

# Good News

## Lancashire West Methodist Circuit

### 1st Week of Advent

**Prayer for Hope:** Almighty God, grant us the grace to hope in you with unwavering trust. As we begin this season of Advent, may our hearts be filled with the hope that comes from knowing your promises are true. Amen.

### 2nd Week of Advent

**Prayer for Peace:** Prince of Peace, in a world filled with turmoil, grant us the tranquility that only your peace can bring. Help us to be instruments of reconciliation and harmony in our relationships and communities. Amen.

### 3rd Week of Advent

**Prayer for Joy:** Heavenly Father, fill our hearts with the joy that comes from knowing your love. May we rejoice in the good news of salvation and share that joy with others during this season of Advent. Amen.

### 4th Week of Advent

**Prayer for Love:** God of love, as we approach the celebration of the birth of your Son, help us to embody the love that He brought into the world. Teach us to love one another as you have loved us. Amen.



Let Your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in You alone. Psalm 33:22.

ABBA Father, please help us to stop looking in all the wrong places for our peace and our joy and our purpose. YOU and YOU alone are the answer to our longings and our prayers and our needs.

## Dear friends.

As we count down the last few days to Christmas, we are very much in Nativity Season, as we hear and share the familiar story in so many varied and innovative ways. It's amazing just how many different permutations there can be of one basic story. So many ways of telling of how the Good News of God's love was shown to the World.

At the end of November, I reprised my role as a Shepherd as Burscough hosted six Schools who came along to Meet the Characters of the Nativity – as part of The Hope Journey, and I know that Up Holland put on a similar event. Whilst not being entirely taken in by the costumes and acting [“are you going to be a Shepherd again and use your mobile phone for the sheep noises” – a Y2 Holmeswood girl on her second visit], the children were very excited about what they experienced and are still talking about it several weeks later.

Many of the children who visited us will be taking part in their own School Nativities over the next few days, providing memories for their families and anecdotes of things that may not have gone exactly to plan or things misunderstood. Once more at the heart of these depictions of the Nativity there is a demonstration of the love of God.

Dai Wooldridge, a writer and performer who works for the Bible Society, who, through the past few Christmas's, has produced thought provoking readings and dramas around the events of the Nativity. This year, he has produced a Story aimed at the younger members of our families, “Festive Fred finds the greatest gift”; with an accompanying video of Dai reading the story which you can find by following the link or looking at the Bible Society webpage

[https://player.vimeo.com/progressive\\_redirect/download/872843193/rendition/1080p/01\\_dai\\_full\\_reading\\_book\\_v2%20%281080p%29.mp4?loc=external&signature=21b0709bb0ad914595b74a1ee8a8004b8176444a7dcb70e55207c46d0a639c74](https://player.vimeo.com/progressive_redirect/download/872843193/rendition/1080p/01_dai_full_reading_book_v2%20%281080p%29.mp4?loc=external&signature=21b0709bb0ad914595b74a1ee8a8004b8176444a7dcb70e55207c46d0a639c74)



Fred is a young boy who loves Christmas so much that he even changes his name from Ryan to "Festive Fred" and loves everything

about Christmas, especially the presents. Whilst listening to his Mum retell the story Fred/Ryan falls into it and gains a new understanding of what the greatest gift really is.

Whichever version of the Nativity Story we experience this year, I hope that we all capture the enthusiasm of "Festive Fred" and celebrate the wonder of the true gift of Christmas, as summed up by Charles Wesley:

"Our God contracted to a span,  
Incomprehensibly made man"

Wishing you all the joy of the season.

Michael

A warm invitation is extended to any lady wishing to attend the following occasion:-

**METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN:  
Lancashire District Annual Conference**



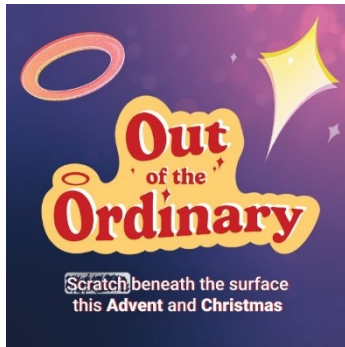
Mon/Tues 5th - 6th February 2024 to be held at

The Best Western Glendower Hotel, North Promenade, St. Annes, Lancashire FY8 2NQ.

This year's theme is "The Lord is my Shepherd" and the Speaker will be Deacon Denise Creed.

Contact Noreen Davison (Tel: 01695 422204) for further details should you wish to attend.





Did you know that the Methodist Church has released it's own Christmas Single this year?

*Be Born* is a new arrangement of *O little town of Bethlehem* and features as the soundtrack to our Christmas film, which can be watched on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4LapwBUqMM&t=6s>

Or directly on the Methodist Website Out of the Ordinary page on the Methodist Website <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/out-of-the-ordinary/>

Where you can sign up to daily reflections for Advent.

