NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE METHODIST CIRCUIT

ISSUE 64

# Newsletter
# December 2026

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,

As Christmas approaches, our homes and streets begin to sparkle with lights, familiar carols fill the air, and we once again hear the wonderful story of Christ's birth. Yet Christmas is more than a cherished tradition. It is God's declaration that light shines in darkness, hope is born in uncertainty, and love comes near to us in the most unexpected ways.

The Christmas story begins not in comfort or grandeur, but in humility. Mary and Joseph travelled a difficult road. There was no room at the inn. A child was born among animals and laid in a manger. The first visitors were shepherds, ordinary people going about their work. Through it all, God was at work, bringing salvation into the world.

This good news remains as relevant today as it was on that first Christmas night. We live in a world that can feel troubled and fragile. Many carry concerns for family, finances, health, or the future. Others come to Christmas with happy celebrations, while some carry the ache of grief, loneliness, or missing loved ones. The message of Christmas speaks into all these experiences: God is with us.

In Jesus, Emmanuel, "God with us", we discover that we are never abandoned. God comes not only to our moments of joy but also to our struggles, questions, and fears. Christ enters the ordinary circumstances of human life and brings the assurance of divine presence and love.

As we celebrate this holy season, let us make room for Christ in our hearts, our homes, and our community. Let us share kindness generously, offer welcome freely, and look for ways to bring hope to those who need it most. A simple act of care, a visit, a card, a prayer, or a word of encouragement can become a sign of God's love to another person.

Thank you for all the ways you have shared in the life of our church throughout the year. Through worship, prayer, service, fellowship, and acts of compassion, you have helped to reflect Christ's light in our community. It is a privilege to journey together in faith.

May the peace of the Christ Child fill your hearts. May God's love surround your families and friends. And may the hope of Emmanuel sustain you throughout Christmas and into the New Year.

With every blessing and every good wish for a joyful Christmas,

Rev'd Joy

*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."* (Isaiah 9:2)

# North Staffordshire Circuit (11/22)
# Preaching Plan – December 2026

| | | | | | December | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 |
| | | | | | Advent 2 | Advent 3 | Advent 4 | Christmas 1 |
| **Lectionary Year (B)** | | | | | Isaiah 40:1-11 | Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11 | 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16 | Isaiah 61:10-62:3 |
| (Principal Service) | | | | | Psalm 85:1-2,8-13 | Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55 | Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4,19-26 | Psalm 148 |
| | | | | | 2 Peter3:8-15a | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 | Romans 16:25-27 | Galatians 4:4-7 |
| | | | | | Mark 1:1-8 | John 1:6-8,19-28 | Luke 1:26-38 | Luke 2:22-40 |
| Please Pray For: | | | | | Cross Heath | Halmer End | Higherland | Madeley |
| **Cross Heath** | TS | 11.00 | **StF** | NIV | Ventom HC | Siwila | LA Carols | X |
| **(23)** | | 3.00 | MWB | | | | | |
| **Higherland** | TS/KB | 10.00 | **StF** | MM | Barnett HC | Nativity LA @ 11 am | X | LA |
| **(35)** | | 3.00 | | | | | Barnett Carols @ 3pm | |
| | | 6.00 | MWB | | | | | X |
| **Silverdale** | TS | 11.00 | **StF** | MM | Chadwick | X | Siwila HC | X |
| **(51)** | | 3.00 | | | | | | |
| | | 5.00 | | | | Carols by Candlelight @ 6.30 pm | | X |
| **Wolstanton** | TS | 10.30 | **StF** | | Siwila HC | Parkes | Chadwick | LA |
| **(92)** | | 3.00 | MWB | | | | Carol Service 6.00 pm | |
| **Audley** | JV | 10.30 | **StF** | SoF 1&2 | Denny HC | Harrison T | X | X |
| **(26)** | | 3.00 | MWB | GNB | | | Ventom Carols @ 6pm | X |
| **Bradwell** | JV | 10.00 | **StF** | SoF 1&2 | Bursley Academy | Ventom HC | LA Carols | X |
| **(30)** | | 3.00 | MWB | NIV H&P | | | | |
| **Halmer End** | JV | 10.30 | **StF** | SoF 1&2 | US @ St Luke's | Wakelin HC | X | X |
| **(18)** | | 3.00 | MWB | GNB H&P | | | Ventom Carols & Christingle | |
| **Madeley** | JV | 10.30 | **StF** | SoF 1234 | R Jones | N Jones | Ventom Carols | X |
| **(23)** | | 3.00 | MWB | NIV | | | | |
| **St Luke's** | JV | 10.30 | H&P | GNB | Toy Service LA US | X | Irvine | X |
| **(22)** | | 3.00 | MWB | | | Ventom Nativity @ 3pm | | |
| **Printed Service for this week prepared by:** | | | | | Barnett | Parkes | Ventom | Heap |

