



DECEMBER 2025/JANUARY 2026

ISSUE NO 211

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM REV DAVID JEBB

A CHRISTMAS OF JOY & A NEW YEAR OF HOPE

To all our beloved members and friends across the St. Albans & Welwyn Methodist Circuit,

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, our hearts are drawn once more towards the wonder of Christmas. It is with immense joy and deep gratitude that we extend our warmest greetings to you and your families for this blessed season, and for the New Year that is soon to dawn.

This is a time for celebration—a time to cherish the warmth of family, the comfort of familiar carols, and the joy of giving. Let our homes be filled with light and our tables with laughter. Yet, in the midst of our festive gatherings, let us also pause to remember the glorious reason for our celebration.



The heart of Christmas is not found in the tinsel or the gifts, but in a humble manger, where the divine entered our human story. The Apostle Paul captures the profound truth of this event:

“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” (Philippians 2:6-7)

This single, powerful verse captures the essence of our hope. **Immanuel—God with us.** He is with us in our joys and our sorrows, in our strength and in our weariness. The birth of Jesus Christ is the ultimate demonstration of God’s love—a love that chose to share our journey, to bear our burdens, and to offer us the gift of salvation and eternal life.

This is the true light that the darkness can never overcome.

As we step from Christmas into the promise of 2026, we do so carrying this light within us. The New Year stretches before us like an unopened gift, filled with potential and guided by God’s faithful hand. Let us move forward not with anxiety, but with expectant faith, trusting that the God who came to be with us will never leave us.

May this Christmas fill your heart with the profound peace and joy that only Christ can give. And may the coming year be one of spiritual growth, deepened fellowship, and renewed purpose as we continue to serve our communities together in His name.

With every blessing for a Christ-centred Christmas

and a peaceful New Year In His Service,

Revd David Jebb

THE REVEREND PETER HUDSON

Rev Rosemary Fletcher, our former Circuit Superintendent, has sent us copies of tributes paid to Rev Peter at the Thanksgiving service for his life. If you would like copies of the full tributes, please email news@methodistreporter.org.uk and we will be pleased to send them to you.



The congregation learnt from Rosemary that she first heard of Peter through her parents who lived in Watford and who were very fond of him. When Peter first retired to St Albans he used to preach a lot on the Watford Circuit plan and especially at her parents' church of Trinity Methodist Church, where Peter's preaching is remembered by members there as being thoughtful and stimulating. She said "For me personally Peter was an unfailingly supportive colleague and he and Celia soon became dear friends, and Peter's wisdom and graciousness became apparent to me very early on in my time at MRMCMC." She described his involvement in and support for many initiatives – the God in Love discussions, the Book Club, Bible Study sessions, Holiday at Home, Pastoral care, and All We Can. He enjoyed being the Free Church Chaplain at the Abbey, and was a key figure in developing the ecumenical link with St Peter's Anglican Church. Rosemary said, "Peter is remembered for his kindness, his graciousness and his wisdom. He was calm and patient. His opinions were always considered, and he had a very gentle approach."

Canon Margaret Tinsley of St Peter's also paid tribute to Peter, and the enthusiasm he brought to the ecumenical link, and being able to preside at Holy Communion. She finished her tribute by saying, "In the last few months, I've had the privilege of visiting Peter in his house and taking Holy Communion to him and Celia - a real honour, especially as they were so welcoming and grateful. Although he was bedridden, Peter's character shone out: always gracious, thankful, ready to partake in spite of his illness. It is a great joy that I have known and been able to share some aspects of ministry with Peter."

You can view Peter's thanksgiving service here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDt7BSri9U4>, and do please let us know if you would like copies of the full tributes.

AN APOLOGY

In last month's Reporter I wrote about happily meeting Rev Nick Thomson recently. I said that Nick was minister at Digswell Village Church, Ludwick Way, Oxlease and Birchwood about 25 years ago. I have now been corrected by Rosemary Fletcher who wrote to me, "Nick was only Minister of Digswell LEP and Panshanger, from 1992-1998. Different world then!"

DIANA HOLT

NEWS FROM THE CIRCUIT

SATURDAY MORNING PRAYER

You are warmly invited to join our weekly prayer group for a time of reflection and prayers every Saturday morning. These 45-minute gatherings are lovingly led by a dedicated team of ministers, lay preachers, and other friends, What began as a local gathering has blossomed into a beautiful, global community. We are truly blessed to be joined regularly by brothers and sisters in Christ from our church, across our circuit, throughout the country, and even from as far away as **South Africa and New Zealand**.

