

December 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters

We are in the midst of Advent and once again I find myself wondering just how quickly it arrived, not least because many of us have not been well! But it seems that busyness is often the standard form of life these days and yet Advent is meant to be a time of 'waiting' of quiet reflective preparation for God.

So I find myself pausing to ask: What are we waiting for, apart from the turkey and roast potatoes that is? Yes - Jesus coming is the obvious answer. Another often rightly given is that we are waiting for 'thy kingdom come on earth' - so it is that we actively work towards a better world. The lectionary reading (and later in Luke 4 Jesus) proclaims:

Isaiah 61:1-2 he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (forgiveness).

But beneath all of this faith in action I see a tiny, vulnerable baby in a manger. The answer for once is not Jesus alone - but what Jesus came to herald and make possible... **namely a new covenant relationship with God.** We are waiting for God who has acted on our behalf by his grace in Christ, to enable us to be with him.

How we wait says a lot about what we believe. How we wait says everything about our faith and expresses God to those around us. **May your waiting be expectant, patient and faithful, leading to joy.**

Looking at Church matters I have realised that communication has come up as an issue. Not all our folk have email, and because of work shift patterns not all can attend weekly worship. So a Sunday announcement of a meeting may also be missed.

I was therefore very sad to hear that some, quite rightly, have felt undervalued as they have not heard about church meetings in time to be able to attend.

To this end I/we would like to try and establish a new year's resolution which is that they key dates for Church councils and the required supporting

meetings of the pastoral committee, finance & property and other relevant meetings will be agreed and set out a year in advance. This will take some time to get sorted but once we have the dates agreed they can go on display and all will have time to note them.



Methodism only continues because of the commitment of so many lay people who share in the life of the Church. Together we work towards the future of God's church, of which we have a short and temporary guardianship. All who contribute, often in unseen caring ways are vital and valued. So we say thank you and bless you for what you do.

Looking ahead:

At Ponders End work is well underway in completing the interior roof and it looks grand.

At Ordnance Road plans have been drawn up to create a new front porch and new front doors which will provide a warmer and drier welcome!

At Goffs Oak improved communications with the Guides and now the Scouts means that parade services continue to be a priority in the New Year.

At all three Churches plans are coming together for 'welcome to faith' membership programmes that will be open to all and will explore our Christian faith and what is important to Methodists.

At all three Churches new building development groups will meet in the New Year to gather ideas and proposals from the congregations regarding potential improvement bids that may be made to the circuit following the sale of Oakwood. None of this will happen quickly but we need to start now. Most importantly we must pray not about buildings but about what God is calling us to do in each church context - for this will drive the resources we need.

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*Make us your song Lord,
for you are the singer and we are your work*