



Staple Hill

Local ... Lively ... Loving



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Sunday 19th December 2021

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4th Sunday in Advent

I am sure you will know by now that there have been a number of changes in how we can worship over the coming days in response to the rapidly changing COVID situation – please see the inside for full details.

As we enter the final few days before Christmas, most of us will probably find that time starts playing tricks on us. We have already had the déjà vu experience with worship being suspended again this year, but even without that we never seem to have quite enough time to make all the preparations for the 'big day' do we? Hours pass us by in just a few seconds. At the other end of the scale, the children will be carefully counting down days on their advent calendars, with every hour they have to wait before opening their presents seeming to drag on for an eternity. It is strange how time warps depending on our situation!

Perhaps that is why the series of advent readings that we have been sharing online or through the booklet that was delivered through our doors is so valued. It forces a small gap in the day when time can just stop for a few moments, when we can escape from everything else that is going on and reflect on what Christmas really means. The time to pause and have our thoughts guided through readings and prayers is invaluable, especially during these troubled times.

Paul Heath

EMERGENCY CHANGES TO WORSHIP:

In recent days, we have all been concerned about the new Covid variant and it has been disappointing the effect this is having. The Mission Council have met to discuss the next couple of weeks. We were all looking forward to having a more 'normal' Christmas this year, but it is also essential we keep everyone safe. With this in mind, we have made the following decisions. This has not been easy, and I know there are differing opinions, but we do it with the best of intentions and are truly sorry that these decisions have had to be made.

- Sunday morning Family Carol Service – cancelled – someone will contact the young people who were prepared to participate.
- Sunday evening Carol Service will move to the Square – A short carol service will take place at 5pm, please bring a torch and a coat. We will try to film this and put highlights online later.
- We are planning to continue with the Christmas Eve Carols in the Square event, but will confirm this after Sunday
- There will be no in-person Christmas Day meeting – we will post something online using the usual channels
- On Christmas Day we will still be delivering dinners and goodies to those people who have prebooked – those people who volunteered to deliver, we will still need you!
- Sunday 2nd January we will not have a meeting in our hall, but worship will be posted online
- The Covid situation is fast moving at present, so please check on our website for updates.

THANKS:

Rita would like to thank everyone for their prayers, telephone calls, and kind thoughts over the last few weeks and months. If all goes according to plan she should have come home yesterday.

Also Rita would like to wish all her friends at the Army a blessed Christmas and happy New year. She looks forward to seeing you all soon.

COVID RESTRICTIONS:

Due to the emergence of the new Omicron variant, please adhere to the following whilst attending our activities:

- Please take a lateral flow test before attending and do not attend if it is positive
- Please do not attend if you are feeling unwell or have had a recent positive Covid test
- Please wear a facemask, even when outside, to keep everyone around you safe
- Please let us know if you experience Covid symptoms or have a positive test in the days after attending

BULLETIN:

Please note that there will not be a bulletin issued next Sunday. The next one being available on Sunday 2nd January 2022.



**A decree went out from Boris that all the world
should be Vacc'd.**

...

But there was no room for them within.

RECOGNITION:

In a week where the cisterns have broken, the computer blew up and the freezer has died taking with it all the food for Christmas etc., we've had some good news. We have received a letter from the Chair of the South Gloucestershire Council which states:

I am delighted to inform you that following a nomination process the 'Salvation Army' team have been selected as one of the winners of a Group Community Award. This is in recognition of the extraordinary work and dedication undertaken by the Group.

There will be an award ceremony in the New Year, and we will provide more information at that time.

So well down to everyone, it has certainly been a team effort!

PEOPLE:

- As this is the last bulletin for 2021, we felt that we should say a massive thank you for all that you have done to keep our fellowship together during this most difficult year. For all the phone calls, texts, social media messages, cards and carrier pigeons sent, we say thank you.
- There are a number of people within our fellowship who are poorly and in particular we remember: Clive, Bob and Jill. As of writing, Rita and Margaret are in hospital, but are hopefully coming home over the weekend (Margaret is hoping to come home today). Pauline is in hospital and Rob L is hopefully being admitted in Monday - both for planned procedures.
- As we enter the holiday season, please be aware of each other, especially those who might be on their own. Please continue to pray for each other.
- Brenda Hussey is celebrating her 90th birthday today. Many congratulations Brenda!

THE WEEK AHEAD:

Due to the rapidly evolving COVID situation, worship within our hall has been suspended again. The revised plans are outlined below.

TODAY Sunday 19th December

5pm Carol Service in Fountain Square

- Please bring a torch and come wrapped up!

Wednesday 22nd December

No Tots on the Hill until January

Thursday 23rd December

No Lunch Club until January

CHRISTMAS EVE

11am Band at St Peter's Hospice

5pm Carols in the Square (to be confirmed)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Dinners and other goodies delivered to those who have prebooked
Christmas Day worship online

SUNDAY 26th December

No worship

SUNDAY 2nd January 2022

Worship online only