

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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IVYBRIDGE
METHODIST CHURCH

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So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to **him** who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death.

But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Romans 7 4:6 NIV

Sharing Life
Sharing Faith

From Amanda

Making Christmas Last...



A cartoon in a magazine I recently saw said it all: in the middle of the floor was a dried-up, withered Christmas tree. The calendar on the wall read December 26th. Dad was sitting in his favourite chair with an ice-pack on his head. Mum was looking dishevelled in a bathrobe with her hair in rollers. On the floor was a mountain of torn paper and sweet wrappers and in the background was a table with a thoroughly picked-over turkey still sadly sitting there. The caption simply read, 'The morning after'.

Perhaps some of us are feeling a little bit like this as January approaches. All we want to do is collapse into a heap, after the festivities of the past month. We are tired, and those warm, fuzzy Christmassy feelings of goodwill and peace quickly evaporate. Even as believers, Christmas seems to fail to have a lasting effect on us for the glory of God. Maybe as Christians we are having trouble making Christmas last because just like the hundreds of Christmas trees up and down our nation, we have been cut off from our roots. Celebrating Christmas has become so full of nostalgia, myth and materialism that Christ can be pushed to the side-lines, which can cause our faith to wither, like a dried-up fir tree. As Christians we should not be hostages to nostalgia at Christmas but be partners in keeping the truth of the Nativity Story alive. We are called to bring hope into the hopeless places of our world, light into the dark places of our communities and peace and reconciliation into our places of work, rest and play – all year round.

What I am trying to say is the message of Christmas is not just for Christmas. Emmanuel, God is with us – yesterday, today and tomorrow. Love came down at Christmas, and He stayed and showed us how to live and love, before His ultimate display of love on the cross. Truly, if the birth of Jesus means anything to you in December, it will go on meaning something in January, and February and March...

As a church, let's not get swallowed up by commercialism but truly celebrate the real reason for the season, over and over again. May we be

like those shepherds, willing to drop everything to go and see the Christ-child. May we be like those wise men, prepared to journey to worship the baby. May we be like Simeon and Anna, intent on seeing Jesus laid in our arms and know the fulfilment of our hopes. As we continue into the New Year, with all its opportunities for new starts, may we continue our meditations on what God coming to earth, for you and for me, really means. And may we experience a warm glow of faith in our spirits as we begin to believe that Christmas will last and surely live on in us ...

*Christ's blessings,
Rev Amanda Roper*

There will be a new worship opportunity, on the second Sunday of the month starting in January at 6pm, called '**Be Filled**'.

Alongside worship & teaching on the character and role of **Holy Spirit**, there will be time to simply 'be' in His presence.

Everyone welcome – just come ready to be blessed and discover how to sustain a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life.

For more information, please speak to Amanda.



Special Evening Worship:

We are privileged to welcome
Rev Derek Balsdon, the Development Worker
from **Methodist Evangelicals Together**,
who will be joining us on Sunday 30th January.

Please do come and give him a warm
IMC welcome!



JANUARY 2022

Services



IVYBRIDGE

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| January 2 | 10:30 am | Revd Amanda Roper Covenant Service - an opportunity to recommit to the service of the Lord in the coming year |
| January 9 | 10:30 am | Mrs Jean Walsh |
| | 6:00 pm | Revd Amanda Roper |
| January 16 | 10:30 am | Revd Amanda Roper All Age Service |
| January 23 | 10:30 am | Mr Paul Whitell |
| January 30 | 10:30 am | Revd Amanda Roper |

BITTAFORD

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|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| January 2 | 11:00 am | Revd David Youngs |
| January 9 | 11:00 am | Revd Amanda Roper Covenant Service with Sacrament |
| January 16 | 11:00 am | Local Arrangement |
| January 23 | 11:00 am | Mr Nigel Norris |
| January 30 | 11:00 am | Ms Ann Stevens |



Wise and Wonderful.....

...is a fellowship group, open to all.
We meet from 2.30 to about 4,
on alternate Fridays in term time,
in the hall and café of the Methodist Church.

PROGRAMME

January 7

New Year party
with some easy games and a very nice spread

January 21

Speakers from the Trevi Trust

February 4

Film, with added choc ices

February 18

Culture Day, with our choices of music, poetry and art

March 11

A visit from the Mayor of Ivybridge
Mrs Sara Hladkij

March 25 and April 8: to be confirmed

A NOTE ABOUT MASKS

We'd like you to arrive in a mask, if you can. We'll use the hall as well as the café whenever possible, to create space between us, and we'll do our best with the ventilation.

