



**Histon
Methodist
Church**

NEWSLETTER

December 2019 – January 2020

Regular Activities

Sunday	Morning Worship	10:30am
Monday	Craft Club (alternate weeks, see diary for dates)	2pm to 4pm
Wednesday	Community Coffee Shop	9:30am to 4:30pm
Thursday	Thursday Group (1 st Thursday in month)	2:45pm to 4pm
Saturday	Community Coffee Shop	10:30am to 11:30am

Minister's Message

Last Christmas, I found the poem *Advent Absentee* by Sylvia Sands to be extremely challenging:

*Here I go again,
carefully unpacking the figures of the crib
tenderly wiping dust from Mary's eyes
and Joseph's beard,
all the while practicing my contemplative skills*

*Here I am,
duster in hand,
seeking to emulate
the shepherd's enthusiasm and openness,
(wipe wipe)
the wise men's courage and generosity,
(dust, dust)
Mary's mysticism
Joseph's humility
The Christ Child's vulnerability.*

Who am I kidding?

*It is the absent figure that haunts me.
I stand shoulder to shoulder
in grim, callous, irritable solidarity
with that wretched innkeeper.
No room, no time, no way.*

*Nobody has ever dared carve him in wood and
include him in the Christmas crib,
Have they?*

My hope and prayer for myself, and for each of us during Advent, Christmas and as we begin our journey through 2020 is that we might not be people who say *No room, no time, no way* to the possibility of Jesus—Emmanuel—God with us bringing peace, light and love to our lives.

Simon

Christmas Market

*In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind make
moan.*

*Come to our Christmas market, and you might
need a loan!*

*Stalls will groan with goodies and gifts galore.
Delicious refreshments and a warm welcome
lie in store.*

*We hope snow upon snow will not fall,
But warmth, sparkle and light await us all.*

Our annual Christmas Market will be held on Saturday, 30th November, 10am–2pm. With books, games, homemade cakes, preserves and pickles, toiletries, bric-a-brac and crafts.

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Diary for December and January

Sun 1 Dec Preacher: Mrs Mary Ratcliffe	10:30am
Tues 3 Dec Study Group	2:30pm
Wed 4 Dec Service at Bramley Court	2:30pm
Thu 5 Dec Thursday Group (see notice)	2:45pm
Sun 8 Dec Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver (Holy Communion)	10:30am
Mon 9 Dec Craft Group	2pm
Tue 10 Dec Study Group	2:30pm
Fri 13 Dec Country Dancing (see notice)	8pm
Sun 15 Dec Preacher: Mrs Lynn Taylor	10:30am
Tue 17 Dec Study Group	2:30pm
Wed 18 Dec Service at Etheldred House	11am
Wed 18 Dec Carols on the Green (stalls from 6pm)	6:30pm
Sun 22 Dec Preacher: Revd Simon Oliver	10:30am
Sun 22 Dec Carols by Candlelight (see notice)	4pm
Wed 25 Dec Christmas Day service at Salvation Army	10am
Sun 29 Dec Preacher: Miss Joyce Goodall	10:30am
Sun 5 Jan Preacher: Mrs Judy Wynn	10:30am
Mon 6 Jan Craft Group	2pm
Tue 7 Jan Study Group	2:30pm
Thu 9 Jan Thursday Group lunch (see notice)	
Fri 10 Jan Country Dancing (see notice)	8pm
Sun 12 Jan Covenant Service led by Revd Simon Oliver	10:30am
Mon 13 Jan Coffee Shop Volunteers get-together (see notice)	10:30am
Tue 14 Jan Study Group	2:30pm
Wed 15 Jan Service at Etheldred House	11am
Sun 19 Jan Preacher: Mrs Tess Maddin	10:30am
Tue 21 Jan Study Group	2:30pm
Sun 26 Jan All-Age Worship led by Revd Simon Oliver	10:30am
Mon 27 Jan Craft Group	2pm
Tue 28 Jan Study Group	2:30pm



The deadline for the February newsletter is

Sunday 26th January

Please hand any items to Chris Whitworth or email them to newsletter@histonmethodist.org

Carols by Candlelight

Our annual *Carols by Candlelight* service will take place on Sunday 22nd December at 4pm and all are very welcome. Any children attending are welcome—and encouraged!—to dress as a character from the Nativity, and we have a small number of spare props.

Mince pies and drinks will be served after the service, and any donations of mince pies will be gratefully received.

Looking forward to seeing everyone and to having a jolly good sing!

Julia

Get Together for Coffee Shop Volunteers

All those who volunteer at our Wednesday and Saturday Coffee Shops are invited to a special get together on Monday 13th January at 10.30 am in the Church Hall. This is to thank people for all they do and provide an opportunity to review how the two cafes are run. We hope as many people as possible will be able to come and share coffee and cake together.

Wednesday Coffee Shop

Please note that the Wednesday Coffee Shop will be closed on Christmas Day and New Years Day, but will re-open as normal on January 8th.

Hall Refurbishment

We are delighted to announce the official handover and reopening of our refurbished hall. Our thanks go to the builders, CD Hood, and all involved in the development.

