**RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**

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Eastwood Road

Rayleigh

**Minister**

Rev. Stephen Watts 01268 770333

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**THE NEWSLETTER**

**DECEMBER 2017 & JANUARY 2018**

**1**

**Dear Friends,**

You may have noticed the nights drawing in, a chill in the air. the rain is definitely colder, yes its summer again! I’m only joking of course. But it is a time of year when some of us would rather be in warmer climates than we are to ease our aches and pains.

But there are good things to enjoy; the colour in the trees for one, but soon those leaves will all be gone and you will be able to see things you have not seen for some time.

If we really stop to think about the seasons and what they bring, surely there is good in all. We all need to remember that for our environment we need the seasons and for them to be as normal as possible. We have heard a lot about global warming, amongst other things which are affecting our planet, and some of it is quite frightening. From a personal point of view my deep concern is for our oceans and what we put into them. Plastic has been seen over the years as being a useful commodity, but now because it will not go away, it has a very sinister side.

I have always believed in simplicity, whether it is in the way we live, talk and deal with each other. When I was an Instructor with the Police Service, we were surrounded by rules and regulations (as we still are) but I believed then and still do to this day, that all we need is common sense, and that also applies to the way we live our daily lives.

The next time you read anything about Jesus, and what he said or did, look for the common sense in it, and I am sure you will find it. Whatever He said about loving one another is so much common sense it is ridiculous to try and complicate it. It comes down to being ‘right’ with each other, in what we do or say, helping our fellow travellers and also in case you thought I had forgotten, disposing of our waste in a correct manner, that is all, common sense.

If you were expecting a Christmas message, well all I would say is. This Christmas, apply common sense to everything you do, and see how it turns out.

**2**

I sincerely wish that everyone one who takes the time to read my letter will have a peaceful, warm and happy time. I also pray that this year you may see something different or pick up something which moves you more than ever before. I want you to experience a difference this time more than any other, and maybe it may come from something which you do for someone else which makes you realise just what a special time of year this is.

 **Every Blessing Stephen and Valerie**

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Our programme for December 2017 and January2018 is as follows

4 December      "Christmas Readings"

 11 December      Christmas Lunch with Carols

            Start 1.00 pm

15 January     New Year Social

 22 January      Speaker Pastor Stephen Mayo

 29 January Speaker Mary Connerlly  "Tiller Girl"

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy New Year

Elaine Blade

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| 1. **CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING**
2. Saturday 2 December10am-12 noon
3. Venue -
4. Rayleigh Methodist Church
5. It will include the following; Bric-a-brac, books, cards, cakes, raffle, lucky dip for children and adults, and handicrafts.

**All are welcome, proceeds for church funds and the Nigeria health care project.** |

**3**

1. **SERVICES For DECEMBER 2017 JANUARY 2018**
2. **[S] = Sacrament of Holy Communion [P] = Parade**
3. **[B] = Infant Baptism**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 03 December | 8.45 | Rev Stephen Watts [S] |
| 10.45 | Margaret Chipandambira |
| 10 December | 10.45 | Rev Stephen Watts [P]Christingle Service |
| 17 December | 10.45 | Rev Brian Gameson [S] |
| 16.00 | Rev Stephen Watts Carol Service |
| 24 December | 10.45 | Rev Stephen Watts  |
| 18.00 | Rev Stephen Watts [S] |
| 25 December | 9.30 | Rev Stephen Watts  |
| 31 December | 10.45 | Rev Stephen Watts Sectional Service |
| 07 January  | 10.45 | Rev Stephen Watts [S]Covenant Service |
| 14 January ' | 10.45 | Val Windsor |
| 16.00 | Rev Stephen Watts Cafe Church |
| 21 January  | 10.45 | Rev Stephen Watts |
| 28 January  | 10.45 | Rev Peter Moorhouse |
| 16.00 | Rev Stephen WattsMessy Church |
| 04 February  | 10.45 | Jane Fulford |

**BIBLE STUDY The next meeting is at Clifford and Linda's house**on Friday 26th January at 10am.

**4**

**THE OLIVE TREE CENTRE: SUPPORTED BY THE CHURCHES IN RAYLEIGH.**

The Olive Tree Centre is the name of our local Christian Counselling service. It originated in The Haven Coffee Shop in Eastwood Road, many years ago.