**Christmas Eve**
Cross Heath, 6 pm
Silverdale, 4 pm Christmas Eve on the Parade
Wolstanton 6 pm

**Christmas Day**
Halmer End, 10 am
Higherland, 10 am
Silverdale, 11 am
St Luke's, 10.30 am
Wolstanton, 10 am

## Eco Tips

Make Christmas greener, one day at a time. Fun, practical, biblical and thoughtful, Olivia Warburton, who heads up her church's eco-group, offers 111 easy eco-tips to go greener at Christmas, in her book, Dreaming of a Green Christmas: Sustainability and creation care for busy people. Here's one of its tips: 'Make your own decorations from recyclable materials, such as dried orange slice ornaments, sticks of cinnamon, loo roll fairies or giant paper snowflakes. Turn scrap paper into paper chains. Foraged materials like pine cones and holly can be used for wreaths, which can then be recycled at the kerbside.' Use this eco tip or another one from our blog: arocha.org.uk/make-christmas-greener-one-day-at-a time/

*A Rocha UK's Easy Eco Tips 2026 Calendar*

## A BIG THANK YOU

Thank you to all the churches who donated their harvest gifts to Foodbank this year and a special thanks to those who donate food all the year round. It is time for an update now.

In the past twelve months 69,940 kilograms of food has been donated to us either by giving to a particular food bank centre or directly to our warehouse in Knutton. The percentage of food donated by churches is 14%, it is mostly businesses that contribute to our stock

9,940 people have been fed of which 3,252 have been children. Unfortunately the demand for food is greater than supply at the moment and so we have purchased food to top up stock by £ 48,837. Whilst at the moment we have a positive sum of money in the bank, can this be maintained long term?

So can you as an individual help, or can you ask your church members to be involved by either donating food or becoming a friend of Foodbank by giving a donation of money whenever you or they can afford. Every little helps as the Tesco motto goes. Tesco are a good example of business help given, every time we have a supermarket collect Tesco will double whatever we collect, so please put items in our box in store if you are able.

Times are hard and we all know how much our household bills have gone up so we fully understand that not everyone can give. It may be that you yourself are struggling to buy food so please do feel able to ask for help if that is appropriate. Whilst we do have guidelines to follow, it is not often we say no to needy folk who obviously need support. Every centre can also offer professional advice, given by MONEY MATTERS, on how clients can move forward financially so it is not a case of just giving out food, advice is there too.

I hope you find this helpful, please do ask me if you want more information. Thank you again to all our faithful food providers.

Marion Reddish Tel 613265.

**Shortages at the present time:**

- **Bags for life**
- **Chocolate**
- **Hot tinned meat**
- **Shampoo**
- **Sponge puddings**
- **Washing up liquid**
- **Tinned fish**
- **Tea bags**
- **Long-life juice**
- **Razors for shaving**
- **Shaving foam/gel**

# The Wonder of Christmas

Recently, at choir practice for our Christmas concert, we were rehearsing *O Holy Night*. As the first sopranos soared towards that glorious top A on "O night divine", I felt that familiar sensation of being carried somewhere beyond the music. For a fleeting moment, it was almost as though we were singing with the angels themselves.

I was once told by a wise Dean (now retired Bishop) that music reaches us where words cannot. I've never forgotten that. Perhaps that's why Christmas carols have always moved me so deeply. Sometimes I can almost imagine myself standing in the stable, witnessing the wonder of that first Christmas.

