



Emsworth Methodist Church & Pastoral Centre



**a serving and worshipping Christian church in the heart of Emsworth,
working closely with other churches and with the local community**

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Newsletter

December 2025

Christmas Carols are the songs that tell the story of the birth of Jesus. Usually, they add to the biblical narrative. Some add detail through poetic licence: winter snow, or the time of night, or the animals that may (or may not) have shared a stable with the Holy Family. Others add theology as a kind of musical and poetic commentary or interpretation of the biblical texts.

Most echo some of what the Bible stories tell us. All echo the purpose behind retelling the story of one baby's birth 2000 years ago in a small Middle Eastern town. That single event, unremarkable in many ways, is the most remembered birth in history, because it spells out so much more than a single birth.

The single word that sums up what Christmas is about is **hope**.

Any baby can be a sign of hope; many hopes are attached to the birth of many babies; but this baby carries the hopes of more than his parents and more than the hopes for the next generation. This baby signals that there is hope for the world, for humanity – even for us 2000 years later.

That God became a human being in Palestine means there is hope, there was hope then and there is hope now. And that hope is echoed in the song

of the angels, which is in turn echoed in the songs of Christmas now.
Read again and think on the words of *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*:

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold :
'Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King !'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
with peaceful wings unfurled ;
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world ;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing ;
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessèd angels sing.
- 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long ;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong ;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song which they bring.
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing !
- 4 For lo, the days are hastening on,
to prophets shown of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when the new heaven and earth shall own
the Prince of Peace their King,
and all the world repeat the song
which now the angels sing.



Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810–1876)
Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 205

Church Services in December

7 December 10.00am

Café Church

led by Margaret Sawyer

14 December 10.00am

Morning Worship

led by Matthew Patis

6.30pm

Carols by Candlelight at St James

to which we are invited

21 December 10.00am

Carol Service

led by Revd David Muskett

6.30pm

Carols by Candlelight at St Thomas à Becket, Warblington

to which we are invited

24 December 9.00pm

Christmas Eve Holy Communion

led by Revd David Muskett

25 December 10.00am

Christmas Day Service

led by Revd Bill Stillwell

28 December 10.00am

Morning Worship

led by Wendy Corney

6.30pm

Reflective Evening Service

led by Matthew Patis



Special Days in December

1

World Aids Day *Based on information from <https://worldaidsday.org>*

World AIDS Day is a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Since 1988, communities have stood together on World AIDS Day to show strength and solidarity against HIV stigma and to remember lives lost.

In the UK, more than 105,000 people are living with HIV. Globally, an estimated 38 million people live with the virus. More than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS related illnesses over the past 40 years, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Medical advances mean people with HIV can expect a long and healthy life and that we have the tools to stop HIV transmissions for good. But HIV continues to be highly stigmatised and misunderstood. Staff at National AIDS Trust, the UK's HIV rights charity, are contacted weekly by people experiencing discrimination because of HIV, including in work, education, housing and even healthcare.

World AIDS Day exists to shine a light on the real experiences of people living with HIV today, while celebrating the strength, resilience and diversity of the communities most affected. It is a moment to inspire the leadership needed to create a future where HIV doesn't stand in the way of anyone's life.

The Red Ribbon

The Red Ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV. It was first devised in 1991, when twelve artists met to discuss a new project for Visual AIDS, a New York HIV-awareness arts organisation.

It was there that they came up with what would become one of the most recognised symbols of the decade: the Red Ribbon, worn to signify awareness and support for people living with HIV. The artists wanted to create a visual expression of compassion for people living with HIV and chose red for its boldness, and for its symbolic associations with passion, the heart and love.



fun and friendship

Thursday mornings at 10.30am in International Hall

**4 December
Knit and Natter**

**11 December
Snowman Drive**

**18 December
Christmas Music and Quiz**



Wednesday Group

**2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm in
International Hall**

**10 December
The Driftwood Troubadours
David Mitchell, Gordon Charlesworth
and Lin Hendry**

followed by light refreshments

***Note that there is no meeting on the fourth
Wednesday of December (Christmas Eve)***



Tuesday 9th December
Join us for Christmas Carols
& Mince Pies at
Emsworth Pastoral Centre
19 High Street Emsworth

*A free mince pie and beverage will be
available for all customers*

*Singing will commence at 11am
(for approximately 45 minutes)*

*Turkey & Cranberry sandwiches or Brie &
Cranberry toasties will be available to
purchase from 12pm*



A Rocha – Eco Church

Here are A Rocha's suggestions for this month.

Celebrate a simpler and greener Christmas



As Advent begins, let us turn our gaze to the true meaning of Christmas – God with us, Emmanuel. The humble birth of a child in a stable may seem distant from the way we celebrate today, but it offers a profound reminder of simplicity. This season, let's reflect on the story that we wish our actions and choices to tell. May our hearts and celebrations align with the simplicity and beauty of the Christmas story.

Action for Children

Margaret Sawyer will lead Café Church on Sunday 7 December, when we will celebrate the work of Action for Children.

There will be an opportunity to make a donation, either in the envelope available on the day, or through the church bank account, as follows:

Emsworth Methodist Church, sort code 20 69 34, account number 10698334 Reference: Action4children.

Our offertories on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will also be in aid of Action for Children.

