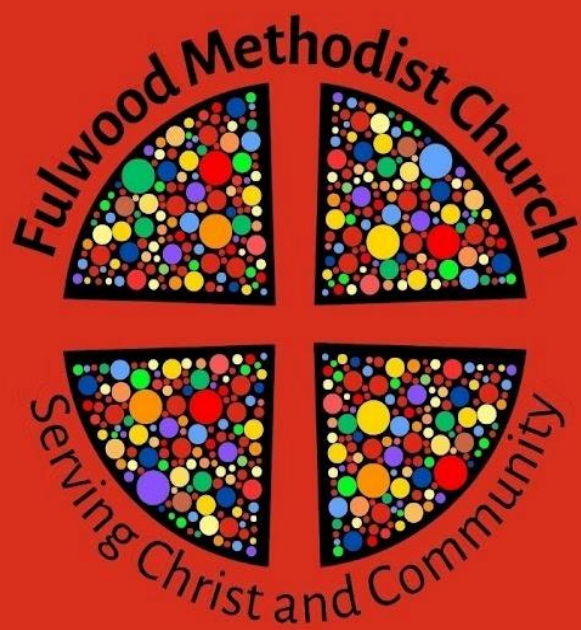




Advent
2025

The Fulwood Methodist

A magazine celebrating faith, community and life

Fulwood Methodist Church

We seek to praise God, honour Jesus Christ and respond to the Holy Spirit in all we do.

Our mission is to grow in spiritual understanding, faithful witness and selfless service.

You will find our building at the junction of Garstang Road and Watling Street Road in Fulwood, Preston, PR2 8EA. There is car parking at both the front and rear of the Church and bus stops are nearby.

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The Advent Edition of The Fulwood Methodist

We hope that you find much to enjoy and think about as you read about **the Gifts we receive from God.**

The writers of most items are clearly identified but occasional script in italics, as here, comes from the editorial team.

Should you find something you wish to share with others, please do so freely—our magazine is intended to be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

For those who prefer to read online, a full colour version of the magazine is available on the Church website.

Further information from the editorial team can be found towards the end of this edition.

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A letter from our Minister

Dear Friends

I have been thinking much as we approach the end of the year of this quotation from the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – “Life is the gift of God, and is divine”.

Yes, Christmas is coming. The Methodist Church has chosen this year to think deeply about the following beautiful word – **gifted**. At Fulwood **‘Gifted’** will be our theme over the next few weeks. Gifts are not just

presents under the tree, interesting as they may be, but recognising that **you are a gift**, your talents matter, and your church can be a gift to the community, is of huge importance to our fellowship and to our world.

How Do You Choose Gifts?

Are you the type of person who picks something for others which you'd love yourself, or do you picture the person and choose with them in mind? Maybe you're a crafty gift-maker – or perhaps you're more a 'grab it from the shop' kind of person. However you do it, the act of giving says something about who you are and how you view others.

In God's eyes you and everyone else are given a great gift. Let us think about that.

You Are a Gift

God gives us life, and that is the greatest gift of all. Eleanor Powell put it perfectly:

"What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God."

So, what do we do with that gift? How can we share what has been given with others?

Simple Ways to Share Your Gifts

- **Say thank you:** write cards to people in your community to tell them 'You are a gift because....'
- **Open Your Doors:** offer your Church as a welcoming space - no strings attached.
- **Share Experiences:** food, music, stories or even quiet moments can be gifts.
- **Make room for real life: joy and grief, faith and doubt** – there is space for the whole of life.

Thomas Jefferson once said, “The God who gave us life, gives us liberty at the same time”. That freedom gives us the chance to live generously.

One Last Thought

God gives you 86,400 seconds each day. Will you use even just a few of those seconds today to say ‘thank you’ to someone? This season let us make gratitude and kindness the best gifts we offer.

Thank you for all you give in so many ways and may I wish you the gift of moments full of joy and peace this Advent, Christmas and New year.

God bless, ***Jane***

What can I give Him

Poor as I am

If I were a shepherd I would give a lamb:

If I were a wise man I would do my part:

Yet what I can I give him – give my heart.

Christina George Rossetti (1830 – 1894)

OUR GIFT TO GOD -

LEARNING AND CARING IN OUR CHURCH

*Jane has introduced us to the current Methodist theme of **Gifted**. It is, she writes, ‘a beautiful theme for this season’. Do you see yourself, again to quote her letter, ‘as a gift, one whose talents matter, enabling your Church to be a gift to the community’?*

Exploring such questions as we read about the experiences of others in the Church activities in which they are involved will be a good use of time over the next few weeks. It will give us time to think about our own contribution as members of the Church.

In this edition we are looking at areas of activity which the Church Leadership Team calls Learning and Caring. Previously, the magazine has focused on outreach and service. In future, we intend to feature other areas of Church work in a similar sort of way and would be delighted to receive your contributions.