There's something special about seeing Christmas through the eyes of children too. I'm looking forward to sharing some of the excitement with my two young grandsons, including a trip on the Polar Express. I love watching their faces as they hold their Christingle candles or search for figures from the Nativity. Familiar things become wonderfully new again through their eyes.

Having spent most of my life celebrating Christmas in the southern hemisphere, I'm still discovering the particular magic of Christmas in winter. The cold, the dark evenings, the twinkling lights - so different from the long, sun-filled days I once associated with December.

Yet somehow, the darkness makes the lights seem brighter.

And perhaps Christmas is also a time when our hearts stretch a little further, making room for family, friends, and those whose celebrations may be quieter, lonelier or more difficult than our own.

Amid the music, the children's excitement and the preparations, I find myself thinking of that first Christmas, and the extraordinary wonder of what was unfolding.

However many Christmases we've celebrated, there can still be moments that take us completely by surprise and leave us quietly in awe.

**I wonder... when did you last find yourself lost in wonder?**

*Jill Stirk*
*Finance and Operations Manager*
*North Staffordshire Methodist Circuit*

## Bible Study on the book of Ruth

10 to 11.30am on the 2nd Tuesday of each month

11th August 2026
8th September
13th October
10th November
8th December
Break January and February
9th March 2027
13th April



Bring a Bible with you

St. Luke's Methodist Church ST5 4BH




## Madeley Methodist Church

# Christmas Fayre

Saturday 5 December
10.30am - 12pm

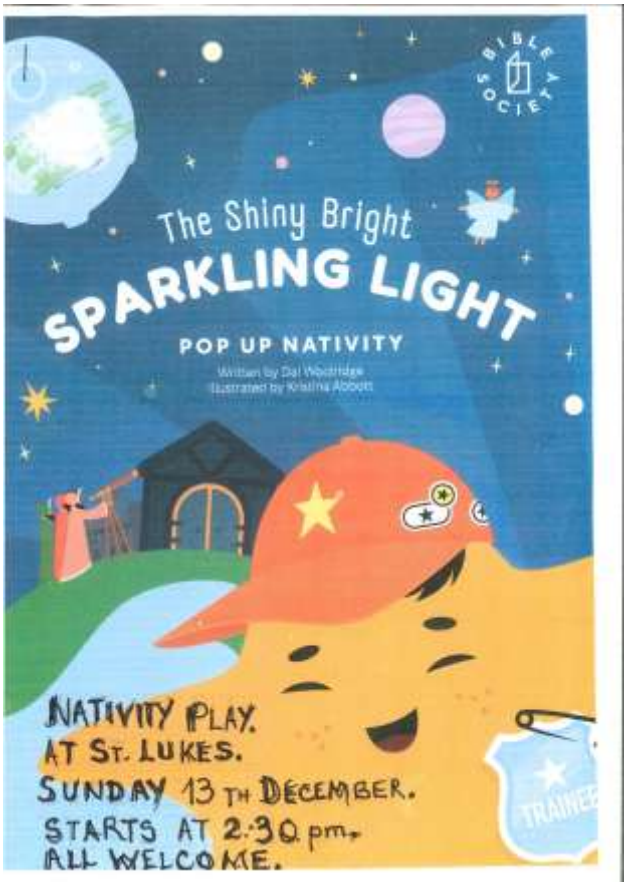
Chocolate Tombola
Raffle, Cakes
Fancy Goods
Refreshments:
Suggested donation £2.50 to include hot drink and mince pie

EVERYONE WELCOME

Proceeds to Church Funds
Poolside, Madeley,
CW3 9HL






All are welcome to arrive and be seated for 2.30 pm when the singing of traditional Christmas songs starts. The Accordion Band will be providing music for all to sing to. The play begins at around 3.00pm. Carols will be sung during the play.












Cross Heath Methodist Church

CHRISTMAS COFFEE
MORNING
AND NATIVITY FESTIVAL

Saturday 19th December
@10:30am
Refreshments Cakes
Raffle Good as New Stall
Tombola

Come and see the church decorated for Christmas with many different crib scenes.

