

For your devotions ...



“A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples; if you love one another.” (John 13 v34-35)

A Prayer for Others

Lord of all our journeys, we pray for those searching for warmth and safety, for those fleeing persecution and violence, for those in temporary accommodation because their homes have been flooded or damaged – remembering particularly those affected by Storm Bella and by the earthquake in Croatia. Jesus child of the crib; **bless them with the gifts of hope and courage and may they find security in you.**

Lord of all our ups and downs, we pray for those searching for peace of mind, for those struggling with depression, eating disorders, addictions...and for their families, for those facing the new year with sadness of heart, or little sense of purpose, for those who face it alone. Jesus child of the crib; **bless them with the gifts of hope and courage and may they find comfort in you.**

Lord of all wisdom, we pray for those searching for clarity and stability, for businesses adapting to new trade agreements, for farmers and fishermen, for teachers and students amid uncertain term times and new ways of learning, for those in industries unsure when they can re-open and struggling with new regulations, for scientists challenged by new variants of the Covid-19 virus, for those desperate to see their families again. Jesus child of the crib; **bless them with the gifts of hope and courage and may they find reassurance in you.**

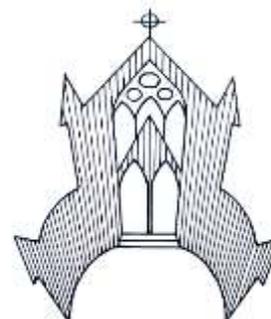
Lord of love, we pray for those searching for work, for those whose work is exhausting – remembering especially those in the NHS and the emergency services, for carers and those administering the new vaccines and for those who will receive it, for those searching for ways to feed their families and pay their bills, and for those charities and organisations trying to help them. Jesus child of the crib; **bless them with the gifts of hope and courage and may they find strength in you.**

Lord of us all, we pray for those searching for faith amid anxiety and loss, for your church as she reaches out to those who are isolated, grieving, or battling with big questions, and we pray for one another as we seek to offer our time and resources to our communities and those most in need. Jesus child of the crib; **bless us all with the gifts of hope and courage and may we find peace in you.**

Amen

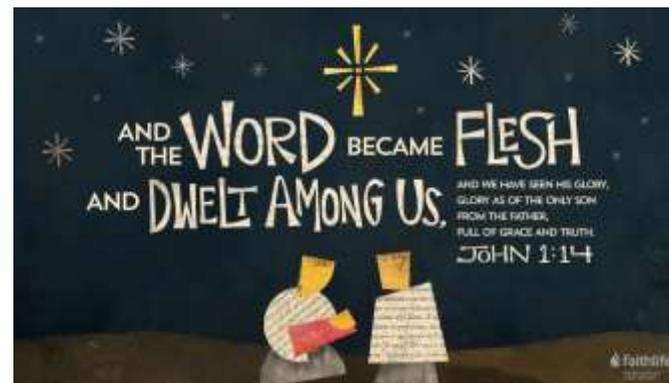
All contributions for future notices & items of interest for the Church Website are welcome! Please contact Lesley Jackson on brackenjack@btinternet.com or **telephone 01642 714384** or **Text on 07837178938**. All notices must be received by the Thursday before the following Sunday. Many thanks.

Stokesley Methodist Church



Sunday 3rd January 2021

2nd Sunday of Christmas



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The website address is www.stokesleymethodistchurch.co.uk .

Circuit Website <http://www.stokesleymethodistcircuit.org.uk/>

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During these unprecedented times, we have changed the way we 'go to church' to help to protect ourselves and others. We have put in place measures that will enable us to still be part of the worshipping community, at home with family, online with friends, coming back together again in Church. If you go to the Circuit Website you will find a range of resources available for you to use at home which we hope will help you to continue your cycle of prayer and worship.

Today our Covenant Service at 10.30am will be led by Rev Andrew Robinson. The service will also include the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

www.youtube.com/stokesleymethodistchurch/live

<https://www.stokesleymethodistcircuit.org.uk/news/join-us-at-home.html>

and <http://www.facebook.com/stokesleymethodistcircuit/>

Light a candle on Sunday as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ.



A Gathering Prayer from the Roots resources:

A new year has begun.