There are now two centres, one at Eastwood Baptist Church on the corner of Nobles Green Rd, & the other at Clarence Rd Baptist Church in Southend. All the Counsellors are professionally trained, accredited by, or members of a recognised professional body.

The members of the teams are Christian, but will not impose their views on others. They are qualified to counsel on a wide range of issues.

Their leaflet states: You are accepted. You are listened to. You are valued. You are respected.

If you know someone who might benefit from this service, please pick up a leaflet from the Welcome Area, or go to: www.olivetreecentre.org.uk.

*Janet Warner.*

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

Congratulations to the recipients of Scouting awards, including Leader Bob Bye, which were presented at the inspiring Remembrance Service.  It was good to see Rev. Steve on his feet for a while, which must have been an effort.

Congratulations also to Anne,  daughter-in-law of Janet and Tony
Warner, who has graduated from the University of Hertfordshire as a mature student with a Foundation Degree in Early Years.

Happy third birthday to Kazia and we welcome her into the Junior Church.

Christmas Greetings to all the church family, especially those unable
to get to church now. Please send in news of special anniversaries,
etc during the coming year.

**5**

**WESLEY GUILD**

Oue programme for the forthcoming weeks is as follows:

 7 December Margaret Babbage

 'Christmas Box'

14 December Gergia Rankin

 “The Impact of Child Maltreatment'

21 December Carol Service

 4 January Coffee Evening at Renee Chrompton's

 14 Gayleighs

11 January No Meeting

18 January No Meeting

25 January Penny Poppins

 'Lady Chimney Sweep'

Our meetings start at 8:00 pm and last for about an hour when there is time for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. All our welcome.

John Lorrimore Secretary

**LADIES CLUB**

Our Programme for the following weeks is as follows:

6 December - Carol service -2.30pm

13 December - Christmas lunch – tba

10 January  - Mystery Auction

17 January - Wrap  & Chat

20 January - Coffee morning 10am

24 January - D Tweddle - India

31 January - Clive Lewis Duo

7 February  - Linda Hunt - Rayleigh library

Elizabeth Ellis

**6**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE A PRAYER FOR THE NEXT METHODIST PRAYER HANDBOOK?**

The theme for next year’s Methodist Prayer Handbook will be 'a world transformed by God’s love', inspired by the One Mission Statement of the Methodist Church in Britain (see [www.methodist.org.uk/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/) onemission).

The theme runs like this: through Christ, in the power of the Spirit, we share God’s mission, both to renew the created order and to transform lives, communities and nations. Christians and their neighbours are not only subjects of change but agents of change. Individually and collectively we are both challenged and changed by God’s transforming love. The gospel of resurrection celebrates the way all things change shape, bringing to birth a new people and a new society and, on a cosmic scale, all things returning to the perfection of God from whom they took their origins.

Would you like to contribute a prayer along these lines? The editor also welcomes prayers for the general pages at the front of the Handbook on the following themes: the integrity of creation, the comforting presence of God, justice, adoration and thanksgiving, confession, times of life and times of day.

Prayers should not exceed 120 words or 12 lines. Shorter prayers and prayers for specific themes or countries are more likely to be used.

When submitting prayers, please give your postal address (so that you can be sent a complimentary copy if your prayer is used), your full name and how you would like to be described (e.g. Jane Jones, local preacher, Townton).

The deadline for submission is 12 January 2018. Prayers should be emailed to prayerhandbook@methodistchurch.org.uk in the body of an email, not as an attachment. For full details please visit <http://methodist.org.uk/prayerhandbook>.

## **The name of God....**

A little boy arrived at the gate of heaven. There he met an angel. ‘Before you come in, can you tell me God’s name?’ said the angel. ‘Oh, that's easy,’ the little boy replied, ‘His name is Harold.’ ‘What make you think His name is Harold?’ the angel asked incredulously. The little boy explained: ‘Because at Christmas we sing “Hark while Harold’s angels sing...” and also, when we pray, we say: “Our Father in Heaven, Harold be Thy Name...”’