PEACE NOEL

'ELDERBERRIES'
at
WOLSTANTON METHODIST CHURCH
Invites you to
'Carols for Christmas'
Monday 21st. December at 2.30p.m.
Followed by
Drinks & Mince Pies
Everyone welcome
Collection for Action for Children's 'Secret Santa

Christmas JOY

`

**Madeley Methodist Church**
**invites you to a…**

## Christingle Service for all ages

**Monday 21 December at 6.30pm**
**Led by Revd Joy Ventom with 'Poolside Puppets'**



Meet Chris Tingle!

**Refreshments afterwards:**
Mulled wine (non-alcoholic), tea, coffee, juice, mince pies and chocolate cake

## Everyone welcome

Donation plate for Karibuni Children

(Registered Charity 1044872)









**Please join us for our:**



**Are you, or someone you know, looking for a group to join or an activity to take part in, there may be something happening at Wolstanton Methodist Church that will suit?**




Every other Monday 2.30-4pm: Elderberries a church social group for older people normally with a speaker always with refreshments

1st Monday of the month 2-4pm: Trefoil Guild a social meeting for people connected with Girl Guiding

Monday 5.30pm- 8.30pm: Workout with Mika three different exercise classes from hula hoop fitness to boxing to rock music workoutwithmika@gmail.com

Monday 6.30-7.30pm Pilates with Nicola nicolajherd@hotmail.com

Tuesday 9.30am-10.30am Baby Signing and Tiny Talk for young babies under 1 year nicolaausterberry@tinytalk.co.uk

Tuesday 10am - 11am: YogaJules.Stoke yogajules.stoke@gmail.com

Tuesday 7.30pm-9pm: Church Music Group

1st Wednesday of the month Bible Study 2.30pm -4pm

Wednesday 10.30am-12.30pm: Community coffee morning - open to all

Wednesday 6-7.30: Brownies

Wednesday 7.30pm-9.30pm: NULCO Newcastle under Lyme Community Orchestra music rehearsals for shows and concerts secretary@nulco.co.uk

1st Wednesday of the month 7.30pm Sugar craft – fondant decorations for cake.

Thursday 10am -11am: Tots of fun music and play for little ones under 4 totoffunuk@gmail.com

Thursday 11.45am-12.45am Tots of Fun new mums social with coffee and cake for young babies and new mums totoffunuk@gmail.com

Thursday 7.30pm-9.30pm Jazz Orchestra / Flute ensemble alternative weeks

Thursday 6pm 7 6.45pm: Dog obedience classes darwins-dog-grooming.square.site

Friday 9.30am-11.30am Tots of Fun Playgroup totoffunuk@gmail.com

Saturday 9am-10.15am: Spanish lessons for children delia.alvarez@kidslingo.co.uk

**Book Swap**
**at**
**Bradwell Methodist Church**

**There is a new free book swap library outside Bradwell Methodist Church. Please take a look and if you have any unwanted books please pop them in.**