Let us leave behind all that is past, and walk together into the future.

Let us trust in the God of new beginnings, and worship the God of fresh hopes.

Lord of our journeys, help us this day to have eyes to see your leading, ears to hear your guidance, and a heart of courage, that we may journey faithfully and find your way – even when the path may seem difficult and dark.

Glorious Lord, we your sons and daughters come together into your kingly presence. We lift our eyes to you, seeking your guiding light and offering up our gifts of worship and praise.

Amen.

The Light shines in the Darkness

Today's Lectionary Readings:

Jeremiah 31 v7-14 (p792) "I will turn their mourning into gladness."

Psalms 147 v12-20 (p633) "He grants peace to your borders ..."

Ephesians 1 v3-14 (p1173) Spiritual Blessings in Christ

John 1 v(1-9), 10-18 (p1063) The Word Became Flesh

Message from the Church Mouse for EVERYONE!



This week, as we begin a new year, it is a good time to explore where to look, for the direction God has for our lives.

Go And Search



Take a little time to read Matthew 2.1-12

The account of the wise men involves searching – initially by looking in the wrong place – for the newborn king. They eventually find him by following the star to Bethlehem. God's

guidance in a dream warns them to take a different route home.

Looking for the direction God has for us is not always as easy as following a star or hearing from God in a dream. When/how have you experienced God guiding you or helping you to make decisions? Particularly at the start of a new year and a new term, we may all be called to reflect on where best we can look for and recognise signs from God that offer us guidance.

'Go and make a careful search for the child.' Herod's words enable the wise men to fulfil their mission and go home rejoicing – yet this was not at all his intention. It is ironic that his words lead to the completion of God's mission: to reveal the Messiah to the Gentiles.

We often find unexpected meaning in the words of others, or even wordless sounds. Dick Whittington heard the bells of London calling to him, 'Turn again, Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London'. God's word comes to us in all sorts of ways, and through people who have no idea they are speaking God's word. Do we listen carefully enough?

In today's reading from John 1 we read that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". This verse tells us that Jesus was known by another name – the Word! It's exciting to think of Jesus as being described as the Word. He came to communicate with all the people of the world. He came to tell us about God's love. He is the Word and he speaks with words that are powerful and loving. Jesus is the Word that helps us connect with each other and with God. Jesus is the Word for all languages – for all the people of the world. Listen to him!



SHOULD YOU NEED ANY ADVICE
PLEASE CONTACT
REV ANDREW ROBINSON (TEL:
01642 710358 / MOB: 07718
516236)

PLEASE CHECK THE CIRCUIT WEBSITE EVERY WEEK TO KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH THE CIRCUIT PLAN AS THIS MAY BE AMENDED DEPENDING ON GOVERNMENT/METHODIST CONNEXION GUIDELINES

Today there will be online services at Carlton led by Ken Hudson, All-Age Worship at Easby led by Katherine Atha, at Seamer led by Rev Graham Peacock, & Great Ayton & Hutton Rudby have Local Arrangements for their worship.

Your Sunday 'Worship Online' Services

This is a time of real uncertainty for everyone and the Church will continue to be central to the life of our community in bringing light and hope in any way we can.

It's simple! Please go to the Circuit Website & click on the 'Worship at Home' Logo:



On this page you will find the links to any recorded services provided by the ministers or local preachers for the coming Sunday. Rev Andrew will be streaming his morning worship on Sunday at 10.30am on the [Stokesley Methodist Church YouTube channel](#) (use Google search).

If you want to follow the service at your usual worship time you know that you are joining with friends in their homes at the same time. More information can be found on the Circuit Facebook page. In addition, each week we are provided with a worship sheet from District which you can find on the 'Worship at Home' page & which is also available to download from the link in these notices.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/19878/3-jan-worship-if-you-are-unable-to-attend-church.pdf>

IF YOU CAN HELP WITH STEWARDING, WHENEVER THE CHURCH IS OPEN, PLEASE SEE DOROTHY BLAKEY – your help will be much appreciated.

THE FOOD BANK - While we are facing increasingly challenging times, let's not forget others facing difficulties in our community. Please continue to donate any non-perishable food & toiletries, but while the church is closed, you can use the Food Bank collection points in the Co-Op stores. Many thanks.

