

**The Link Magazine****Dec 2020 & Jan 2021**

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[sbpearson@gmail.com](mailto:sbpearson@gmail.com)**MINISTER'S LETTER**

Dear friends,

As we begin to turn our minds towards Christmas, I find myself recalling some of the things I said in my one of my first ever sermons. That sermon, focused on “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus Christ remains the same – Emmanuel, God with us. I spoke about how this can be both a comfort and an encouragement. God with us in the midst of the new; of change, of uncertainty, of excitement. God with us; showing us God’s love, working out God’s purposes, establishing the kingdom.

I also spoke of how one of characteristics of Jesus is to constantly reveal more of God’s love and nature to us. This means that we should expect to be surprised by Jesus, to be challenged by him as he leads us to see God’s ways in new places and changing circumstances. This is part of who he is.

It seems to me this is true even from the moment of his birth. Will the king and wise men accept that God is to be found outside the palace and with common people? Will the religious folk recognise God is not just within the temple but is at home in a borrowed room?

It is true even from before his birth. Can Mary accept she has been chosen as the one to bear God’s Son? Will Joseph believe that God can and would do such a thing?

So as we prepare once more to celebrate Christmas and the birth of Emmanuel, God with us, let us find comfort and encouragement that God chooses to dwell with us and faithfully remains with us. But let us also be prepared to be challenged and surprised at how and where God is revealed and what God would have us do.

Every blessing,

**Tanya**



Let the picture of Baby Jesus in the manger give us a message

That worldly things are not important.

What matters most is the richness that we have in our hearts.

Have a meaningful Christmas.

Wishing you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas time,

Rev Tanya

# CHRISTMAS AT LIDGETT PARK & SHADWELL METHODIST CHURCHES

## Messy Christmas

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December – For further details contact Mo Onyett -  
[mo.oneyett@gmail.com](mailto:mo.oneyett@gmail.com)

## Circuit Carol Service

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December You tube – 4pm

## Christmas Eve – Rev Tanya Short

'Angels at Christmas' 4.30pm via zoom. To receive an activity pack that goes with this act of worship contact Rev Tanya 01132666791 or  
[tanya.short65@gmail.com](mailto:tanya.short65@gmail.com)

Zoom code:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82542825505?  
 pwd=TWlvTFdBeEVKK2RQY05lcGVtNzR0dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82542825505?pwd=TWlvTFdBeEVKK2RQY05lcGVtNzR0dz09)

Meeting ID: 825 4282 5505

Passcode: 254128

## Christmas Day – Rev Tanya Short

Worship at Shadwell Methodist Church at 9.30am (if Government regulations allow, please book your place with Emeila Peterson 01132892147)

Worship 11am at Lidgett Park and on Zoom (if Government regulations allow, please book your place with Howard Clinkard 01132672986)

Zoom code:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81601795102?  
 pwd=SlRmSVYwUGZjVFRLVjE0QjZnWTJTQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81601795102?pwd=SlRmSVYwUGZjVFRLVjE0QjZnWTJTQT09)

Meeting ID: 816 0179 5102

Passcode: 241710

## Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December – Rev Tanya Short

Worship on zoom 11am

Zoom code:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85795127971?  
pwd=L0paNlppWUpVK1FpNXg1VG1HT2NzQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85795127971?pwd=L0paNlppWUpVK1FpNXg1VG1HT2NzQT09)

Meeting ID: 857 9512 7971

Passcode: 152483

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

***Every blessing Tanya***

## **PRAYER FOR CHANGE**

*This prayer also appears in the magazines of our covenanting churches, St Edmund's and St Andrew's.*

Eternal God,

As we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus we do so in circumstances that are very different from those we have become used to. We miss our family and friends and the social gathering. Many of us have the worry of loss of livelihood and the memory of lost loved ones. Many are suffering from anxiety, depression and loneliness.

Help us in all this to remember the positive things we have learned and experienced: the importance of care for others; the kindness of strangers; a new appreciation of our planet and our responsibility to your creation; new ways of living and relating.

We don't know what the coming year will bring but help us to remember that in Jesus we have Emmanuel, God with us. And we have the promise of Jesus that he will be with us until the end of the age.

**Amen**

## DOING DECEMBER DIFFERENTLY.....

Maybe, like me, you have reached December thinking – how can this have arrived so soon? And why do I always let myself get stressed? This year we know that we will be doing December differently, and with that brings many differing emotions, let us not think what we can't do, but what we can do....

Advent is a season that I love and every year it offers its own gifts. This year we may have to actively look harder in finding them, but they are there, and we can share in the joy and hope together.