Most people, seeing the refurbished church premises for the first time, have had the same reaction—wow!—which is most encouraging to those of us who have worked so hard to bring this about. The premises now provide one of the best and most central facilities in the Histon and Impington area.

However, please remember that the work has taken a great deal of time, work, and expense, and it is important that we take proper care of the new facilities—both for current users, and for those who will come after us. In particular, we ask that people using the building:

- Please ensure all lights are turned off (note that the lights in the foyer, small meeting room, and on the stairs operate automatically).
- Please don't switch off the radiators at the wall, as this affects the heating system.
- When clearing away chairs, please don't leave them stacked in front of the radiators, and don't stack them too high; the hall chairs should be stacked at the West end (the end with the kitchen hatch) of the room.
- Please clear up (and sweep) the area you've been using once you're finished. In the event of a spill, please wipe it up straight away—but don't use water (or otherwise make the floor wet) as this may cause damage.
- Please don't affix anything to the walls or doors.
- Be careful when moving chairs, tables, and other heavy furniture to avoid damage to the doors, walls and floor; if you're getting the tables out (or putting them away), open both doors to the cupboard to avoid damaging them.
- Please take care when using the hall window blinds (which will be installed soon) and leave them open after your meeting.

A letter will be sent to all outside hirers, and we hope our great new facilities will remain in the best condition possible for a long time to come.

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

The Development Team

Prayer for December

Where the past binds us, Lord, open our hearts to your future.

Where prejudice blinds us, Lord, open our eyes to your love.

Where change frightens us, Lord, give us the courage to care.

Amen

Winter Fair

We were pleased to be asked to participate in the Winter Fair on the evening of 13th November when shops and businesses in the village had special late night opening.

We served hot drinks and mince pies and were pleased to welcome lots of visitors who were admiring our refurbished premises. Thank you to those who helped to make this a success, we hope to expand on this next year.

Cottenham News: The Roost

December 15th, 10:30am at the Coffee Shop

The Roost Shadow Puppet Nativity and Christmas Brunch. Always completely full, so booking is essential through Simon by Weds 11th December.

January 19th, 2:45pm at the Coffee Shop

The Roost New Year Special. 2:45pm for informal communion, 3–4:30pm for challenges, crafts, conversation, coffee and cake...

Anyone is welcome to these, especially as we consider how we might develop our All Ages services here at Histon during 2020.

Thursday Group

The meeting on 5th December will take the form of a Christmas Social with a Miscellany of Seasonal Prose, Poetry, Carols, Quizzes, etc. We hope that you can also bring a plate of food for the shared refreshments.

Our Annual Lunch will be held at The Phoenix on Thursday, 9th January, 2020. Further details to follow.

Kathryn

What would you have done?

Everything was going well. All the cast had arrived— the angels' halos were finally fixed, the shepherds were ready, the narrator had her script on the reading desk, the Kings were resplendent in velvet cloaks and cardboard crowns, the inn-keeper was behind his door, the audience were settling down and the big hand of the school clock was pointing to 6. Time to turn down the house lights.

Walking down the centre aisle, out of the darkness came two little figures. They climbed onto the stage, and went up to the inn door, and knocked. It opened: "Can we have a room here for the night? My wife is tired and needs to rest." The good-hearted lad who answered the door forgot where he was and what he should do, and answered as he would have done at home: "Come in! And welcome!"

For several seconds, time stood still. Then: someone in the audience laughed—and another, and another, more and more.

On stage, three pairs of anguished eyes looked for Teacher. Something was badly wrong, and Teacher must come and put it right. And Teacher came: she pushed three little figures through the door where kind arms were waiting to calm and comfort. She went to the front of the stage and gradually the audience calmed down. She smiled, and said: "For one performance only, Baby Jesus will be born in the best bedroom of the inn in Bethlehem, and all who wish to may visit him there." A raised hand to stop any audience reaction, and she turned and left the stage, only pausing to point at the narrator's script

And that sensible child gave a little nod and, with perfect self-possession, left out a paragraph and began to read: “There were shepherds abiding in the fields...”—the play went on to its accustomed end.

This is a true story. Is it a parable? I must ask Simon...

Margaret Brierly

Thank You

Now that we can use our premises again, I would like to thank those who have undertaken to move all the tables and chairs each week—one of many tasks that we tend to take for granted.

Janet Houghton

Prayer for January

God you are radiant!

You are our star,

You lead us and shine among us.

Help us to be your brilliant messengers.

We praise you and thank you. Amen.

**Pupil Worship Team
Hippings Methodist Primary School
Oswaldtwistle, Lancs**

Country Dancing

Jane and I look forward to seeing you at our Christmas Party on Friday 13th December, at 8pm. Our caller this month will be Bob Ridout and music will be provided by our resident band.

Do come along for an evening of fun, dancing and friendship. If you are able to bring a plate of food for the shared refreshments in the interval, that would be much appreciated.

The next meeting (still to be confirmed) will be on Friday 17th January, 2020. See you there!

Kathryn