ventom HC	Davies T X	X Ventom C	Circuit @ Wolstanton X
Bradwell (46)	JV	10.00	StF MWB	SoF 1&2 NIV H&P	LA	Ventom HC	M. Ventom C	Circuit @ Wolstanton
Halmer End (23)	JV	10.00 3.00	H&P MWB	SoF 1&2 GNB	Ventom B	N Jones	Harrison T	Circuit @ Wolstanton
St Luke's (26)	JV	10.30	H&P MWB	SoF 123 GNB	Barnett TS	Dyble T	Ventom C	Circuit @ Wolstanton

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DIARY DATES...

Tuesday 7th December 7.30pm Local Preachers & Worship Leaders Meeting at Silverdale Methodist Church

CHRISTMAS SERVICES (not shown on the plan) ...

Audley

Christmas Eve

Friday, 24th December

3.00 pm – 4.00 pm Storytime and Craft – Rev'd Joy Ventom

Baldwins Gate

Thursday, 16th December at 6.30 pm – Carol Service – Rev'd Liz Singleton

Bradwell

Christmas Eve

7.00 pm – Holy Communion Service – Rev'd Joy Ventom

Cross Heath

Tuesday, 14th December

5.00 pm Christingle Making Workshop
5.30 pm Christingle Service – Rev'd Christine Legge
6.15 pm Refreshments

Christmas Eve

Friday, 24th December

6.00 pm Christmas Eve Service – Rev'd Christine Legge

Halmer End

Christmas Day

9.30 am – Service – Rev'd Joy Ventom

Higherland

Christmas Day

10.00 am - Christmas Day Service – Rev'd Christine Legge

Madeley

Thursday, 16th December

6.30 pm – Christingle by Zoom – contact Rev'd Christine Legge for joining details

St Luke's

Christmas Day

10.45 am – Service – Rev'd Joy Ventom

Silverdale

Christmas Eve

4.00 pm – Carol Singing, Puppets & Brass Band – Silverdale Parade (Outside the Co-Op)

Wolstanton

Christmas Eve

6.00 pm – Service – Rev'd Liz Singleton

Christmas Day

10.00 am – Family Worship – Rev'd Liz Singleton

Biblical Who's Who – the lesser known characters of the Bible and what they have to say to us today.

THEOPHILUS

Chapter 1 of Luke's gospel contains many words that we will hear read this Advent and Christmas season. The visit to Mary by the angel Gabriel, Mary's journey to see her cousin Elizabeth, and, of course, the emotive words of The Magnificat. What we probably won't hear is the introduction to Luke's gospel – '*I also have decided to write a careful account for you, most honourable Theophilus, so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.*' Luke 1: 3-4 NLT

Theophilus was evidently a friend of Luke and a fellow believer. The name Theophilus literally means ‘one who loves God.’ For Luke to have addressed this gospel and, indeed, the Acts of the Apostles, to his friend suggests that Theophilus wanted to know about what God was doing in the world through the lives of others and how that might impact on his life.

I wonder what you and your friends talk about? The weather, sports, our families? But how often do you talk about God and his work in the world and your life? God shouldn’t be a taboo subject or a private matter. If we consider Jesus to be our friend then he’s part of our friendship network and that means talking of him as we do our other friends. And what better time of year to do that then now when we are thinking about Jesus’ birth - without which we wouldn’t be wrapping presents, planning meals, writing cards and sending greetings.

Talking of our friend Jesus should be something we do naturally and it isn’t about trying to convert others or to make them like him. It’s simply mentioning someone, and something, that is significant to you and is part of who you are. You may be surprised to discover that your friends are actually interested enough in you to want to know more about what is important to you.

Foodbank – please click on this link [here](#).

Thank you to everyone across the circuit who gives regularly to Foodbank through their church. Foodbank remains open through these troubled times and demand for food is high. Can I please ask you to all keep on giving by taking your donations to your nearest Foodbank.