Here are a few ideas to help us receive these precious gifts, and maybe help us find a way to do Advent and Christmas differently. They are both playful and serious, stressing the Advent themes of day-by-day waiting, watching, and preparation.

Why not put the tree up early, but leave it bare for as long as possible! The undecorated tree is a visual clue of something unfinished, of something yet to come.

Remember darkness and light are Advent gifts. Take time to appreciate this dark time of the year – light an advent candle in your prayer time, be still, take time, become aware of your breath, use an Advent prayer 'Come Lord Jesus', or wrap up and stand outside and look up at the stars.

Advent calendars are not just for children. Create a blank calendar and draw or doodle each day – a word, a prayer for yourself or others, an image of the season, these ideas are borrowed from Sybil MacBeth <http://prayingincolor.com/>

Practice a random act of kindness for someone, or put aside some money for a charity.

Join in with our Circuit journey through Advent, everyone will receive their very own circuit booklet (coming out later in November) with daily advent reflections written by Local Preachers and staff, and also included is a Sunday advent liturgy, crafts and recipes! You could also deepen your advent journey further and purchase the book 'At Home in Advent: A domestic journey from Advent to Epiphany' by Gordon Giles and join in our weekly discussions.

May the gifts of Advent bless you into the joy of Christmas.

***Every blessing, Tanya***

## **THE SHEPHERD'S CAROL by JAMES NASH**

It seems with each Christmas that comes around  
 God has some changes for my body planned,  
 And everything I do comes with a sound,  
 A sighing when I sit, exhaling when I stand.  
 My joints creak now on winter nights,  
 When memories stir in my heart once more;  
 We came from the hills to a sky of lights  
 And I knelt on the snow in reverent awe.  
 So baby, lying in the manger there,  
 It's as if each year you're born anew,  
 This old man offers these sounds as prayer,  
 Dedicates each ache and pain to you.  
 You'll surely not remember who I am,  
 I was the shepherd boy who brought the lamb.

### **SREEPUR VILLAGE.**

During the last 12 months the Lidgett Park community has raised a most generous £14000 for two Charities: Oasis Relief and Sreepur Village in Bangladesh. It is wonderful that £7000 will go to each charity. On behalf of the Sreepur organisers I want to thank our community and also confirm that despite the pandemic the Village continues to care for destitute mothers and their children.

At present there are 100 mothers and 300 children in the village. This is the story of Julie who was 14 years old when she arrived at the Village with her 10 month old baby on June 28<sup>th</sup> this year.

Julie is speech impaired, her mother left when she was a young child and she was looked after by her father until he died. Julie's older sister took her in but insisted that Julie find work. She could not find any employment so began begging. Julie was raped and at the birth of the baby was looked after by The Danish Leprosy Mission who then contacted Sreepur Village because Julie had no

home or support. Sreepur Village is the only charity in the country which enables mothers to keep their children.

When Julie and her baby arrived at the Village they were quarantined for 2 weeks and out in time to celebrate Eid. As part of the celebrations all the mothers and children were given a chocolate which given the temperature had to be served straight from the freezer.

Like all the mothers in the village Julie will be taught how to care for her daughter and also receive education and training so that in 3 years she will be ready to become independent with help from the village.

Thank you Lidgett people for your generosity and support of Oasis and Sreepur Village. On the Sreepur Village website you can find reports and happy photos of smiling mothers and children.

***Jan Rippin***

## **LIDGETT PARK LADIES' GROUP**

We should now be in the midst of preparing for our Carol Service. Sadly, that's not going to happen this year. However, as we look forward optimistically to a Happier New Year, Anne and Lynne would like to send:

Love & Warmest Christmas Greetings to Everyone

***Lynne & Anne***

## **JOSEPH**

At this time of year (in normal times) our thoughts turn to the Christmas story and we sing about Mary, Baby Jesus, kings, shepherds and angels. One person is rarely mentioned, Joseph,

who played such an important role in the life of Jesus. Joseph who spoke with an angel, who led the way to Bethlehem, who saved the baby's life in a flight to Egypt and who taught Jesus the craft of carpentry in order to earn a living.

The late Jake Thackray wrote a tribute to Joseph and I have tried to transcribe it here but it's just not the same without Jake's voice and the lovely music.

Joseph Joseph in your cattle stall  
 Joseph Joseph what do you make of it all?  
 You and your working man's hands and your wrinkled eyes  
 How come that you understand, how come so wise?  
 How come that you show no surprise when all around the snowy  
 ground is golden tonight  
 This frosty night

How come that you know just who the baby is this winter  
 midnight?  
 Joseph Joseph what do you make of it all?  
 Do you know these three kings just who they are?  
 Caspar and Melchior and Balthazar  
 Do you know why they came so far or even why the air is full of  
 angels tonight  
 This frosty night?

