

Christ Church

New Southgate & Friern Barnet
(Baptist/United Reformed)

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023

ISSUE 316

www.christchurchnsfb.org



DIARY FOR DECEMBER 2023

- Sat. 2nd 10.00a.m. ADVENT CRAFT CAFE
to Noon
- Sun. 3rd 9.00 a.m. TOAST – Prayer Meeting in Parlour
1st Sunday in Advent – Rev. Ruth Moriarty
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship, Communion & Junior Church
- Tues. 5th 4.15 p.m. Rainbows (Tuesdays until 12/12/23)
5.45 p.m. Brownies (“ “ 5/12/23)
7.15 p.m. Guides (“ “ 5/12/23)
- Sun. 10th TOY SERVICE with Nativity
2nd Sunday in Advent - Rev. Ruth Moriarty
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship – All Age Service
- Wed. 13th 8.00 p.m. Premises Group Meeting at The Manse
- Thurs. 14th 2.00 p.m. Women’s Club in Parlour
- Sun. 17th 3rd Sunday in Advent - Rev. Ruth Moriarty
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship, Communion & Junior Church
4.00 p.m. CAROLS by CANDLELIGHT
- Sun. 24th 4th Sunday in Advent - Rev. Ruth Moriarty
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship & Communion – All Age
t to 11.45 a.m.
4.00 p.m. CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
to 4.45 p.m.
- Mon. 25th 11.00 a.m. CHRISTMAS DAY
to 11.45 a.m. CELEBRATION SERVICE
- Sun. 31st Rev. Ruth Moriarty
11.00 a.m. Morning Worship – All Age Service

PASTORAL LETTER

Has Christmas started for you yet? As I write this I have been rewording and checking emails to send out from my business for Christmas, I am looking forward to my first Christmas dinner of the season, on the 4th December. People are talking about putting up decorations early, it seems like we want to fill ourselves with the warmth of friendship, the joy of twinkling lights, the feel of light in the dark, a bit earlier this year.

Is it because the news is so difficult to watch and listen to? Israel and Gaza, where tens of thousands are dying, and there is a tentative hold on the truce that is allowing hostage release and prisoner exchanges. The Ukraine war that has so far lasted 645 days with no end in sight. The COVID inquiry where we are finding out what was going on in Government during the Pandemic. The Climate Crisis, where new records of excess heat or weather seem to be broken daily, the cost-of-living Crisis with food banks in wider use than ever before... it all seems too much.

But...

The traditional Christmas story takes place at night. Mary and Joseph arrive in Bethlehem late and all the rooms are taken. We can imagine the scene taking place today with 'No vacancy' signs on all the hotels and B&B's. We see what is happening in our world. The bombings, shootings, the arguing in our government, neighbour against neighbour, it seems as if the whole world has a large bright red 'No vacancy' sign flashing to the heavens while the world remains dark.

There was no room for the parents of Jesus at the inns in Bethlehem, but they found a place anyway.

On that dark night long ago, God found a place to be born anyway. Like that night long ago, God today will still find a way past all the world's attempts to keep him out. I believe that is a good message for Christmas 2023. The dark does not triumph, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.' (GNB - John 1:5).

I like to note here that it has never been put out – past, present and future all wrapped up in one!.

Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Sent by his Father, he came as human, as a message of 'good news' and light into a world of darkness. Despite all of the passing time and changes, we are again in the midst of darkness revealed by senseless wars, economic hard times, political deadlock, and spiritual coldness. We need the light, a word of positive, good news to give us hope and faith. So, Christmas must be an everyday renewal. I have a small piece of tinsel in my purse as a reminder that Christmas – Jesus - is here for us every day of the year. This act of unwavering love has to give meaning to life afresh every day.

My hope and prayer for us is that God will find many hearts for the Christ child to be born into anew, and the goodness we see in one another at Christmas will continue through all the days to come.

Amen

Diana Bensted

FAMILY NEWS

At this time of year, we remember all our Church Members and their families and all other friends who are unwell. We think of all who are coping with long term illnesses and injuries and those finding things so difficult in so many ways. Lord, we remember them all in our prayers.

It is good to keep in touch and catch up with friends and a quick phone call or letter will be much appreciated, especially at this time of year.

Lord, we think of all who have been bereaved and pray for all who mourn the loss of family members or friends.

We continue to think of all those around the world who are suffering and living through so many major disasters, wars and other problems. They remain in our prayers in these difficult times.

CHRISTMAS REMINDERS

You are welcome to come to our Christmas Craft Café on Saturday the 2nd December, where kids and adults have opportunity to make Christmas decorations and share festive refreshments together.

This year we can share Christmas joy with local families via New Southgate Family Resource Centre. Please bring new or gently used toys to our Toy Service on Sunday 10th December.

The Centre look after a number of children who may be fostered or unlikely to receive toys for Christmas and we hope to collect as many new, or looks like new, toys or books. Sue and Jane have agreed to deliver them to the Centre. Thank you.