Clayton St Luke’s host a session
on Tuesday morning. 10.00am – 12 noon

All Saints, Madeley host a session
on a Wednesday Morning. 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

The Bethel Centre Silverdale 2.00 pm – 4.00pm

Chesterton Pentecostal church on:
Thursday Morning. 10.00 -12.00 noon

Newcastle Congregational church on:
Thursday afternoon. 2.00 pm – 4.00pm

St Thomas church Kidsgrove on:
Friday afternoon 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm

or you can take your contribution to our warehouse on the Parkhouse estate on a Monday afternoon or Wednesday morning ... please give us a ring if you want details of how to get there, it is on the Aspire work complex.

Your gifts large or small are very much appreciated and are a lifeline to those sadly more vulnerable than ourselves.

*Please give us a ring if you want to drop your gift off at our house!
Carol and Marion Reddish TEL 01782 613265*

If you would like to make a monetary donation to Newcastle Staffs Foodbank you can contact the Trustee/Treasurer Michael Heap for details: -
01782 639882 or email him on accounts@newcastlestaffs.foodbank.org.uk.
If you would like to Gift Aid your donation please visit the website or contact Michael Heap for details.

At the present time Foodbank are short of the following items:-

Shampoo

Shaving Gel & Foam

Shower Gel

Deodorants for Men & Women

Toilet Rolls

Toothpaste

Washing Up Liquid

Washing Powder/Tablets/Pods

No Room: We're Full

*There's no room in this country,
we're full up.*

*In fact we're overcrowded,
there's hardly room for us
(well, for our cars, at any rate)
so we really can't take you or anyone else.*

Sorry.

*No really, believe me, there's no housing to spare,
none at all; especially with the rising demand
for second homes.*

So you see, we really can't help you.

You must go somewhere else.

And please, move your old banger away from the drive.

Thanks.

The stable? What stable?

What on earth do you mean?

We couldn't put you in a stable.

*This is a civilised country
and a stable, even if we had one, which we don't,
wouldn't comply with the building regulations
for human habitation.*

So move away, please.

.....

*No, my dear, it's all right. They've gone now, thank God.
Just a couple of foreigners, bogus asylum seekers, probably,
in an old banger. Of course we couldn't take them in,
not people like that.*

*written by Louise Pirouet. Published in 'shine on, star of bethlehem'
compiled for Christian Aid & CAFOD (Canterbury Press)*

SILVER SERVICE

Mid-week worship

At Silverdale Methodist Church

11.30 am - 12.30 ..

1st Thursday - Holy Communion

3rd Thursday - Worship with Activity

Light refreshments

Upcoming dates:

18 November,

2 December, 16 December

All are very welcome

- why not bring a neighbour or friend?



Baldwins Gate Methodist
Church

Coffee Fellowship

Tuesday, 14th December

10.30 am

"Christmas Music"

All Welcome

Cross Heath Methodist Church
Christmas Mince Pie
Coffee Morning
 with homemade cakes, preserves
 and craft stall

Saturday, 4th December
at 11.00 am

All welcome. Tickets £2.50 available
 beforehand or admission on the door.

Join us this Christmas at
Audley Methodist Church

- * Carol Service - Sunday 19th December at 3pm
- * Carols in Audley Village (Margaret's Garden)
 Thursday 23rd December - 5pm - Bring a torch!
- * Christmas Eve Storytime & Craft - 3pm
- * Christmas Day at Halmer End Methodist Church -
 9:30am

EMMAUS

"Emmaus is new, different, with exciting possibilities, and many have warmed to it already. It is good that we can choose either to meditate on a verse of Scripture in the quiet of the building, or go outside in groups discussing the same verse whilst engaging with people in the community."

"The first time I travelled on the Emmaus road was about 35yrs ago, on a family weekend retreat in Wales with church members from around the circuit. My initial thoughts were of apprehension as to how this could work in our village - but this, EMMAUS, was so different from that. It was good fun, and I thoroughly enjoyed connecting with God in a fresh new way."

But don't take our word for it, come & try it for yourself!
SILVERDALE METHODIST CHURCH

"As the disciples walked along the road, Jesus came and walked alongside them" (Luke 24:15)

BOOKS & CD'S

Peggy Fitchett has quite a lot of books and a few cd's which she no longer needs and would love to pass on. If you would like to see the list of what she has please contact Michelle in the Circuit Office.

REJOICE



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REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS.
Philippians 4:4a