

In touch



information from Dawlish URC

the church with the spire

December 2012

FROM THE MINISTER

I start each Christmas season with good intentions. I will write the cards and family circular in plenty of time. I will buy those family presents assigned to me to get. I will have the services prepared in advance, and all will go smoothly. But every year the cards get posted just before the deadline (my excuse is that people like cards just before Christmas not weeks in advance) presents are acquired at the last minute, and panic sets in.



It is, therefore, reassuring to remember that the story of the first Christmas is the story of a series of completely unplanned and messy events – a surprise pregnancy, a possible broken betrothal, an unexpected journey that's got to be made, a complete muddle over where to stay, and then receiving unexpected visitors (some VIPs) in temporary accommodation. And this is before you flee as a refugee from the murderous plans of a psychotic ruler.

It's not exactly a perfect way to have your first child.

But it tells us something really vital. We try to plan everything and stay in charge, and too often we think that unless we can cook the perfect dinner and organise the perfect Christmas and satisfy all the guests, we somehow have got it wrong and we have failed. And if the celebrations are marred by family members not getting on with each other, with visitors overstaying their welcome and worry about the bills to be paid, we can be glad when it is all over.

We need to remember God is already and always there for us and is not going to wait until we've got everything sorted out perfectly. God's son was born into a real, chaotic world with caring but confused parents.



So perhaps this year I will not wish anyone a peaceful Christmas, because it hardly ever is. But I can wish everyone joy in the midst of the mess, and every blessing from the God of ordinary, untidy, surprising things.

ROGER WHITEHEAD



STRAND CENTRE REPORT

The end of an era

At the end of this month the Third Age Group will cease to exist. As its members have grown older it has been unable to sustain its programme and it has decided to close. The Centre will miss its contribution and its presence. Steps are being taken to find another group which might lease or use the top floor of the Strand Hall.

The Foyer will also cease to exist in its present layout. Work will start on 2nd January on the two toilets and enlarged kitchenette. It should not take longer than six weeks. An appeal has been launched for equipping the kitchenette at a cost of around £6,000. In preparation for the work on the external ramp (which also awaits funding) the east vestibule will be cleared. It will become the main entrance to the building when the ramp is in place. The cleaning cupboard under the stairs will be removed to provide a more spacious and attractive entrance.

During the building work the vestry will be transformed into a centre office and small meeting room. The toilet will be removed to house the new photocopier and paper store; adjustable shelves will replace the present shelves.

Storage remains a real problem. Until the gallery is extended the prayer corner and the area where the amplifier is will be screened off for storing the trolleys for the hymnbooks, chairs and tables and other necessities..

During the building work access to the auditorium will only be through the Strand hall. This means that most activities will either not meet during the building period or will relocate to the hall.

METHODIST-URC LIAISON GROUP

Twice a year representatives of the Methodist stewards and the URC elders meet to talk about working together. We re-affirmed our pattern of morning services for Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day held in the URC; and Maundy Thursday which in 2013 will be Holy Communion and Tenebrae. Our monthly Iona Services and Messy Church continue, and we are encouraging the ministers to exchange from time to time, and the lay/local preachers to be invited to the other's church

The Elders Meeting has not met since the last edition of *In Touch*.



**For more up-to-date information
about the church visit www.StrandChurch.org.uk
About the centre visit www.StrandCentre.org.uk**



CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS



When we don't get the presents we really want, some people are much more likely to return the gifts they were given! Overall, 15% took back a present they received. If you thought this might include those grumpy teenagers and fussy young people, you thought right — 22% of 15-24 year olds took back at least one present last year. But there are grumpy grown-ups too — 35-44 year olds were also significantly more likely to take back presents — 23% admitted to taking back at least one gift they didn't like.

In terms of regional habits, Southerners were much more likely to take back gifts than people from other regions — 18% admitted to taking stuff back after Christmas compared with 12% for the Midlands and 15% for other regions.

It seems that among the favourite presents this Christmas for men are tax disc cuff links (£30) and Doctor Who sonic universal remote control (£60); and for women a leather, silk-lined iPod case (£75) and a heart-shaped cheese board (£45). We do not know how many of these will be returned.

Torbay Police Choir and Voice Male Concert

Christmas programme of popular songs

Fri 14 Dec at 7.30

for Chernobyl Children's Lifeline

Tickets £5 inc refreshments

A great start to the Christmas season



TORBAY URC CHURCHES PROGRAMME 2013



In addition to the bimonthly quiz evenings, Torbay Churches hold two events each year. Book the dates now for next year - two real treats for everyone

Jan 12th 3.00 - 5.30 Words & Music in Teignmouth

Including Teignmouth Sings and Jonathan Oliverio on the piano

July 6th 1.30 - 6.00 Visit to Killerton House,

Tour the 18th-century house with costume collection, hillside garden and estate, ending with tea and a service in the splendid chapel. Free for National Trust members; group rates for others.