And why your head is full of music this winter midnight?  
 Joseph Joseph what do you make of it all?  
 You were so true for so long, so unafraid  
 But nobody sings you any songs no serenades  
 And though your face is old and pale  
 Yet I for one will keep you in my mind's eye tonight  
 This frosty night

You're just the man I want to remember on this winter midnight  
 Joseph Joseph what do you make of it all?

***Barbara Holmes with thanks to Jake***

## **THE CHURCH'S FINANCES**

The financial year for the church ends on 31 August each year. The church accounts are normally reported as part of the General Church Meeting in April or May of the following year. However, in view of the financial challenges arising from the consequences of the covid 19 epidemic we thought that we should give a high-level report on the financial position of the Church at the end of the last financial year (August 2020)

### **Income**

We are so pleased and grateful that giving by church members has continued at the level we had expected even though the church was closed for services for five months. This means that gift aid has also continued at the level we expected. Income from property lettings was one third less than we had included in the budget as many property users were unable to use our premises.

### **Expenditure**

Most of our expenditure is fixed. We were able to make some small reductions in repairs and maintenance expenditure and we reduced by half our giving to local and national charities. Even with this, we have given £6200 to these charities over the last financial year, in addition to £14,000 to the Church Project charities

### **Overall**

We had a small surplus at the end of the last financial year. Thank you all very much.

It is difficult to be sure about what will happen financially over the current financial year. The new lockdown will affect our income from property lettings again as there are limitations on who can use our property. We hope that giving by church members and friends will continue as it has over the last financial year even when services are not able to be held in church. If this happens, we hope that we will only have a small deficit at the end of August 2021

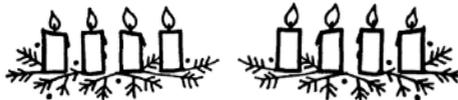
## The Church Projects

What is amazing is the way that support for and giving to the church project has held up over the just completed financial year. Fund raising activities have continued despite the lock down. We are now able to give £7000 to Sreepur Village in Bangladesh and £7000 to Oasis Relief in Zambia and Alan will arrange this. Thank you to the Project Group who have organised the fund-raising activities and all who have contributed

***Graham Saunders, Chairman of the Finance Committee***

***Alan Wittrick, Church Treasurer***

## At Home in Advent: A domestic journey from Advent to Epiphany'



Join me as we travel together as we explore Gordon Giles's book and take a journey through Advent to Christmas and beyond in the company of familiar seasonal and domestic objects and experiences. Focusing on the everyday stuff we typically associate with this time of year, including some things not so festive, he reflects on their spiritual significance, meaning and message in today's world. Beginning with chapters on journeying and travel, the book moves through major Advent themes of expectation, waiting, mortality and hope to the joy of incarnation and salvation. Buy Gordon Giles and join in our weekly discussions.

**This book is available on all online bookshops – order it now it time for Advent!**

The reading of these daily reflections will be accompanied by zoom discussion groups on the following dates and times:

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December @ 7.30pm – Discussing the first 5 days**

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December @ 2pm – Discussing Week 2.**

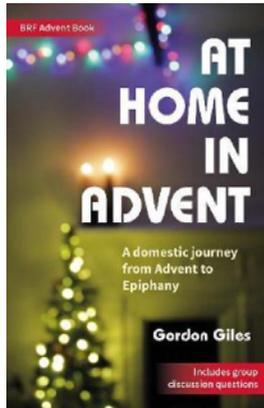
**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December @ 10am – Discussing Weeks 3 & 4**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January @ 7.30pm – Discussing Week 5**

For further information and zoom codes contact Rev Tanya Short  
01132666791 Or [tanya.short65@gmail.com](mailto:tanya.short65@gmail.com)

May the gifts of Advent bless you into the joy of Christmas.

***Tanya***



## **ADVENT 2020**

What have the Big Lunch, Advent and Covid19 in common? Ten years ago the people of Gledhow Wood Grove joined in the national celebration of The Big Lunch – a movement aimed at getting neighbours together by eating a meal together. Our road is divide into three blocks with no vehicular access at the bottom end. Arrangements were made with the City Council to close the middle part of the road to traffic for a limited period on a Sunday in June. Working parties met to make bunting which was strung across the street at first floor level, tables were set up down the middle of the road and filled with food and drink from everyone and people brought out their garden furniture. A couple of local bands played

throughout the afternoon and lunchtime extended into the evening. Neighbours met, talked and got to know each other, or met for the first time. The event proved to be so popular it became an annual event to be planned and looked forward to and enjoyed each year. Tables from Lidgett Park were borrowed for a donation for many years and the Tenth Anniversary was to be a Big Event but then ..... Covid-19 and lock down.