**7**

We’re in the countdown to Christmas! Christmas cards, shopping, school nativity plays, carol concerts, ordering the turkey, wrapping presents, bringing home the Christmas tree.... all in preparation for the big day itself! How many Christmas related words can you find in the following word search?



|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| babytree Jesusnativity shepherds angels | donkey sheepinn maryvirgin | josephmangerstarhallelujahheavenlyhostturkey | hollypresentsmistletoestuffingpuddingcarols |

**8**

**9**

1. You are invited to a
2. **COFFEE MORNING**
3. **Ladies Club and Rainbows**
4. **(Jelizabeth Ellis)**
5. **on**
6. **Saturday 20 January 2018**
7. **10.00 to 12.00 noon**
8. ***It will include the following stalls, cakes cards, books, bric-a-brac,***
9. ***and much more***
10. **BEH District MwiB District Day**
11. **30 April 2018**
12. The plan is to viisit Central Hall Westminister, enjoy some friendship in the chapel in he morning, and have lunch followed by aguided tour of the building. The cost of the day is £15 which includes tea / coffee and biscuits on arrival, a lunch of jacket potatoes with various fillings and hot drink, and the tour. Make your own way to Central Hall.
13. 30 people are needed to make this viable and Ruth Watkins needs to know numbers ASAP.
14. Timetable: 10.30 Arrival and coffee 12.30 Lunch
15. 1.30 Tour
16. If interested please contact Sandra Hyslop who has the necessary booking form.
17. **THE STORY BEHIND 'O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM'**
18. On Christmas Eve in 1865, Phillips Brooks (1835-93), a gangling young American Episcopalian, rode the perilous journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, to assist at the midnight service in the Church of the Nativity.
19. Two years later, back in Massachusetts, he was inspired by the experience to write this carol for his Sunday school. Rev Brooks - 6ft 6in tall and capable of preaching at more than 200 words a minute - was a favourite with children; when one woman told her daughter that he had died, the girl replied: "O how happy the angels will be."
20. Brooks's carol was an instant success in the USA, but only came to England when Vaughan Williams introduced it in 1906, arranging it to the traditional tune Forest Green, which he had collected from peasants in Surrey in 1903.
	* + 1. **10**

## **CHRISTMAS: WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE... WHAT?**

“A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and specially a long journey, in. The way’s deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, in solstitio brumali, the very dead of winter.”

It was 1622, and the Bishop of Winchester, Launcelot Andrews, was preaching a magnificent sermon to King James I. Reckoned one of the best preachers ever, Launcelot Andrews’ words were later taken up by T S Eliot and transformed into his wonderful poem ‘The Journey of the Magi’. What a vivid picture – we can see it all! The camels’ breath steaming in the night air as the kings, in their gorgeous robes of silk and cloth-of-gold, and clutching their precious gifts, kneel to adore the baby in the manger.

Yet the Bible does not give us as much detail as some people think. Tradition down the centuries has added a great deal more. For instance, we know from St Matthew that the magi were ‘wise’, or learned men of some sort, but we do not know if they were kings or not. The Bible tells us there were several; tradition has decided upon three, and even named them: Balthassar, Melchior, and Caspar (or Gaspar). But the Bible does tell us that the magi gave baby Jesus three highly symbolic gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Gold stands for kingship, frankincense for worship, and myrrh for anointing – anticipating his death.

There is a lovely ancient mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, that is 1,500 years old. It depicts the wise men in oriental garb of trousers and Phrygian caps, carrying their gifts past palm trees towards the star that they followed... straight to Jesus.

## **Turkey**

It was Christmas Eve in a supermarket and a woman was anxiously picking over the last few remaining turkeys in the hope of finding a large one. In desperation, she called over a shop assistant and said ‘Excuse me. Do these turkeys get any bigger?’
He patiently replied: ‘No, sorry, they’re all dead.’