Christmas Events

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Sunday 23rd 10.30 **FAMILY SERVICE** (4th Sunday in Advent)

4.00 **TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE**
followed by afternoon tea
readings, carols

Christmas Eve



4.00 **CRIB SERVICE**
an absolute *must* for all under 7's
children come dressed as angels or shepherds

7.00 **CANDLE LIT CAROL SERVICE**
 poems, readings, carols
all will receive a candle during the service

Christmas Day 10.00 **UNITED FAMILY SERVICE**
 in our church

Sunday 30th 10.30 **UNITED SERVICE** in **METHODIST CHURCH**

ALONE ON CHRISTMAS DAY?

Couples and singles are warmly invited to

*Christmas Day Dinner at the Strand
 Church*



with all the traditional trimmings



noon to 2.30

Transport can be provided

No charge, but donations can be given to Christian Aid

For catering reasons, advanced booking is essential: ring 889 098

Parking

Parking in *Teignbridge* car parks is free on Sundays until the end of March. On-street parking is controlled by Devon County Council and it is *not* free.

Special delivery of cards to members

Sending Christmas cards? Post your Christmas cards to church members in the box in the foyer by 9th December if possible. Collect them from Sunday 16th or 23rd. The money saved on stamps can be given to the Refurbishment Fund.

Nativity Display

We are not holding a Display of nativity sets, but we will have the full size stable on the dais. Each Sunday during Advent something more will be added to it.

Men's breakfast (15th at 8.30)

Those who have never tried the monthly Men's Breakfast will be tempted by the cooked breakfast, and might be tempted to know that Roger Whitehead is the December speaker on *Christmas Through the Ages* (a humorous look!).

Carols on the Lawn (7th from 5.00)

This year we assemble on the piazza at 5 pm with lanterns or torches to process to the bandstand. Each child will be given a voucher for a hot dog redeemable at the bandstand. As before Westcliffe School will lead the singing and there will be a nativity play. We have to provide kings and shepherds. Offer to Marie or Roger Whitehead, please.

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR CHRISTMAS**Synod Quiet Day** 5th Dec 10.00 – 4.00 Buckfast Abbey

Two of our members are attending this chance to be still and reflect before the Christmas rush begins. Lifts are available. Full details from Jean Potter or Marie Whitehead

Torbay URC Advent Studies

Tuesdays 4th & 11th 12.20 - lunch; study 1.00-2.00 *lifts are available*

A chance for space to think about the Christmas story amidst the rush.

4th at The Avenue Church, Newton Abbot; 11th at Central URC, Torquay

Morning services in Advent

The overall theme is *The Kingdom of God is near*. There will be a special Introit each Sunday and the Advent Wreath will be lit. The theme will reflect how different God's kingdom is from earthly ones. On 16th Café Worship participants will be asked to reflect this difference when they are asked to choose the beneficiaries of our Christmas offerings.



JOINING IN

participate and help

Prayer Meeting Fridays 11.30 – 12.30 in the Carey Room

Our newly formed prayer group focuses on quiet meditative prayer, and those on our prayer list. Newcomers always welcome. Those unable to attend might like to pray at home at this time.

Remembering Service—Tuesday 4th 7.00 Methodist Church

This is a service particularly for those who have lost loved ones in the past few years and would like a quiet occasion to remember them. You can light a candle and pray for the loved one. All welcome—details from Roger Whitehead.

Carols Down the Line Wednesday 5th, Buckfastleigh Station 7 pm

We can fit in one or two more people for this exciting event in a steam train. Lifts are provided.

Street market Sunday 9th—after service

We will be giving away hot drinks and offering toilets and a place to get warm in peace to passers-by at the street market. Please offer your help.

Home Aid Coffee Morning 11th is for Shelter Boxes

Shelter Box responds instantly to crises anywhere in the world, delivering boxes with supplies for an extended family of up to 10 people with a tent and essential equipment to use while the family is displaced or homeless.

URC Ministers, Spouses and Widows Christmas lunch Wed 12th from 10.30

We are hosting this annual three course traditional Christmas meal for about 30 people. Help is needed from about 10.30 am. Please sign the list.

