



# Sacriston Methodist Church Newsletter

December 2017

[www.sacristonmethodistchurch.org](http://www.sacristonmethodistchurch.org)



## **Greetings from the Minister!**

Rev Colin J Jackson

### **Dear Friends,**

Someone reminded me the other day that there were only three weeks left before Christmas. This wasn't something I was ready to hear because it doesn't seem that long since I put the Christmas tree away! Then my wife Janet asked me how we were going to spend Christmas day... she would love to have all the children return home for a while and have a large family gathering. I'd be happy to have a quiet and peaceful stress-free Christmas.

However, Christmas is the one time of year when we tend to make a special effort to keep in touch with friends and family who live away and to share news of activities during the year. It is very heart-warming to receive a communication from someone we have neither seen nor heard from for some time and to know we are still thought of and loved.

As we approach Christmas we are invited to contemplate how God communicated his love to us in the coming of Jesus - coming in an ordinary and yet spectacular way. The Messiah or Christ had been long expected by God's people but he came in a way unexpected. Part of the joy of Christmas, particularly for children, is the unexpected surprise. Surprise that God's Son should be born in a stable of all places!

Part of the function of church magazines is to communicate - to tell of things that have happened and of things that are planned. It's a way of keeping in touch with those who belong to the church family. The coming of Jesus was God's way of keeping in touch with his people. The very name given to Jesus, "Emmanuel", means "God is with us", and it reminds us that we have a God who is very much with us in our celebrations and disappointments.

Not everyone welcomes the coming of Jesus into their lives but those who do and who know him not only as the Babe of Bethlehem, but also as their Friend and Lord, well, these people know true joy.

I hope that in your family you will be able to make room for a Christmas celebration of one kind or another and that you will feel drawn to be in church this Christmastide to celebrate the most wonderful event in the history of the world - the coming of Jesus Christ.

I send to you all my very best wishes for a Happy (Blessed) Christmas, whether you will have a houseful or it will be much quieter, and I wish for you and your family every blessing in the coming year.

**Your friend and minister, Colin.**

First of all, we must apologise for not producing a newsletter recently. We certainly have not been short of news!

Once we were back into full swing after the summer, we held our Harvest Festival in September. We had an uplifting morning service, led by our minister, where we were joined by our friends from Witton Gilbert and Langley Park. In the evening we were delighted to welcome Annetta Read from Newbiggin (Angy's mam) to lead our worship. How good it was to sing the traditional Harvest hymns, as well as some newer ones! We had pies and peas for supper on the Saturday evening with an excellent quiz, thanks to Doris, and then a bring-and-share lunch on the Sunday. We thank Alan for his love and care in decorating the church. The offering was for "All we can", formerly the Methodist Relief and Development Fund.

Coffee Mornings (every Tuesday) and Craft & Chat group (Wednesday mornings during term time) continue to be popular. Please pop in, even if you can't manage every time, and feel free to invite others. The monthly Soup Lunches will be starting again after Christmas.

The Toddler Group on Monday mornings is attracting new families. Please invite young families to come along - £1 per session per family. We have lovely toys and activities.

Churches Together held a very special Advent service in our church on the evening of 26<sup>th</sup> November led by our minister.

Thank you to all those who turned out on a particularly cold evening to sing carols at the Christmas Extravaganza.

Advent Study Groups are well under way: there is one remaining study afternoon still to go at Langley Park led by Rev. Tony Holden, using the York Course at 2pm on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December. At St. Michael's and All Angels' Parish Church at Witton Gilbert, there is one study evening left at 7pm on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> December. All are welcome, even if you have missed the earlier sessions.

At the time of writing, we are busy with Christmas Journey – this year we look forward to welcoming children from Edmondsley, St. Bede's and Sacriston Primary Schools.

### **Services around Christmas**

On 17<sup>th</sup> December at 4pm we have a family Nativity Service led by Anne Offler – this replaces the Crib Service usually held on Christmas Eve. It will be a service for the whole community – please invite people along to it.

On Christmas Eve there will be no morning service but in the evening, at 5.30pm, we have our traditional candle-lit Carol Service and we are delighted that our Salvation Army friends are able to join us.

On Christmas Day our worship will be led by our minister at 10 o'clock when folk from Witton Gilbert will join us.

On New Year's Eve we have no service in our church but we are joining with Witton Gilbert for their service at 10.30am when the preacher will be Bill Offler.

**Carol Singing – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December at 10 o'clock**

Please join us outside Tesco in the village when we will sing carols and give out knitted angels.

We are hoping to sing in St. John's Court too but that is yet to be confirmed.

**Contributions to the Foodbank**

Many people donate regular items to the food bank for which the organisers are very grateful. We have had a letter asking if we could increase our giving a little during the weeks around Christmas so they can be sure of having enough stocks to meet clients' needs.

**Next Year**

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January, 5.30pm – Songs of Praise Service in our church to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Details later.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 11am, this will be our Chapel Anniversary when we are looking forward to welcoming back Rev. Angy Long. We will be having lunch in church that day.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 5.30pm (Palm Sunday) – we are delighted to be welcoming back "The Witness Choir" to lead our service that evening. This will be part of Churches Together joint events for Holy Week.

## Church Family News

There have been several funerals in our church – we hold the families and friends of those who have died in our prayers. May they know God’s love surrounding them in these difficult times.

We also remember those of our fellowship who are unwell and we ask God’s blessing and healing on them.

Several baptisms have taken place – we pray that the families may be truly blessed.



*We wish you all a very happy  
Christmas and a blessed New Year*