## Call for Advent candle to remain unlit for peace

To remember all those who have died in the Israel/Palestine conflict, Methodist churches across the country are being called upon to leave their second Advent candle unlit this year.

The call not to light the candle, which represents peace, on the second Sunday in Advent (10 December) and on subsequent Sundays, follows the news that celebrations to mark Christmas in the Holy Land will be subdued this year.

The Revd David Hardman, Methodist Liaison Officer, Jerusalem, is currently fulfilling his role from the UK and remains in touch with those living in the Middle East. David explained, "Our Christian colleagues in Bethlehem tell us that this Advent and Christmas the lights that normally adorn the birth place of Jesus will remain unlit in memory of those who have been killed in the current conflict. We are inviting Methodist churches in Britain to leave the second candle of Advent unlit to serve as a reminder that we stand in solidarity with all who are suffering in the Holy Land."

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Gill Newton, commented, "The events of over 2000 years ago and of now, remind us that sadly, nothing much has changed. We are still caught up in conflict and challenge, fear and uncertainty. This Advent, to stand with Palestinian Christians, we invite Methodist Churches to leave the Advent candle on the Second Sunday unlit and for it to remain unlit throughout advent."

"God is still present even in the most difficult places, and in the midst of violent conflict so many people are wishing for and seeking peace!"

Churches who participate are invited to take a photo of their Advent Ring on Christmas Day with the second candle unlit to be shared with local church communities in the Holy Land.

### Photos

On Christmas Day churches are invited to take a photo of their Advent Ring with the second candle unlit and send it to [office@mlojerusalem.org](mailto:office@mlojerusalem.org). The staff at the Methodist Liaison Office will forward pictures to local church communities in the Holy Land.



# The Neighbourhood Project in Four Parts



In Spring 2022, as part of the **Neighbourhood Project Initiative**, I got together with the One Programme Leader for Up Holland, Becky and we decided to run a craft group for Women on a Friday afternoon. We based our work around the making of a Peace Banner: the war in Ukraine had just begun. Over the weeks, we wove, we sewed, we made “feathers”, but most importantly we shared fellowship and prayers. We were small in number at the **Reclaim Café**, as we called ourselves, but that didn’t matter. Eventually, we had made a beautiful banner, which now greets people on their way into **Up Holland Methodist Church**.



Out of this work, we formed links with the Missional Priest at St Thomas the Martyr in Up Holland, the Reverend Jack Shepherd and discussed what we could do next as part of the Up Holland Community Hub. He introduced us to his Mum, who led an initiative called Peaced Together over in Yorkshire.

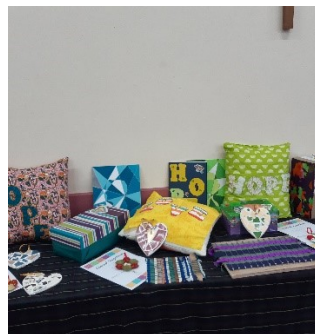
Peaced Together is a world-wide organisation founded over 10 years ago by Heidi Singleton. It began as a project for Women, but there are now courses for Men and Young Children. During the course of 10 weeks, five crafts are completed which, as the initiative explains helps to bring about healing.

“Brokenness is an opportunity for creative design” By exploring mosaic, decoupage, quilting, weaving and painting, we will show you how the creative arts can ignite a hope in you that your life can also be pieced together.

It seemed like this was what we should do next. So, after Reverend Jack gained funding for the project from West Lancashire Community Champions, two of us duly attended the training course over 6 weeks via Zoom; gathered the resources; advertised and began a course in September 2022.

From the beginning, the group were able to share thoughts and feelings based around that week’s topic and craft and friendships began to be formed. It was a privilege to lead these sessions with my colleague and our group of volunteers, who helped to make teas and coffees, shared their sewing expertise and also joined in the discussions. We were also blessed with the presence of Reverend Alex Laing, the Methodist Minister, who gave pastoral support and continues to do so whenever possible.

At the end of the 10 weeks, we had a celebration “Jacob’s Join” and invited friends to come and see the crafts that had been made. It was a wonderful afternoon, which Reverend Jack came to with his wife, Emily. But what next the participants all asked?





## Part Two - Hearts and Hands

Well, we decided to start a supportive Whatsapp group and continued to meet for another five weeks, whilst the group made decisions. It was then that **"Hearts and Hands"** developed. This is a group open to anyone who was part of the original course, as well as others. It met on Monday afternoons, but moved to another part of the Up Holland Parish/ Lancashire West Methodist District at Christ the Servant, Digmoor, as part of our ecumenical work in this area. The group continued to meet until the summer months and then has had a rest.