What's On this week

Monday 4th January	2.00pm Nattering & Knitting – Please join us for a 'chinwag' & to catch-up on all the things we've been doing at home! Contact Ann Keene (keene.home@yahoo.com)
Tuesday 5th January	Our Tuesday Night Fellowship will be meeting as usual at 7.00pm (Zoom ID 288 056 7734). We will have a catch-up for an hour and then move into our online Oasis Study Group at 8.00pm based on our current Holy Habit. Contact Mandy Robinson (mansemum01@gmail.com)
Wednesday 6th January	Please note there will be no 'Hymn-a-Long' tonight – the Choir get-togethers will resume on Wednesday 13 th January.
Thursday 7th January	
Friday 8th January	 10am-11am - Open Church for Private Prayer: A time for quiet personal prayer, you can pop in for a few minutes, or stay for a bit longer if you wish.
Saturday 9th January	10.30am – Coffee Morning with a theme, on Zoom (ID 288 056 7734). Contact Mandy Robinson (mansemum01@gmail.com) 11.30am Saturday Quiz



Our Covenant Service ...

Today, we choose again to trust God, to walk with Jesus and to live in the ways of the kingdom. As we leave behind a year in which the whole world changed, we must be forward-looking & search for all the opportunities & new beginnings which come with Jesus & which God offers us each & every day.

Read the words of this hymn by Graham Kendrick (StF 489)

"All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this:
Knowing you, Jesus
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you, Lord

The story behind the hymn: A major Christian conference in the UK had circulated a number of songwriters asking them to consider writing specific material to accompany the Bible readings and teaching at their event the following year. The book of Philippians had been chosen, so in order to begin the process of seeking inspiration Graham began to read through the book meditatively, asking God to draw his attention to anything which might become the seed of a song. He came to the famous passage where Paul lists his impressive qualifications, and then dramatically sweeps them all aside for the sake of one supreme aim - to know Christ.

At this point Graham's heart was stirred by the theme of knowing Jesus, and in an attempt to make it a personal song directed to Him, Graham began to experiment with the phrase 'knowing you' as the moment of release of the song.

As we read these powerful words, let's remember that one of the most important things about this hymn is the theme of sharing in Christ's sufferings (in the third verse), and of dying and rising with Christ. We may have all suffered in some shape or form over the past year, we may have lost what we thought was most dear, but we can rejoice in knowing that Jesus is with us through everything – He is our all, THE BEST!

TALE FROM THE GARDEN!

A fresh start ... Give yourself a little breathing space between the festivities to take stock of your garden & plan some ideas for a brighter, more fruitful year ahead. If you can do it for your garden, how much better you'll feel in hoping for a brighter 2021 in all aspects of our lives, especially after the year we've had.

I love this 'no man's land' between Christmas & New Year. It is the one time in the calendar when I can stocktake – walk round the garden, knowing nothing much is moving. I'm looking for gaps – spaces where I can shoehorn in another shrub, another border plant or a few bulbs.



For instant brilliance & interest, you could seek out the dwarf & hardy 'Cyclamen Coum' (or Persian Violet), which makes jewel-like ground cover. This cyclamen might look small and dainty but it's a tough, fearless flower & can have a fantastic impact in the winter garden - what a little treasure!

Sparkling in winter and early spring & often seen alongside hellebores, snowdrops and crocus, the dainty but robust flowers come in a wonderful range of colours & the leathery, kidney-shaped foliage also varies enormously from deep lustrous green to completely silver with many pretty patterns in between.

It originates from countries positioned around the Black Sea, where winters are generally harsh, and starts blooming in December, lasting all the way through to March. Its name is transcribed from the Greek word kuklaminos, derived from kuklos, meaning "circle": it refers to the round and flattened shape of its tuber. It gets its common name "sow-bread" because pigs are said to eat them!

It is a plant of lasting feelings and sincere affection. Thanks to its tuber, which allows it to withstand difficult conditions, the cyclamen is the flower of deep love. In the language of flowers, & so important in the circle-of-life, giving someone a cyclamen expresses love and heart-felt tenderness. So whatever you grow, from me & mine to you & yours, have a happy in-between time! And may the New Year bring us all a fresh start, full of love.