But it went ahead in a different form. The day was beautiful and warm. We had a street quiz. People were asked to put a display of a film title in their front window/ garden and to set a question about the street, or general knowledge. These displays were set up by 10.00am and the answers would be posted at each site after 4.00pm. People ate their lunches in their front gardens at 1.00pm. Social distancing was observed at all times and the atmosphere was relaxed, friendly and good humoured as neighbours walked around trying to work out The Jungle Book, The 10 Commandments, Pirates of the Caribbean, ET, etc..

The Big Lunch has spawned several other events over the years and one of the earliest and popular being carol singing up and down the street on a Sunday evening in December. This ended with mince pies and mulled wine initially in someone's house. This changed over the years to meeting in the Gledhow Social Club at the bottom of the street. Anticipating carol singing would be banned this year hasn't stopped the ideas flowing: the organisers asked for 24 households to become an Advent Calendar. Lots have been drawn for dates for volunteers to put up their display on their particular day. There will be a lot of walking up and down the road in December – and into the Twelve Days of Christmas also?

Remember playing in the street when we were young? That is something that has been resurrected in Gledhow Wood Grove brought about by the Big Lunch. Until we had the first lunch I don't think anyone in the street realised just how many children live in the street. You hardly ever see any youngsters walking up and down – but playing never. After seeing children enjoying themselves in the street some mums got together and organised closing the part of road where the party is held for two hours a day after school three times a year. This is always popular and the road is covered in chalk markings until the rain washes it clean. Something else which has been missing this year for on the only day possible avoiding lock down – it rained!

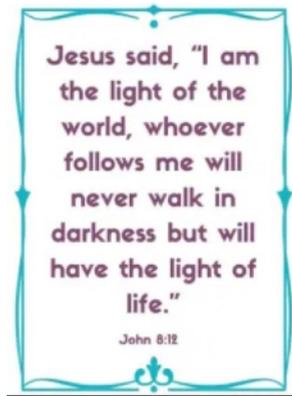
So neighbourliness is what the Big Lunch, Covid-19 and Advent have in common. Neighbourliness encompassing watching out for each other as so many people have been doing this year. May we live in anticipation and love throughout Advent for the continued coming of Love into the world. May we see and feel this goodness and blessing throughout 2021. The best of all is God is with us.

***Peter Harper***

## **GRACE**

Grace tells us that we are accepted just as we are. We may not be the kind of people we want to be, we may be a long way from our goals, we may have more failures than achievements, we may not be wealthy or powerful or spiritual, we may not even be happy, but we are nonetheless accepted by God, held in His hands.

***McCullough***



Christmas Greetings  
From  
Lidgett Park and  
Shadwell Methodist  
Churches



Keep safe

The coming year  
is in the hands of  
God



And I am with you  
to the end of the age.  
(Matt 28:20)

We join in wishing all our friends a  
peaceful Christmas and hope for the  
New Year.

**Anne Millet**

**Alan & Sue Wittrick**

**Barbara Holmes**

**Barbara Belsham**

**Betty Ashton**

**Chris & Maureen Tear**

**Dave & Margaret Farrar**

**Gerry & Margaret Leake**

**Howard & Judith Clinkard**

**Jackie Bennett**

**Peter Bennett**

**Jan Sanders**

**Jean & Crosbie Cain**

**Joan Roberts**

**John & Margaret Summerwill**

**Colin Watson**

**John Sadler**

**Joyce & Garth White**

**Karen, Robin & Lindsay  
Illingworth**

**Charles Yewdall**

**Kathy Benson**

**Malcolm & Janet Speed**

**Margaret Lee**

**Pat & Paul Nolan**

**Patricia & Graham Davies**

**Peter & Vivian Harper**

**Roger & Margaret Orchard**

**Ruth & Gary Albiges**

**Stan & Liz Pearson**

**Val Faint**

**Daphne Barton**

**Dorothy & Catherine Carr  
Heather & Geoffrey Fry  
John & Barble Witt**

## 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Nun's Prayer

Lord thou knowest better than I know myself

that I am growing older and will some day be old.

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something

on every subject and every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody: helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity

not to use it at all, but Thou knowest Lord

that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details;

give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains.

They are increasing and love of rehearsing them

is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains,

but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory but for a growing humility,

and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memory of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint-some of them are hard to live with-

but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places  
and talents in unexpected people.

