

## Newington Methodist Church

Church Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, ME9 7JT

**News and views for the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

The people walking in the darkness  
have seen a great light

*Isaiah 9:2*



### Notices

**This Sunday Worship will be led by Rev Robert Zachar.** It will be the Carol service and we will sing our favourite Christmas Carols together. The service starts at 9:30 am

**Next Sunday Worship 26<sup>th</sup> December – there is no service in Newington on this Sunday.**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December circuit live stream worship 10:30** will be led by Ann Mathews. Link <https://youtu.be/dbNLbsBeHM>

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December circuit live stream Carol Service 6:30** will be led by Robin Selmes. Link <https://youtu.be/kciyqVd9W1E>

**Invitation to celebrate Christmas Day** with the online service led by Rev. Robin Selmes and Third Avenue. <https://youtu.be/bbTJHXQvGR4>

Please note that following day 26<sup>th</sup> December there *will be no Sunday circuit live stream!!!*  
Circuit live stream Sunday worship will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 10:30 am led by Supt. Rev Bonni Belle Pickard

### Looking back with thanks

We give thanks for all we could do throughout this past year and thanks for being spared of infection which ruined so many lives. It was a challenging year for Newington Methodists but God is good to us and we believe He has a plan for us to be his sanctuary and place of worship.

**Covid update** – please be aware that at all services we have to wear a mask all the time when in building. Sanitize and wash your hands frequently, use a home test kit and if you feel unwell do not socialise.

### Dates and events for your diary

- There will be a property meeting in January to discuss repairs and initiate them.  
The date and place TBC



### *Christmas season in Newington Church*



- **19<sup>th</sup> December 6:30 pm Christmas carols** live stream service led by Robin Selmes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kciyqVd9W1E>
- **19<sup>th</sup> December St Mary's Newington: 6.00pm Carol Service**
- ~~24<sup>th</sup> Dec. Friday Christmas Eve – Sittingbourne 3pm Carols and cake/mince pies drop in to last about an hour. There will be a table top quiz as well. – **CANCELLED!!!!**~~
- **24<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Eve Crib** service 4pm St Mary Newington
- **24<sup>th</sup> December Midnight communion** 11:30 pm at Newington St Mary
- ~~25<sup>th</sup> Dec. Saturday, Christmas Day – no service. Invitation to worship at Sittingbourne 10am this service is **Cancelled!!!**~~
- **25<sup>th</sup> Dec. Saturday, Christmas Day** Circuit Live stream service 10:30 am with Rev Robin Selmes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbTJHXQvGR4>
- **25<sup>th</sup> December Newington St Mary** 10 am Communion service
- **26<sup>th</sup> Dec. Sunday after Christmas** – no service. Invitation to Benefice service at St Michael's Hartlip 10:30 to worship with our friends from The Six.

## Reflection on God's word 4<sup>th</sup> Advent Sunday 2021

Mary's and Joseph's life was turned upside down when Jesus was born. He came in an uneasy time, in an unusual way and with uncertain origins.

He was born to Mary but not to her alone. He was born with purpose and that relates to all of us. Lk 2:34 records when Simeon handed Jesus back to Mary with the words which surely stayed in her mind " *this child is assigned to be the cause of the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be sign that generates opposition so that inner thoughts of many will be revealed*".

The nativity story describes this purpose as the long awaited help – the salvation of God's people. The great celebration and inspired speeches of Mary and Elizabeth and Zachariah and Simeon and Anna are part of this great event. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness could not overcome it. A glorious event marked with signs and motions even in the universe. We read about the spiritual world being on its feet and heavenly bodies serving to mark the time and place. The end of darkness. The end of its rule. The darkness was not removed but it has met with an opposition which cannot be destroyed. Gold, myrrh and frankincense were delivered to his birth bed by noble kings to acknowledge his ultimate kingship, prophetic role and priesthood. The fullness of God, which became flesh, a helpless child from the start. All these people with names and the unnamed shepherds, wise men – they are witnesses of that great event and yet there were only a few of them. Yet many people woke up and had an ordinary day that day not noticing any difference. Even the nobility and learned advisors didn't have a clue.

Isn't this the same as today? So many people have Christmas but so few celebrate Jesus.

What brings Jesus to people's lives. God made a great step forward and actually became one of us in Christ. That is as far as he can come. The next step is up to each person to make. It is a step forward, a step which makes all the difference. Step out of that ordinary day with its usual occupation into a celebration and wonder of the new creation. That is what Christmas wants to be to everyone. The beginning of a new life with Christ and in Christ.

Approaching Christmas with the growing rates of infection can be very stressful. Especially for people on the front line who are working hard to fight this battle. But also for all of us as we are all participating and are responsible for doing our part.

I wonder how we can channel the peace and the joy of Christ's coming to this situation? Are we having a bitter reality check? Is this what the world is going to be like now? I wish I could object. Surely the vaccine is a massive response to the challenge but it does not answer everything. The problem we are facing is more complex and its complexity emerges only gradually. We certainly cannot expect a quick recovery and return to the world before corona. We entered a new world and we have to learn to live in it. It is possible, it is manageable. People will listen to the gospel perhaps with a new perspective. It looks like the roof we had as a shelter was taken away and we need to find a new shelter. The message is the same and we are to carry it into this new world with passion and the authority that God has provided the answer to all our big and small questions in Christ Jesus – the fullness of God in him. **Amen**

## People and places for prayer

We continue to hold each other in prayer. We pray for the mission of our church to reach those who look for God. We also remember those for whom Christmas is not such a happy season.

Prayers for Jenny G. who is now recovering from a minor stroke.

Prayers for Peter and Beryl W. as Peter has had a series of falls and is in hospital at the moment. Pray for Beryl may God give her strength and peace.

Prayers for Ernie S. who is with his son during Christmas and also doesn't feel well.

We remember those who died and their loved ones. Audrey G, Margaret S.

*Please send news, prayer requests and any other contributions for inclusion in the weekly newsletter to [robert.zachar@gmail.com](mailto:robert.zachar@gmail.com)* **Bank details for Offerings:** Newington Methodist Church, HSBC Sittingbourne. Sort Code 40 – 42 – 04, Account 70614696. If you prefer to send a cheque contact our church treasurer Chris Ch.



Rev Robert, Rachel and all the family wish everyone at Newington Methodist  
a happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.