1. **11**

**FROM THE EDITORS WE NEED YOUR ARTICLES for February**

*The deadline for the submission of articles for this edition of the Newsletter is Sunday 14 January 2018 ( in Welcome Area) or Wednesday 18 January by post or email.*

1. *A Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year John and Sue*
2. ***johnward816@gmail.com***

**ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS APPEAL**

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are calling for support for this urgent appeal for refugees displaced by the recent violence in Myanmar.
Over the past few months, more than half a million people have fled violence in Myanmar’s Rakhine State. The majority of those fleeing are Rohingya women and children.

All We Can and the Methodist Church in Britain are calling for generous support for this urgent appeal to assist those seeking refuge in Bangladesh. People are in desperate need of water, food, shelter and access to medical care.

Since violence flared up in Myanmar in late August, an estimated 519,000 Rohingya have sought shelter and safety in Bangladesh. Many are currently living in temporary, unsanitary structures constructed out of plastic sheeting and bamboo in informal camps and settlements.

Refugees are arriving in Bangladesh exhausted and traumatized, and camps and local host communities are struggling to respond to the scale of this disaster.

Food insecurity is one of the primary areas of concern, while providing health care, access to safe water and mitigating the threat of disease is critical. Heavy rains in recent days have made an already precarious situation worse for refugees trying to seek shelter in sub-standard housing and makeshift camps. All We Can’s partner is responding to this emergency and is calling for urgent funds to help reach people suffering because of this crisis.

Many bring with them accounts of brutality and report having seen and suffered atrocities that have left them traumatised. Meeting the needs of these refugees who have suffered so much is critical. To donate, visit [www.allwecan.org/rohingya](http://www.allwecan.org/rohingya)

**12**

* + 1.
		2. **RAYLEIGH METHODIST CHURCH**
1. **PRAYER GROUP MEETING DATES 2017 and 2018**
2. DECEMBER: 13th and 27th.
3. JANUARY: 10th & 24th
4. FEBRUARY: 7th & 21st
5. MARCH: 7th & 21st
6. APRIL: 4th & 18th:
7. MAY: 2ND, 16TH, & 30TH
8. JUNE: 13TH, & 27TH
9. JULY: 11TH & 25TH
10. No meeting in August.
11. SEPTEMBER: 5th & 16th
12. OCTOBER: 3rd, 17th, & 31st
13. NOVEMBER: 14th & 28th
14. DECEMBER: 12th
15. ALL MEETINGS ARE IN THE WELCOME AREA, COMMENCING AT 9.30AM, FOR ABOUT 45 MINUTES.

**SERVICES**

**Sunday Services**  10:45 am

Café Church 4:00 pm on the 2nd Sunday of each month

Messy Church 4:00 pm on last Sunday of each month

also occasional services at 6:30 pm.

See church noticeboard for this month’s details

**Junior Church**  10:45 am

**Monthly Mid-Week Communion** (except in August)

On the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the WESLEY ROOM at 10:30 am.

**REGULAR WEEKLY MEETINGS**

**Monday**

1:15pm Sunbeams Parent and Toddler Group

2:30 pm Women's Fellowship

**Wednesday**

1:45pm – 3:15pm Ladies Club

4:15 pm-5:30 pm Rainbows

5:45 pm -7:15 pm Brownie Guides

7:00 pm-8.45pm Guides

**Thursday**

10:00 am Care and Share

5.15 pm- 6.15pm Beavers

6:30 pm - 7:45 pm Cubs

8:00 pm – 9:30pm Scouts

8:00 pm Wesley Guild (Sept to May only)

**Friday**

4:30 pm-5:45 pm Rainbows

5:30 pm-7:00 pm Brownie Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides

7:15 pm -9:00 pm Guides Senior Section (fortnightly)



**Preschool**

Mon 9:15 am to 11:45 am

Tues Weds Thurs Friday 9:15-11:45 am & 12:30-3:00 pm

*Editors John and Sue Ward* 9 *Sheridan Close Rayleigh SS6 8YR Telephone 01268* 742847 **(johnward816@gmail.com)**