And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. Amen

***Anonymous ( found in Rochester Cathedral)***

## **PROJECT NEWS. DECEMBER 2020.**

When you read this, those of you who ordered Christmas cakes and baking from our November list will have received them – and, we hope, are enjoying them!

We are delighted to have Wendy Taylor joining our group of bakers and appreciate her kindness in offering to help.

As we move into December and what would normally be a time for church celebrations and family get-togethers, we are still uncertain about what form Christmas will take this year. But we hope that receiving the baking from your friends on the Project Group will have brought some cheer and a friendly chat on the doorstep from the person who delivered it.

Post – Christmas in normal times can sometimes feel a bit blue and we usually offer a church lunch of bangers and mash and a nice hot pudding. That won't happen next January, of course, but we are hoping to offer a delicious alternative for you to eat at home, along with some of our usual baking. We will be finalizing this in December and will let you know all about it in the usual various ways.

Our thanks go to church members who have kindly donated to the Project through the communal Christmas card in the Link and to Val Faint, whose idea it was. We are always happy to receive different ideas and ways to raise money from any of you, especially in these difficult times.

As I write, I am unaware of the amount raised by our current baking list but will put a note in the weekly notices before December.

On behalf of the Project Group, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas along with the hope that 2021 will see a start to a more normal life and a return to Church services and events that we have all missed so much.

Thank you.

***Margaret Farrar.***

***On behalf of the Project Group.***

## **SOME REFLECTIONS ON OUR SOCIETY**

During the initial Lockdown in March I started listening to the Podcasts from The Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Part 2 of the enquiry which is mainly to enquire into how the refurbishment of the block was undertaken started in January 2020. It may seem an odd podcast to listen to, but for me it has become important to listen to it each week. Sometimes I have listened to it twice. I will try and explain why.

There were 17 organisations involved in the refurbishment, from the architects, main builders, various subcontractors, clerk of works, cladding specialist, fire safety consultants, various suppliers, the Tenant Management Organisation and the LA building control department. Since January they have all given their evidence. Only the LA building control department and one of the material suppliers accepted any responsibility for doing something wrong.

A thread rang through the evidence, it was someone else's responsibility to check something, or they didn't have the qualifications, they thought X was doing that, or they didn't have

the time to read a report, they didn't have expertise doing this kind of project, it wasn't necessary to do something. None of them accepted cost cutting but the budget was not big enough to cover the lowest estimate of costs. Consequently they had used cheaper materials.

I won't anticipate the findings but the 2 expert independent witnesses, one in fire safety and one in building control, were scathing of many things, materials, construction and lack of management and control. It didn't appear to me as a lay person that any of the 17 organisations came out of this part of the enquiry well.

So why am I writing about this in The Link? I am sure there are things in my working life I could have done better but many of us at Church are now retired. I believe that people in work currently face many more pressures. Time pressures, pressures to cut corners, pressures to present reports or issues in a certain way, financial pressures to cut costs in their organisation etc. The statistics showing how many people present false CVs are surprisingly high.

Wherever we come across family members, friends, former colleagues or acquaintances I think we need to support them to make good choices of how they operate at work. It could make a difference.

It also links with a book I have been reading by Reni Eddo-Lodge, "Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race." The book asks us to look honestly at some of the many ways in which we as individuals and as a society are racist. I have found it a challenging read.

It ties in well with part of the Grenfell enquiry as one of the groups of residents and bereaved families represented at the enquiry, is asking the enquiry to make findings that the shortcomings in the

refurbishment would not have happened if the flats had been mainly occupied by white people.

Together with the police killings in the US and the Black Lives Matter movement I have found there has been quite a lot to occupy my thoughts this year apart from coronavirus.

***Sue Wittrick***

### **PUT YOUR HAND INTO THE HAND OF GOD**

*Three Years ago, **Tom Alexander** wrote a piece for the Link. We face a time of uncertainty and doubt as we approach the New Year. This extract of Tom's article seemed appropriate to me as we face the unknown of 2021. Ed.*

Psalm 43 is the prayer of an exile who asks God these questions: 'Why have you abandoned me?' The exile then poses these questions: 'Why am I so sad?' 'Why am I so troubled?' And in response says: 'I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my saviour and my God'.

At the end of his Christmas Message in 1939, King George VI said: "A new year is at hand. We cannot tell what it will bring. If it brings peace how thankful we shall all be. If it brings continued struggle, we shall remain undaunted". Then he quoted these words from the poem 'God Knows' by Minnie Louise Haskins, 'I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown". And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way".' Like the psalmist the King turned to God to send light and truth to lead him forward.