



Daily readings:

Sunday 29 November

Monday 30 November
 Tuesday 1 December
 Wednesday 2 December
 Thursday 3 December
 Friday 4 December
 Saturday 5 December

Mark 13:24-27

John 1:35-42
 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5
 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Psalm 80

Psalm 27
 Psalm 34:1-10
 Psalm 34:11-22
 Psalm 34:5-12
 Psalm 39
 Psalm 42

Sunday 13 December

Monday 14 December
 Tuesday 15 December
 Wednesday 16 December
 Thursday 17 December
 Friday 18 December
 Saturday 19 December

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Isaiah 40:1-11
 Lamentations 3:22-33
 Joel 3:9-6
 Isaiah 62:1-12
 Isaiah 2:2-5
 Proverbs 8:22-31

Psalm 126

Psalm 38:1-8
 Psalm 38:9-22
 Psalm 39
 Psalm 40:1-10
 Psalm 47
 Psalm 48

Sunday 20 December

Monday 21 December
 Tuesday 22 December
 Wednesday 23 December
 Thursday 24 December
 Friday 25 December
 Saturday 26 December

Luke 1:26-38

1 Samuel 1:1-20
 Revelation 22:6-21
 Malachi 3:1-4, 4:5-6
 Luke 1:67-79
 Luke 2:1-20
 Acts 7:51-60

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Psalm 126
 Psalm 113
 Psalm 25
 Psalm 80:1-11
 Psalm 110
 Psalm 13

Sunday 27 December

Monday 28 December
 Tuesday 29 December
 Wednesday 30 December
 Thursday 31 December
 Friday 1 January
 Saturday 2 January

Luke 2:22-40

Matthew 2:13-18
 John 21:19b-25
 Isaiah 12:1-8
 Philippians 2:5-11
 Luke 2:15-21
 1 John 22:2-28

Psalm 148

Psalm 124
 Psalm 117
 Psalm 132
 Psalm 103
 Psalm 8
 Psalm 146

*Hark! The herald-angels sing
 Glory to the new-born King
 Peace on earth and mercy mild
 God and sinners reconciled!
 Joyful all ye nations rise
 Join the triumph of the skies
 With the angelic host proclaim
 Christ is born in Bethlehem!*

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(During the time of the coronavirus the office is closed to visitors—please do not post urgent items for the time being. Donations by cheque will be collected regularly.)

Hello Everyone!

Winter but no Christmas

I think we have to face the inevitability that Christmas this year will be very different from recent years. Even in churches that are open, it is unlikely that there will be any singing and while lighting candles would be a possibility, it would certainly infringe the regulations to blow them out. I don't know about you but already I am not feeling the same about it this year – though I can't say the same for my neighbours some of whom already have already put up elaborate Christmas lights. Even I like to do a little bit of Christmas shopping but I won't be doing it this year.

There are two things that I have done every year of my ministry that I think I am going to miss doing this year. The first is to invite people to special Christmas services; the second is to visit people who might not be able to come or who it is important to see in their homes and read one of the Christmas passages with them ('shepherds and angels' or 'wise men'). It's perhaps not the 'done thing' to say publicly that I privately keep score between the readings; nor ought I to reveal that shepherds and angels normally win (perhaps because there are more of them!).

Already I have shared enough information for us to be rather gloomy about Christmas this year. If it is about family gatherings and dinners, if it is about parties and shopping – or even about going to seasonal football matches (which I enjoy) – then we are going to feel that we are missing out. Even if it is about Carol Services, enthusiastic singing in candlelight, then we are going to feel that we are missing out. Some years ago, in response to my invitation to a Carol Service, a young woman said, 'Oh! I might come to that; I like a good sing-song.' But surely, it has to be more than that.

One of my Dad's favourite Christmas carols was 'Cradled in a manger'. Unlike many carols where the tune is good but the words are a bit 'thin', the words of this carol are good but the tune that Methodists have insisted on singing for 100 years is not so good (only familiarity with the tune will suggest otherwise). In the carol, we are reminded that the real celebration of Christmas has to centre on Jesus, not simply his coming to Bethlehem's manger but his coming to our hearts today.