Thank you from the Teignmouth Food Bank

Please thank those who kindly gave the Harvest gifts to us. We are preparing our usual supply of Christmas food for families with lots of children who are generally in difficulty, and especially at Christmas. We seek to show God's love in action and we give literature about Jesus and the work of local churches.

OFFERINGS AND OTHER SPECIAL INCOME

	Sunday Offerings*		Special Collections and Events
	2012	2011	
			Coffee Mornings in Oct (2011 = £101) £130
October	£2,175	£1,132	Coffee Mornings (year so far) £1,132
Year (so far)	£16,028	£13,220	

* includes standing orders etc but not Gift Aid rebates



FOR YOUR PRAYERS AS WE APPROACH CHRISTMAS

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A special prayer for the days before Christmas

Dear Lord, as I get immersed in the preparations for Christmas, help me to remember those who simply don't bother because of bereavement or poverty or no nearby relatives and friends.

As I look forwards with joy to celebrating your love in the birth of Jesus help me to remember those who do not recognise your love and to pray for the light of Christ to shine on them.

As I look forward to worshipping with friends help me to pray for those who will attend our services for the first time that they will experience the joy and friendship of those who love you.

COMMITMENT FOR LIFE PRAYER FOR DECEMBER

Generous God,

We look back over the years and give thanks:
for those who have given faithfully year after year
for those who have campaigned fearlessly for justice
for those who have administered resources honestly
and ensured they have gone to those in greatest need.

We look back over the years and give thanks:
for women who have lifted themselves
and their families out of poverty
for children given the chance of education
for young people who have found new meaning in life
for farmers who have learnt new skills
for traders whose businesses have been strengthened.

Generous God,

We look forward into the future.
We do not know what lies ahead;
we are afraid of the damage
that may be done by climate change
or the effects of war or politics or finance.

But we trust you.

We know that this is your world for
which you gave your Son
and you enfold it in your everlasting arms.

A busy person's prayer

Oh Lord,
thou knowest how busy
I must be this day.
If I forget thee,
do not thou forget me.

Sir Jacob Astley

When wrapping gifts

Dear God,
as write on each label,
I hold up to you
each person in turn.
Slowly I ask that
the fire of your love
will burn in them,
and I pray that my gift
will bring them your joy.

As you open your cards

*take time to think of
the senders; what they
have meant to you.*

*Hold them each in
God's presence; thank
God for them as you
hang up the card.*

SERVICES IN DECEMBER

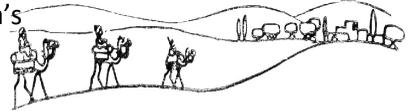
Morning Services at 10.30 unless otherwise stated

2	Holy Communion	Advent Sunday	Revd Roger Whitehead
9	Family Service	Advent 2	Jean Potter
16	Nativity Café Worship	Advent 3	Revd Roger Whitehead
23	Family Service	Advent 4	Revd Roger Whitehead



Other services

- 2 6.30 United Advent Service, St Agatha's
There is no Iona Service this month



Special Christmas Services see page 4

REGULAR CHURCH EVENTS

Tuesdays	2.00 - 4.00	Knit & Chat (4 th and 18 th) #
Thursdays	10.00 - 12.00	Coffee Morning (with a play area for children) §
Fridays	11.30 - 12.30	Prayer Meeting # (not 21 st or 28 th)
	12.30 - 2.00	Bible Study Group (last one 14 th , resumes in New Year) #

§ in the auditorium † in the Strand Hall ✕ Strand Hall lounge # in the foyer

ADDITIONAL MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

(on our premises unless otherwise indicated)



Sat	1	10.00	Table Top Sale § full of Christmas goodies
Tues	4	7.00	Remembering Service (see page 6—Methodist Church)
Wed	5	7.00	Church Outing to Carols Down the Line , Buckfast Station
Fri	7	5.15	CTDD Carols on Lawn and Switching on Town lights (see page 5)
Sun	9	11.30	Street Market: church serving free hot drinks §
Tues	11	10.00	Home Aid Coffee & Cakes for Shelter Box (see page 6) §
Wed	12	12.30	URC Torbay ministers & spouses Xmas meal †
Fri	14	3.45	Messy Church (Methodist Church Hall)
Sat	15	8.30	Men's Breakfast Dawlish Warren (see page 5)



THE STRAND CHURCH



Minister	Revd Roger Whitehead	28 High Street	889 098
Acting Sec	Mrs Jean Potter	1, Ivy Lane, Teignmouth	773856
Treasurer	Mr Rychard Winslade	3 Prospect House East Cliff Road	866 948
Bookings	Mrs Janet Garland	10, Luscombe Terrace	888312