We are collecting donations for families who are struggling to buy food at Christmas. There are envelopes in Church, or you can use your own envelope, marked “Christmas Appeal”. We hope to buy as many £20 vouchers or Gift Cards from Tesco as possible.

I know everyone is finding things hard but the Centre knows which families are most in need. If you want to put the money into the Church Bank Account- you can, so long as it indicates that it is for “Christmas Appeal”.

We are collecting from start of December until Sunday 17th December after the Carol Service, giving us time to deliver before Christmas.

The delight of Christmas is singing carols by candlelight, making Christingles with oranges and sweets and hearing again the beautiful story of Jesus being born into this world.

Please do join us celebrating God’s love at Christmas on Sunday 17th, Sunday 24th and Monday 25th December. (see Diary above).

Happy Christmas everyone, may it bring you Joy and Peace. Hope you all have a well blessed New Year!

Anthea Denham

CHURCH MEETING NOTES

Meeting held after service on Sunday 26th November 2023.
13 Attendees, including 2 Non-Members – No Apologies.
Minutes of the short meeting held on 24th September '23 agreed.

Diana, Church Treasurer, reported that it has been decided not to move the Church Bank account to Metro Bank as they will be charging £5 per person per month to use the Online facility. Email received saying they will close account in January. We have raised a complaint.

It is felt we should have an extra person able to operate our Barclays Online facility. Anne and Jane might be candidates.

Diana is making headway using “Xero” bookkeeping package.

Safeguarding

Ola discussed the Safeguarding Policy.
She is Co-ordinator and trustee and Clare is the Deputy.
All are responsible to look after one another.
We are following the URC guide lines – Based on new Good Practice 6 booklet, which is more user friendly. The policy should be reviewed annually.

Topics include Preventing abuse (excluding someone is included in abuse) and Misuse of power.

If you are concerned then you should share with Ola or Clare.
As policy will be online not putting numbers on but generic email addresses.

Additions include Child sexual exploitation, self-harm and discriminatory abuse - for various reasons (hate crime).
Online abuse also covers email, mobile, social media etc.
None of this is easy but if you are concerned, do not turn a blind eye.

Remember Bullying and harassment and the need to be mindful and gentle when asking people to do things.

Be aware of financial abuse.

If you suspect or something is disclosed - do not judge, just record what happened or was said. You must report within 24 hours.

There is a Form to record

If anything reported to social services should report to safeguarding.

Questions were asked re number of adults with Junior Church and taking children to toilet - there is a table in policy.

Regular Pastoral visits should be agreed with Minister.

Be careful when visiting on behalf of Church to protect yourself.

If have a known offender in church ask for information- welcome them but also need to be careful and children come first.

Remember to be aware and the need to have records.

We all need some safeguarding training re children and vulnerable adults – online training is now available.

Current DBS checks needed on everyone who works with Junior Church, an application and references. Checks made as best we can.

Policy discussed at Deacons and recommended to Members for approval, who confirmed updates.

GDPR Policy

Whilst same as before, the only changes are to make more generic. The only data we hold is name, address and church membership - this makes this sensitive data.

We deleted -The example of parent toddler group - just strives to community.

Training originally said we will provide general training and we will review training needs.

This data is special category
So, in section 5 - we have added what data we have.

Ruth does not hold notes on pastoral discussions

Members and attendees list mentioned in other places -
Written permission to have data.

Ruth will not do a named prayer if the person has not given explicit agreement for this. Comment made that the Minister needs a very good memory.

Members asked if they were happy with policy – Voted unanimously.

Communion

A lot of you help serve
How to keep more similar

Come up, take bread and tongs and give bread to those with hands out -
actively asking.

Wait at back until both finished. Come up together, then sit.

Same for wine.

Stay on stage for prayer.

Help to collect glasses in last hymn.

AOB

Question asked re Grove Road Christian Centre.

Still standing and still with National Planning Inspector - We Wait!

Premises group have asked glaziers to mend windows.

Site looks tired.

Good to pray for building security and confidence in our mission here.

Ruth closed in prayer

(No church meeting in December - Christmas Eve).

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

It had been a truly long year for many people. Darkness descended in many ways via natural disasters, war, conflict, illness, or loss. Many of those affected are still wondering if there will ever be any light at the end of the tunnel. I pray for divine help for them. May Jesus Christ, the light of the world uplifts them and be reminded that no darkness can overcome his light.

Christmas is upon us again when we will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. His light continues to shine brightly through the darkness of war, conflict, loss, illness, fear, or sadness. We only need to trust Him and to believe so. May the light of Jesus shine brightly in our lives through this Advent and Christmas. **Amen.**

Isaiah 9:2 (NIV)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

John 1:4-5 (NIV)

In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Happy, Bright & Blessed Christmas Everyone

Ola Lawal