I am going to miss the larger family gatherings, I am going to miss doing my little bit of Christmas shopping, I am going to miss candlelit Carol Services and singing Christmas carols in church, I am going to miss inviting guests to the Carol Services and I am going to miss sharing in Christmas readings in people's homes. But I am not going to miss out on Christmas!

It would be easy to go online and get expensive Christmas presents delivered. I've been thinking about that. When 10% of the world's people own 90% of the world's wealth (and that 10% includes me and my family and friends), I have decided to cut down on Christmas presents and give larger donations to Christian charities. Over the years, I have enjoyed 'Christmas at church' as much as everyone else – but I am going to put the time that I would have spent on all that into reading the Bible stories of Christmas and reading Christmas carols at home. And I am still going to read Bible passages ('shepherds and angels' or 'wise men'), with even more people, over the telephone – it will be easier to keep a score card without their knowing! Take a look at the following Christmas carol and think not about how Christmas this year won't be so good but how we can make it better!

Cradled in a manger, meanly, laid the Son of Man His head;
 Sleeping His first earthly slumber where the oxen had been fed.
 Happy were those shepherds listening to the holy angel's word;
 Happy they within that stable worshipping their infant Lord.

Happy all who hear the message of His coming from above;
 Happier still who hail His coming, and with praises greet His love.
 Blessèd Saviour, Christ most holy, in a manger Thou didst rest;
 Canst Thou stoop again, yet lower, and abide within my breast?

Evil things are there before Thee; in the heart, where they have fed,
 Wilt Thou pitifully enter, Son of Man, and lay Thy head?
 Enter, then, O Christ most holy; make a Christmas in my heart;
 Make a heaven of my manger: it is heaven where Thou art.

And to those who never listened to the message of Thy birth,
 Who have winter, but no Christmas bringing them Thy peace on earth,
 Send to these the joyful tidings; by all people, in each home,
 Be there heard the Christmas anthem; praise to God, the Christ has come!

God bless and Happy Christmas!

John Haley

Minister

In contact with the President and Vice-President

Revd Richard Teal and Carolyn Lawrence broadcast live on facebook every Monday at 12.45pm. They lead a time of reflection and prayer as well as talk about the things they have been doing during the past week.

Dial-a-hymn (for a limited period only)

During December, if you would like John Haley to sing the first verse of a hymn or Christmas carol to you then please telephone him during office hours. You simply ring and make your request. If you say 'One more step along the world I go' he will tell you you've got the wrong number and hang up. He'll do that for anything he doesn't know or doesn't fancy.

Zoom Together

Tuesdays Together is an important feature of our spiritual life and we are exploring new ways of being together—including Zoom. We still meet on Tuesdays (7.45 pm). This term we have been focusing on a series of studies Start Again by Phil Moore (Genesis 1-11) who applies the Bible powerfully to our current situation. Phil Moore broadcasts a daily 10-minute devotion on YouTube and these are followed up on the Everyday Church website. Friends from North Devon and London join us and we would be delighted if you would like to join us. You can join on PC, laptop, tablet or phone. Contact Wendy Forman directly or through the circuit office.



The Christian Message on facebook Steve Wild on the Sermon on the Mount

Steve Wild presents a daily reflection on the Sermon on the Mount each morning on facebook and YouTube. He is well-known and has a passion for Jesus and never misses an opportunity to share Jesus with everyone he meets. His reflections get to the heart of the Gospel with sincerity and humour.

Jeffanory

Jeff Lucas, Christian preacher, writer and broadcaster presents a live reflection on facebook at 1.00pm from Monday to Friday each week. Jeff speaks with sound Biblical insights interspersed with humour. He is well known for his daily Bible notes and Christian books and it is worth taking ten minutes to stop and listen to his reflection each day.



If you are not able to access these devotions when they are broadcast, they are all posted on the Goodrington facebook page.

Bible reading notes

If you already take Bible reading notes these have been reordered automatically and you will be invoiced in January. If you would like to take Bible reading notes please contact the circuit office without delay. We can recommend something suitable for you if you don't know what to order.