All are welcome to this special time of shared prayer. We look forward to connecting with you and supporting one another in faith.

We are pleased to share our schedule of prayer leaders for the coming months (December & January) listed below for you.

We gather online every Saturday at 9:00am on Zoom. Please advise the Circuit Office if you wish to be sent the link. A reminder will be communicated by our Circuit Administrator on the Thursday prior.

SATURDAY MORNING PRAYER LEADERS

December 2025 - 9am to 9:45am

6th December - Revd Dr David Jebb

13th December - Jean Owen

20th December - Revd Daniel Yovan

January 2026 - 9am to 9:45am

10th January - Deacon Nigel Perrott

17th January - Diana Holt

24th January - Jenet Jebb

31st January- Revd Rosemary Mutopo

**New Themed Preaching Series
at St. John's Methodist Church in Potters Bar
'HOPE FOR A WEARY WORLD'**

In a world weighed down by uncertainty, conflict, and fatigue, our hearts long for something sure and lasting, something that carries us through the storms of life.

This January and February, we invite you to join us on a seven-week journey of renewal and discovery:

Hope for a Weary World.

Together, we'll explore the deep and unshakeable hope found in God—a hope that endures through every season of life. Through Scripture, reflection, and worship, we'll encounter the God who brings:

Comfort in our grief

Peace in our struggles

Courage for each new day

In Christ alone, our Hope is found. Come and be refreshed as we learn to live as people of **authentic, active hope**—a hope strong enough to transform our hearts and light up the world around us.



The first dates are:

Sunday, 11 January: Hope in Grief - Preacher Dr Paul Dakin.

Sunday, 18 January: Hope in Change – Preacher Mr Stuart Johnson

Sunday, 25 January: Hope in Community – Preacher Revd Dr David Jebb

For more information, please contact Circuit Office.

**THINKING LUNCHES AT
MARLBOROUGH ROAD METHODIST CHURCH**

Please bring your own lunch and drinks. Half an hour talk
and then discussion.

Donations will be gratefully received to cover expenses,
and any profits will be given to the speaker
for a charity of their choice.

**Upcoming dates are:
Thursday 5th February
Thursday 5th March**

AROUND THE CHURCHES

DIGSWELL VILLAGE CHURCH

DIGSWELL REMEMBERS.....

Following the service at DVC on Sunday 9th November, many of us went to the village War Memorial, where a service of Remembrance was held. It was led jointly by Rev Canon Rob Marshall from St John's Church, and Rev Rosemary Mutopo.

The service was well attended by local residents, and by representatives of the village school. The children had made wreaths which they laid at the Memorial, and Lee Pocha, with her children, laid a wreath on behalf of Digswell Village Church.



DVC is continuing its monthly visits to Oakview, a Care Home in Welwyn Garden City. Our next visit will be on Wednesday 17th December, and it will be a special Christmas service with carols. Joining us will be Rev Ryan Gilfeather and others from St Mary Magdalene, an Anglican church in the town.

Free Children's Christmas movie

Monday 22nd December

Digswell Village Church Hall,
Warren Way, Digswell.AL6 0DH
3pm to 5pm

Free Pizza and drinks included.

Book your child's place at the exciting story of the first Christmas as told in this animated film by the friendly animals: A small but brave donkey and his animal friends become the unsung heroes of the first Christmas

film@digswellvillagechurch.org.uk

Text: 07889 317599

By Friday 19th December

More details & the trailer:
www.digswellvillagechurch.org.uk



The picture shows DVC's 'Carols under a Winter Sky' last year, and you can see from the clothing that it lived up to its wintery name! We're organising this year's on Thursday 18th December - I wonder what weather we'll have then! Feel free to join us!



**Carol Singing at Cuffley Manor
Care Home led by the friends
from St John's Methodist Church**

🎄 **Wednesday 17th December 2025 at
3pm** 🎄 **Come and join us for a warm and
joyful afternoon as we meet the residents
and staff!**

**Enjoy friendly conversation, festive cheer,
and delicious mince pies and coffee to
follow.**

Let's celebrate the season together!

AND IN OTHER NEWS.....

ECO CHRISTMAS TIPS FROM BEDS ESSEX AND HERTS METHODISTS

(This is a summary: go to www.wwf.org.uk and search 'Christmas' for more tips)

PRESENTS AND CARDS

Try to reduce your Christmas footprint: gift an experience which needs no packaging: ensure wood and paper gifts and Christmas cards are made from recycled materials where possible.