For more information, please ring one of us:
Judy 894829 Val 893614 Sue 896444
Christine and David 892858 Maureen 945799

We look forward to seeing you

**President Elect and Chair of the Plymouth and Exeter District
Revd Graham Thompson
has called for a day of prayer on 6th January 2022**

Please will you join us in setting aside some time, alone or with others,

- ✝ to pray for all those bereaved by Coronavirus
- ✝ suffering lasting effects of 'long Covid'
- ✝ working in health and other services
- ✝ who have lost their jobs or businesses
- ✝ anxious about the future
- ✝ elected to serve in this and other nations
- ✝ working to find treatments for Covid19
- ✝ without access to vaccines (remembering particularly partners in India)
- ✝ leading our churches to plan mission
- ✝ whose faith is challenged

And so much more!

Please also use the Day of Prayer to ask what you are called to do and be as God's church.

Quiet Morning

Saturday 15th Jan 2022

9.30am – 12.00noon at IMC



On **Saturday 15th January** we are again opening the church for people to spend some quiet time with the Lord.

The morning will offer an opportunity for quiet individual prayer and the hope is that whether you stay for 10 minutes or the whole morning you will feel enabled to spend some time in God's presence and will leave with a sense of His peace in your heart. Various prayer stations will be set up to help you focus on different themes but this is not a 'prayer meeting' it is a time for individual quiet meditation, peace and rest where you are free to just come and 'be'.

Please feel free to bring your own flask of refreshment. We hope you can join us!



DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWS

If you have anything you would like to include in the **Church News** please let Judy know by ringing her on **01752 894829**

Many congratulations to Becca and Sam on the birth of Everly Elizabeth (Evie) on 5th December. Grandparents Nicky and Dave will no doubt be extra busy for a while enjoying their new Granddaughter and keeping Millie busy. We do hope all goes well as you settle into being a family of four and that Evie allows you to get some sleep.



Please continue to Pray for Sally as she battles through her treatment regime and for several others who are in the midst of waiting for results and/or surgery dates and are in a lot of pain.

We do need anyone who has news to share to get in touch - please don't feel uneasy as there is a great deal of encouragement from hearing the peoples good news and the ability to pray for concerns is also welcomed.

After contributing the news section for more years than I care to remember, I wonder if there's anyone who would consider taking it on? It's not an arduous task but with Judy's help and mine I hope someone might feel it's their calling. Thank you. Val

From the Editor

If you would like to include anything in the February **News-letter**, please let me have details by Monday 17th January 2022 in either of the following ways:



- ◆ send it by email to: imc33chris@gmail.com
- ◆ Put it through my letterbox or send it to: 33 Julian Road, Ivybridge. PL21 9BU - please put your name on it

POEMS for FAITH

January, 2022

Bio

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was an Irish poet who in 1923 won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his deeply symbolic and imaginal writings. Though he had a grand and great-grandfather who were Church of Ireland clergymen he became interested in the occult. However, in later years, as a member of the Irish Senate he took a stand in debates for Protestant ideals.

Background

As we are in the season of Epiphany, I have chosen the short, eight-line, poem below. 'The Magi' was composed in 1914 while Yeats was staying in Bloomsbury, London. It pictures the 'kings' continuously travelling from the confusion of Calvary to try and rediscover the satisfying mystery of the Manger scene.

Poem

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depth of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

Yeats W.B., 'And Other Poems' (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916) - Public Domain

Reflection

Which is your most favourite line of the poem and why? Like the Magi, are you fulfilled more by the Manger than the Cross? If so why, if not, why not? Or are both scenes from the life of Christ similarly important to your faith?

Action

- (1) Please pray for the Christians of Latin America and Spain for whom the celebration of Epiphany and 'The Day of the Kings' is of greater importance than Christmas.
- (2) Decide to make more of this season at home by baking an Epiphany Cake and Star biscuits.

Copyright: Mark Roper, December 2021

FAMILY & FRIENDS

Our family has always celebrated Epiphany. The kids loved getting presents again, after all their friends had finished with Christmas! It started in a small way, but grew across the years. I thought I'd share a couple of things we do together, to spark some of your own ideas and creativity!

Firstly, for those not so sure, Epiphany is also known as Three Kings' Day and is a Christian festival which starts on 6 January. It is a special date in the Christmas story as it's when people celebrate how a star led the Magi - also known as the Three kings or the Wise Men - to visit the baby Jesus after He had been born.