## Part Three – Peaced Together 2

The next Peaced Together group began in February 2023. It was based in Christ the Servant Church in Digmoor, Skelmersdale, as there were some young mum's who were keen to join, but couldn't travel to the original setting. Once again, the ladies were able to share with each other in a supportive environment.

## Part Four – Peaced Together 3

After a summer break, a new group met once again at Up Holland. Some of the ladies were new to the course, whilst one returned as a volunteer and two ladies came for the fellowship and crafts. Over the summer, one of our original participants trained to lead the group. Indeed, in January she will be helping to lead the next group which will take place at Trinity Methodist/URC on Monday afternoons, as we extend the reach to another part of the Up Holland/Skelmersdale Hub.

At the start of December, 17 of us went for a Christmas meal to Bramleys in Ormskirk. It was good to see participants from the different groups getting to know each other. We intend to continue with these lunch meetings once a quarter, and are also working on reviving the Hearts and Hands group.

We are grateful for the support of Reverend Alex, Reverend Paul Lock from St Thomas the Martyr in Up Holland and The Hub community of Up Holland, as well as the churches that have and continue to support us.

## Missional thoughts

If you have been thinking about how you can reach out to others in your community, sharing God's love, whilst also helping to bring about positive thoughts, then I would highly recommend investigating about how to start a Peaced Together group. Peaced Together came out of a place of brokenness, which has Christian values and ministry at its core. The training, guides you through not only practical things, but also spiritual and safe-guarding issues. Its proven successful structure and support network means that as you work with people; you know that you are not alone.



If you had asked me at the start of January 2022 about how I was helping with missional work in my area, then I couldn't have foreseen where the Lord was guiding me. In one of the sessions, we read the poem by **Corrie Ten Boom** called **Tapestry of Life**, it begins with this verse.

**My Life is but a weaving**

**Between the Lord and me;**

**I cannot choose the colours**

**He worketh steadily.**

May you find the weaving that God has intended for you.

**Lorraine Howarth**

Class 1 had a fantastic morning at Burscough Methodist Church, taking part in the **Hope Journey!**



Our class thoroughly enjoyed their Hope Journey experience at Burscough Methodist Church.

The children commented on how "the church looked so different!" because of the different interactive stations that had been set up! The characters were very engaging and had the children listening to every word of their story. It was interesting for the children to hear the Christmas story from different points of view.

The children left Hope Journey with huge smiles, Hope Journey passports, a wonderful Christmas decoration that they had made themselves and a delicious chocolate coin! Thank you very much to Burscough Methodist Church for organising such a wonderful event that we look forward to every Christmas time!

Miss Lunt (Class 1 Teacher)

In the Autumn, we had a very successful cake sale here at Burscough Bridge Methodist Church, to raise funds for our fabulous school, Burscough Bridge Methodist School.

We would also like to thank the wonderful children who helped too!

- Class 3 for delivering flyers around the village!
- The juniors who performed a wonderful dance!
- The children who donated some of our cakes!

With all of your help, we managed to raise an amazing **£951.30!**



## Harvest with a difference!



At Mawdesley Methodist Church, we celebrated Harvest with a twist – our animal friends and companions joined us!

We held a Harvest Pet Service to thank God for all the good things in the created world. During this time, we enjoyed the beautiful harvest displays, we sang - some woofed, gave thanks and celebrated.

I went round and blessed all the animals individually, which was an opportunity for me to stroke all the gorgeous dogs! The star of the show was Mr Kipling, the bearded dragon.

Everybody was very well behaved, including the humans, and it was a very happy morning.

Rev. Alex





## Christmas around the Circuit

"CHRISTMAS PRAISE" led by Holmes Brass

Tuesday 12th December 7.00pm  
at Mere Brow Village Hall  
Mince Pies & Refreshments

CHRISTMAS FAMILY SERVICE

Sunday 17th December at 10.30am  
At Mere Brow Methodist Chapel  
Led by Rev Michael Tindsley

CHRISTMAS MUSICAL by Holmeswood Choir

Sunday 17th December at 6.30pm  
At Tarleton Methodist Church

"CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT" led by Colin

Sunday 24th December 6.30pm  
At Mere Brow Methodist Chapel

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30am  
At Tarleton Methodist Church  
Led by Rev Michael Tindsley  
Holmes Brass

Please come & share the joy of Christmas in the community

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace & goodwill  
toward men"

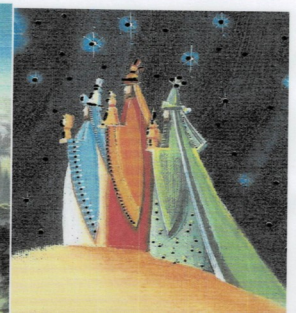
Mere Brow and Tarleton Methodist Church

"HOLMESWOOD  
CHRISTMAS CHOIR"

PRESENT  
WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED  
& STARGAZERS

Sunday 17th December  
at 6.30 p.m.  
at

TARLETON METHODIST CHURCH



## BURSCOUGH METHODIST CHURCH CHRISTMAS SERVICES

REMEMBRANCE AT CHRISTMAS

Thursday 14th December at 7pm  
an occasion to remember loved ones  
who are no longer with us.

TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE\*\*

Sunday 17th December at 4:30pm  
Well loved carols telling the story of the First Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION\*\*

Sunday 24th December at 8:00pm

CHRISTMAS DAY FAMILY CELEBRATION\*\*

Monday 25th December at 10:30am  
Come and worship  
Christ the new born King,  
and bring along a present to show us

\*\*There will be a Retiring Collection for the charity SHELTER at these services

CROSTON TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

A Christmas Celebration

Sunday  
17th  
Dec  
6:30pm



Join us for an evening of  
Christmas carols, poems &  
readings of

Joy, Peace & Hope.

Led by Rachel and the team

Festive Refreshments  
served

Collection for





# CHURCH SERVICES

	December			January				February			
	17 <sup>th</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>	31 <sup>st</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Burscough</b> Orrell Lane 10.00 HP, CMP, STF, NIV	Merle Farthing 4.30 Carol Service	o/a 8pm Michael Tindsley S	Michael Tindsley S	Lorraine Howarth	Michael Tindsley Cov	Geoff Farthing	o/a	Merle Farthing	Michael Tindsley F	Liam Woods	o/a
<b>Mere Brow</b> Mere Brow Lane 10.30 MPC HP	Michael Tindsley Nativity	Tarleton 6.30 Carols by Candle Light	Andrew Richardson	Tarleton	o/a	Julia Robinson	Cliff Hill	Tarleton	Shirley Potts	Barbara Clarke	Michael Tindsley S
<b>Tarleton</b> Church Rd 10.30 HP, MP,	Mere Brow 6.30 Christmas Musical	Geoff Farthing S	Mere Brow	Michael Tindsley Cov S	David King	Mere Brow	Michael Tindsley	Emma Birkbeck F	Lynne Watson	Mere Brow	o/a
<b>Mawdesley</b> Four Lane 10.30 Ends HP, MP, JP, NIV	Alex Middleton-Laing S	Carol Service 7pm	Croston	o/a	Malcolm Abbott	Alex Middleton-Laing Cov S	Carrie Middleton-Laing	Alex Middleton-Laing S	Croston	Geoff Farthing	Alex Middleton-Laing S
<b>Croston</b> Westhead Rd 10.30 HP, MP, STF,	Malcolm Abbott Carol Service 6.30	Sue Guénault S	David Allen	Mawdesley	Sue Guénault Cov S	o/a	Geoff Farthing	Mawdesley	Sue Guénault All Age	Merle Farthing	o/a
<b>Ormskirk</b> Derby St 11.00 CMP, StF 4.00	Sue Guénault Carol Service	Michael Tindsley Sue Guénault	Malcolm Abbott	Sue Guénault Cov S	David Allen	Merle Farthing	Sue Guénault P	Michael Tindsley S	o/a	Lorraine Howarth	Sue Guénault P
<b>Trinity</b> High Street 11.00 STF, GNB	Geoff Farthing	Alex Middleton-Laing	Merle Farthing	Up Holland	Liam Woods	Janet Walton	o/a	Geoff Farthing	Alex Middleton-Laing S	Michael Tindsley	Malcolm Abbott
<b>Up Holland</b> Alma Hill 11.00 STF LP	Service of Light	Trinity	Geoff Farthing	Alex Middleton-Laing Cov S	Beacon ?	Michael Tindsley	Alex Middleton-Laing S	Beacon?	David Allen	Alex Middleton-Laing S	Carrie Middleton-Laing

MP –Mission Praise Combined  
HP – Hymns and Psalms  
JP – Junior Praise  
LP – Let's Praise

CMP – Complete Mission Praise  
STF – Singing the Faith  
Cov – Covenant Service  
S - Holy Communion  
O/A – Own Arrangement  
F – Family Service [All Age]  
P – Parade Service

## Christmas Day

Tarleton	9.30am	Rev Michael Tindsley + Holmes Brass
Up Holland	9.30am	Rev Alex Middleton-Laing
Burscough	10.30 am	Rev Michael Tindsley
Mawdesley	10.30 am	Rev Alex Middleton-Laing
Emmanuel	11.00am	Rev Sue Guénault

Revd Michael Tindsley

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Revd Alex Middleton-Laing

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