Coffee Morning's at

Audley Methodist Church

Refreshments, in a welcoming "WARM SPACE" await you

Join us every Tuesday 10am to midday



## Coffee Morning

10.30am – 12.30pm

Every Wednesday at Wolstanton Methodist Church

*Madeley Methodist Church*

*invites you to join us at our*



**Warm Space**

**Elevenses**



On Wednesdays at 11am

Chat

Free Refreshments

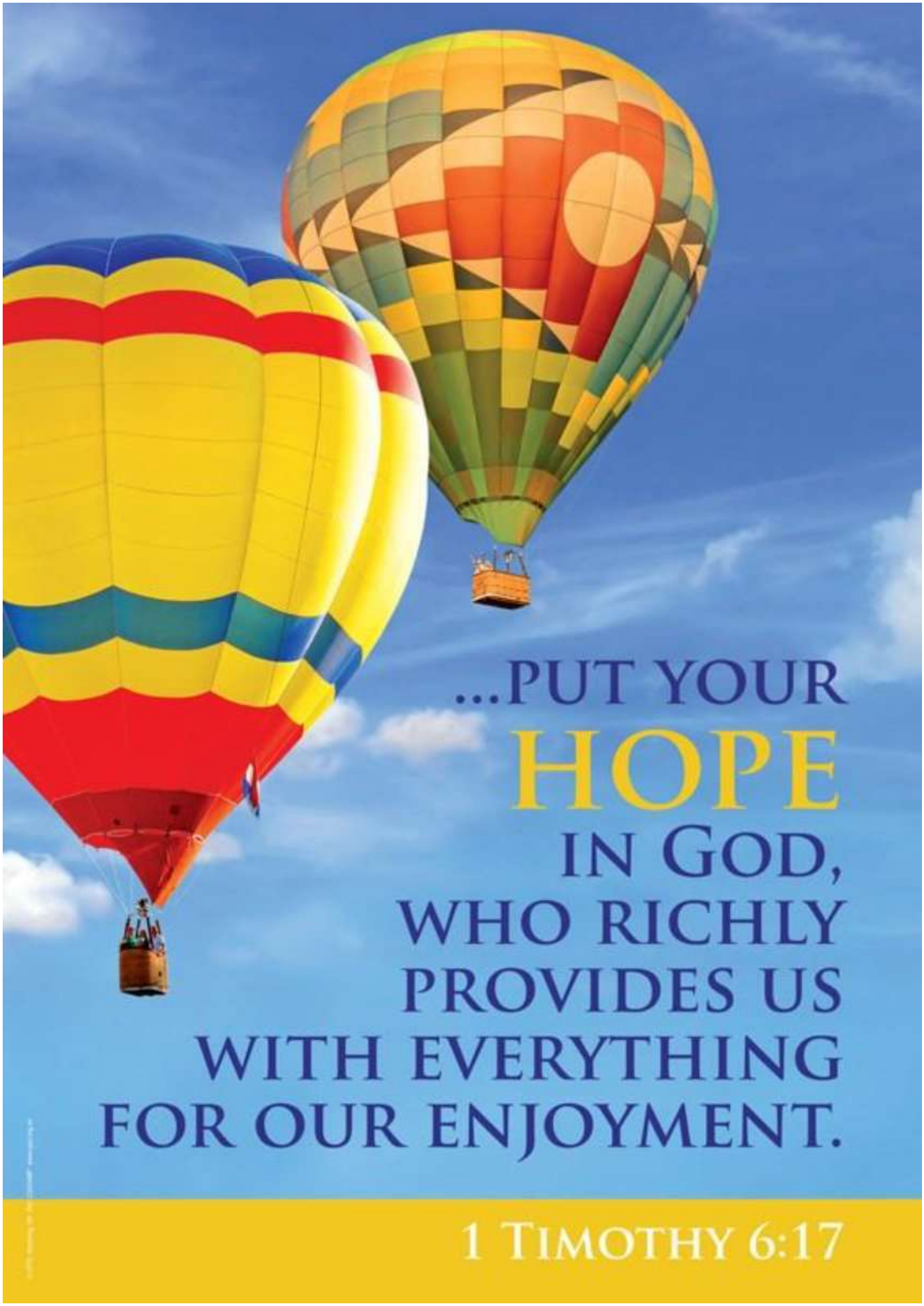
Activities

Everyone Welcome


There's nothing like a good cuppa coffee and a friend like you to share it with!
Let's catch up!
WHY NOT CATCH UP WITH FRIENDS OLD AND NEW
BRADWELL METHODIST CHURCH
THURSDAY'S 10 - 12


Christian Resources for Life
@ Methodist Book Centre
Support your local, independent Christian bookshop
In Store
Online
www.crfl.co.uk
Gitana Street, Hanley, ST1 1DY
01782 212146


MAGIC MOMENTS
St. Luke's Methodist Church
Severn Drive
Clayton
ST5 4BH
FREE ENTRY
MAGIC MOMENTS
Crafts
Activities
Quiz
Bingo
Games
Tea, Coffee & Biscuits
Stories
10.00am - 12.00 noon, last Thursday of every month.
Fun, explore together in lots of creative, interactive and fun ways.
A great opportunity to enjoy some time together.
For more information please contact Phil or Jeanette Hodges on 01782 634766 or look on our Facebook page.


...PUT YOUR
HOPE
IN GOD,
WHO RICHLY
PROVIDES US
WITH EVERYTHING
FOR OUR ENJOYMENT.
1 TIMOTHY 6:17