'Epiphany' actually comes from the Greek word meaning 'to reveal', as it is when the baby Jesus was 'revealed' to the world (this is why you might hear people say they've had an epiphany, when they've just realised something!).

So what do we do?

Well, we keep all the 'king' figures from our nativity sets and put them out on display. We also have candles in star shapes which we light. And in true Magi fashion, we give presents to each other. Craft ideas abound – there are crowns, camels, kings and stars to make and decorate. Baking is also an important part of the celebration, with star spicy biscuits and an Epiphany Cake that I make each year. What makes this special is hidden inside the cake is a 'feve' – a little figurine or bean, and whoever finds this in their slice of cake becomes king (or queen) for the rest of the day! Our children used to milk this for all it was worth!

Two websites you could check out are:

[15 Ways to Celebrate Epiphany with your Children \(wunder-mom.com\)](https://wunder-mom.com/15-ways-to-celebrate-epiphany-with-your-children/)

[Celebrating the Epiphany With Catholic Kids \(catholicicing.com\)](https://catholicicing.com/celebrating-the-epiphany-with-catholic-kids/)

And if you are a friend of mine of Facebook, last year over lockdown, I uploaded lots of craft ideas and recipes, so you can always check them out!

Happy Epiphany! Amanda



Payday Loans, Cambodia-Style

As Cambodia began to emerge from the deprivation brought upon the country by civil war, genocide and international isolation, various organisations sought to stimulate the economy and improve standards of living by providing so-called microloans. Individuals were able to borrow money easily against collateral in the form of the title deeds of the land on which their homes were built and, in many cases, on which they subsisted by growing rice and keeping a few animals.

Now, what was formerly a humanitarian aid project has become a multi-billion dollar business. Cambodia has the most overindebted microfinance sector in the world. By the end of 2020, the average microloan in Cambodia was nearly four times as large as the median annual income. There are more than 2.7 million microloans spread across Cambodia's 4 million households, and most of these loans are collateralised with borrowers' land titles, putting land ownership at risk.

This means the inability to make microloan repayments can result in coerced land sales, robbing Cambodian families of their most precious asset. Even if a small percentage of loans result in such sales, it will irreparably harm hundreds of thousands of families.

Nilay Pilorge, director of Cambodian human rights organisation LICADHO, claims, 'The big nine banks and microfinance institutions, which together control about 90% of Cambodia's microloan market, collected more interest in 2020 compared to the year before. Eight of the nine posted record profits last year, baffling those of us who were seeing more and more borrowers struggling to repay their debts. While many Cambodians are drowning in debts they cannot afford, their creditors are swimming in cash.'

Cases of coerced land sales, child labour and even debt-driven suicides were documented prior to the pandemic, but they are becoming increasingly frequent as the economic situation deteriorates.

A Better Way?

Cambodian Communities out of Crisis (CCC) has no wish to exacerbate this problem, but we have been seeking the Lord about whether He wants us to make small interest-free loans in order to help a few individuals develop sustainable one-person or one-family businesses. We realise there could be risks: borrowers might not be able to repay their loans; unscrupulous

people might take the money and run. But Jesus did say, 'If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? ... Do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return....'

Our first exploration into this possibility, to assist a disabled television repairer to buy equipment, did not lead to our making a loan to him as his circumstances had changed, but it did give our team the opportunity to visit him and his children (he is a widower), pray for them and make a love gift to them.

Please pray:

- ✠ on the large scale, for a solution to Cambodia's indebtedness problem;
- ✠ on the small scale, for the Lord's leading of CCC as we consider this possibility further, that if this is His will for us He would lead us to people in genuine need whom He wishes to bless in this way.

Myers Cooper



Church Workdays - held on the second Saturday of the month.

We meet from 9.30 to 12 approx. so feel free to come for whatever time you can spare. There is always a break for coffee, cake and fellowship halfway through the morning.



Future dates are: Jan 8th and Feb 12th



As we publish this magazine, things remain uncertain with regards to the Omicron strain of Covid. Please be assured that the stewards at IMC will be working hard to keep you as safe as possible when you come into the church building, and will keep you up-to-date with the latest advice and guidelines. For now, we remind you that it is mandatory to wear masks inside, and would encourage you to keep the masks on even during singing. Please do not congregate together in groups, and do dress warmly, due to the increased ventilation that is required.

Church Contacts

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Visit our website at

www.ivybridgemethodistchurch.co.uk

where you can see a **colour version** of this Newsletter.

If you wish to contact Tony regarding the website you can do so at

mrmerrit@icloud.com