FOOD

Plan meals to reduce food waste: use Tupperware, foil or wax cloth covers rather than clingfilm to cover leftovers to eat later.

DECORATIONS

Use recyclable or reusable crackers, or make homemade ones with sustainable gifts: use LED lights on your Christmas tree, and recycle old decorations or make your own from waste paper.

THE TREE

If it's artificial, keep re-using it, or buy a real tree which is FSC-certified.

FREE CHURCHES AT ST ALBANS ABBEY IN THE LADY CHAPEL AT 11am

7th January 2026: Revd Simon Carver, Free Church Ecumenical Chaplain

(This service will include a celebration of the Lord's Supper, to which all Christian believers are invited)

4th February 2026: Maggie Dodd, Anna Chaplain, St Albans

THE METHODIST RECORDER FEATURES 'CORNERSTONE'

Nigel Perrott had an interesting article published in the Methodist Recorder recently, describing the work he and Cornerstone do in their community. He writes about the way the Manse is used for meetings and get-togethers, and about how he interacts with the community around them, and has built people's trust in him and the organisation. He goes on, *"Now that trust has been built, we can focus on faith, and we hold a monthly 'Faith Talk'. One of our regular attendees told us, 'I don't do organised religion!'; yet each month she comes along, and we talk about Jesus, faith and how this fits into our daily lives."*



Nigel sums up the work of Cornerstone House thus:

It's people, not projects

It's a home, not a house

It's real, not religion

It's prayer, not preach

It's hope when it's despair

It's light when it's dark

It's love, not fear

It's laughter when there are tears

It could be said, it's a hospital of hospitality

It's credit when there is debt

It's food for the soul

It's food for the fridge

It's heat when it's frost

It's community, not commune

It's NOT conforming, but transforming

It's the Gospel without words

Yes, it's a place of the word, NOT words

It's the kingdom in action

Yes, it's a reflection.....

*It's a reflection of what God's Kingdom
is about*

It's not plastic, it's stone

The Cornerstone

Reproduced with permission

THE NATION'S FAVOURITE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HYMNS

Songs of Praise on BBC 1 recently opened a vote on the hymns schools like best, and tens of thousands of votes were cast.

The winners were featured in a special edition of the programme, and I think we will recognise most if not all of those that came in the Top Ten:

1. Shine Jesus Shine
2. Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning
3. Lord of the Dance
4. All things bright and beautiful
5. I, the Lord of the sea and sky (Here I am Lord)
6. One more step along the road I go
7. Oh Jesus I have promised
8. Colours of day (Light up the fire)
9. He's got the whole world in his hand
10. Make me a channel of your peace

AND FINALLY.....

A LITTLE QUIZ - WHAT ARE THESE CRYPTIC CAROLS?

1. DECORATE THE CORRIDORS
2. NO NOISE BETWEEN 8PM AND 6AM
3. OBSERVE THROUGH THE SEASONAL PRECIPITATION
4. SUMMON THE ENTIRETY OF BELIEVERS
5. WE ARE A TRIO OF ROYAL MEN
6. ONE PERCEIVED WITH EYES A TRIO OF VESSELS
7. JUBILATION TO THE TERRESTRIAL GLOBE
8. LISTEN, THE CELESTIAL MESSENGERS ARE VOCALISING
9. REMOVED IN AN ANIMAL FEEDING TROUGH
10. CELESTIAL BEINGS FROM THE KINGDOMS OF JOY

ANSWERS
1. DECK THE HALLS
2. SILENT NIGHT
3. SEE AMID THE WINTER'S SNOW
4. O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL
5. WE THREE KINGS
6. I SAW THREE SHIPS
7. JOY TO THE WORLD
8. HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING
9. AWAY IN A MANGER
10. ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

HOW DO I TO SEND SOMETHING FOR INCLUSION IN REPORTER?

Please send your articles to news@methodistreporter.org.uk

Copy must be received by the 20th of the month,
for the following month's issue.

Please ensure you have permission from people (or young people's parents) for their picture to be published in Reporter.

Copy is acceptable only in the following file formats:

DOCUMENTS: Microsoft Word (.doc/docx). PICTURES: Jpeg

No scans of documents are acceptable, only the originals, please.

**The opinions expressed by contributors are the author's own,
and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors
or the Methodist Connexion.**

**Contributions and photographs are accepted with
the assumption they are copyright free.**

Do you know someone who would like to receive Reporter?

Ask them to email editor@methodistreporter.org.uk