Marilyn Carroll



(Action for Children continued)

For more information on Action for Children this Christmas, please go to the Action for Children website, <http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk>

Action for Children states: Action for Children is driven by love. We take action so children don't miss out on a safe and happy childhood. We have thousands of people working on the ground, giving children and young people the protection and practical help they urgently need. And we campaign tirelessly for lasting change.

Next Youth President

The Methodist Youth President for 2026/2027 will be **Gracie Silk**, who attends Melbourne Methodist Church in the Nottingham and Derby District. Gracie, aged 19, will succeed the current Youth President from 1 September 2026. She will be formally welcomed at a service to take place next autumn. Gracie says:

"I'm very excited to be the next Youth President and really looking forward to starting the role and being an advocate for the children and young people of the Church."





Illuminated



Medieval



manuscripts

A major curatorial project at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham, called *Fragments of Devotion*, offers 'a sensory history of illuminated manuscript cuttings'.

It features exquisite pieces from the V&A and Barber collections, and the stories that accompany them.

The Institute is currently closed for improvements, but you can access the collection online at:

<https://devotion.barber.org.uk>



The Annunciation and The Nativity from *Les Belles Heures du Duc de Berry*, Wikimedia Commons

Christian Aid

Thank you to everyone who supported the Coffee, Cake and Table sale on Saturday 1 November. We had a very good morning with some lovely items for sale. The total raised, plus several donations, totalled £502.79.



We have been looking for a new Treasurer as the previous one decided the weather was better in Australia. We now have a Treasurer from St James' Church, and we look forward to working with them to continue our fund-raising activities.

We will be Carol Singing in The Square on Saturday 6 December from 10.00am until noon. We are hoping for good weather and would love you to come and join us to sing some of your favourite carols.

Gill Cooper, Margaret Sawyer and Marian Hughes

Emsworth Methodist Church Welcome Booklet

The revised edition of our Welcome Booklet is now available, with copies in the church magazine racks to give to visitors. As the Editor, I would like to thank everyone who kindly provided up-to-date text and advised me where things had changed since last time, and those who checked the drafts. A special thank you to Adrian who printed the booklets, and to David Harris who took the new photos for the front cover and page 3 (shown below).

Jane Gregory



Adapted from The Methodist News

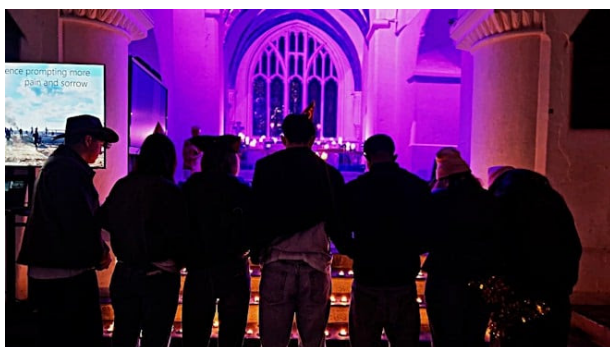
Since opening its doors for a weekly Friday-night vigil three and a half years ago, over 15,000 people have accepted the invitation to enter the medieval church of St Mary's in Guildford to light a candle and pray for peace. This takes place in the heart of the town, attended by the stag and hen parties, students in fancy dress and clusters of friends who are heading home from pubs and clubs. The invitation is simple: to pray for peace.

Each Friday from 9.00–11.00pm, two volunteers stand at the church gates, where they extend a simple invitation, to light a candle for peace. One of them, Michael Lee, describes how unexpectedly positive the reaction has been. "It's quite a step to stand out on the street and invite pub and club goers to pop in," he says. "But people are remarkably positive. Nobody has ever been rude about it. They'll say, 'I'm not dressed for church', or 'I've had a drink'. But we tell them that's not part of the deal, everyone's welcome."

This gentle, unobtrusive approach is part of what makes the vigil so accessible. "We don't invite people to do anything except enter a beautifully-lit building and light a candle," Paul says. "It isn't a service. There are no expectations. They can take as long or as little time as they need."

For Andy Wheeler, a retired Anglican priest, the power of the vigil lies in the way it gives people permission to acknowledge what they carry emotionally. "People have seen candlelit vigils on television," he says. "They may never have taken part in one themselves, but they understand the symbolism. People carry anxiety, compassion, distress about Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, as well as their own bereavements. Our society doesn't give many places to take that. So when they find a church open, inviting them in, it's extraordinary."

St Mary's has become a place where strangers acknowledge griefs and worries, and maybe pray for the first time in years. Where, as one young woman declared when she returned with friends a few weeks later, "This is my church now."



Prayer Points

You are invited to use the suggestions listed below in your prayer times

1. Light a candle (perhaps choose a time when it's dark) and watch the flame flickering.

Say, 'We light this candle as a reminder that wherever we are, whatever we do, however dark the world seems to be, Jesus, the Light of the World, is with us.'

2. When it is dark – early morning or in the evening – look up at the dark sky. Imagine the angels singing, 'Peace on the earth ... from heaven's all gracious King'. Join in?!

3. Draw around your hand and label each digit:

Thumb = family

Pointing finger = those who teach

Middle finger = those in power and leadership

Ring finger = those in need

Little finger = yourself

Point to each and hold before God those who come to mind.



We have a small **Prayer Chain** working within the church. If you, or anyone you know, is in need of prayer, please do contact Judy Emerson on 02392 474656, or email ajemerson113@gmail.com

Please send contributions for the **January** Newsletter to jane@janegregory.co.uk or newsletter@emsworthmethodistchurch.org by **Saturday 27 December** – or earlier if you can!

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