Using our gifts to make sure that Everyone Belongs: The Growing Friendship Between L'Arche Preston and Fulwood Methodist Church

L'Arche is an international federation of communities where people with and without intellectual disabilities live, work, and grow together. **Founded on the belief that every person has unique gifts to offer**, L'Arche creates places of belonging where everyone is valued and accepted just as they are. It's a vision that resonates deeply with us at Fulwood Methodist Church—because here too, everyone belongs. And as we write this, we remember with thanks the early work with pioneers from the Church such as Stephen Grice, and others.

As a result, that shared sense of belonging has flourished beautifully over the past few years between Fulwood Methodist Church and the L'Arche Preston community. Our own connection began in 2017, when our son Ben, who lives in one of the L'Arche houses known as The Loom, started attending services at Fulwood. From the very beginning, Ben was welcomed with open arms. The congregation accepted him wholeheartedly, not just as a visitor, but as part of the church family—someone who belongs, contributes, and shares in the life of the church.



In those early days, Fulwood already had special evenings for people with disabilities, offering a place for friendship, worship, and joy. As Ben became more involved, the church community found ways to include him further. One Christmas, he proudly lit the Advent candles—a real highlight for him—and he sometimes helps by taking the collection during Sunday services. These small but meaningful acts of participation have helped Ben feel truly part of the church, and his confidence and happiness have grown as a result.

The partnership between L'Arche Preston and Fulwood Methodist Church has continued to deepen. L'Arche uses the church's excellent facilities regularly for their own activities, and as they do, the two communities naturally overlap and enrich each other's lives. One of the most popular groups is Soupercraft—a cleverly named workshop where participants enjoy both “soup” and “craft”! Each week, around thirteen of the L'Arche core members gather in the church to share food, conversation, and creativity. Volunteers and members of the congregation often come along to lend a hand, chat, or simply join in the fun. Core members from Moor Fold, the other L'Arche house in Preston, regularly enjoy friendship, brunch and the New to You stalls at the Welcome Wednesday event, run by volunteers from the church community. It's a wonderful example of how inclusion and friendship grow naturally when people spend time together.

L'Arche also uses the church facilities for gatherings, such as their Voice and Power meetings and other community celebrations.

Regularly the whole L'Arche community—core members, assistants, staff, and friends—come together for a gathering at the church for a time of sharing, singing, and joy. Events like these remind us of how fortunate we are to have such a well-equipped and welcoming space where everyone can come together in unity and celebration.

One of the highlights of recent years was the joint church–L'Arche



pantomime held last year. It was a truly wonderful event that involved people from both communities working side by side. L'Arche members provided much of the scenery and costumes, while church members, and various groups associated with the church contributed music, and support behind the scenes. The result was a joyful, laughter-filled performance that perfectly captured the spirit of togetherness that defines both L'Arche and Fulwood Methodist

Church.



Ben continues to attend Sunday services regularly, often alongside his friend Callum, another L'Arche core member who uses a wheelchair. The congregation makes sure they both—and everyone else—feel comfortable, valued, and loved. What's most remarkable, though, is that inclusion here isn't treated as something special or deliberate; it simply happens, because that's who we are. In a world

that too often divides and excludes, the friendship between Fulwood

Methodist Church and L'Arche Preston stands as a shining example of what community can be when everyone belongs.

Keith and Jane Brooks

Using our gifts to deepen our Fellowship Together – Home Groups

We all experience many ups and downs in life. As Christians, we can sometimes find comfort in a loving God and in Jesus who knows what it means to be human. However, sometimes our experiences can lead to difficult questions: 'Why is this happening to me?' The world we live in can be both a wonderful and a devastating place. An age-old question: 'Why does God allow suffering?' might often trouble us.

Our spiritual journeys also go through peaks and troughs, as we wrestle with prayer, the Bible and living out our lives in a way that shares the love of God with others. Sitting in a pew at church and listening to the service on a Sunday morning (joining in with songs and prayers, reflecting on the sermon, meeting together for coffee afterwards) can be a positive way to help build up our faith and learn more about God. However, it's not the easiest place to have deep conversations, particularly on a personal level. Church services tend to be more passive than active, and while this can feed us spiritually, it doesn't necessarily allow us the chance to ask questions, express our doubts and fears and look how the Bible relates to us personally.

This is where home groups come in. Meeting as a small group within someone's home and exploring relevant topics together can be a huge boost to our personal journeys with God, and to our fellowship. It's good to hear others expressing the same doubts that have been swirling around in our own heads, and to 'open up' about how different parts of the Bible make us feel, or what's going on in our lives and the world. Of course, we can also gain much from simply

attending, listening and quietly reflecting, but as we get to know a small group of other Christians, it can become easier to feel comfortable and safe sharing our lives with each other.

At Fulwood, we are currently trialling three fortnightly home groups (on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) with roughly 25 people attending in total. There is no pressure to attend every session, no pressure to speak if you'd prefer to just listen and absorb, and no pressure to keep going if you've tried it out and found it's not for you. But there are friends to be made, enlightening and uplifting conversations to be had and new ideas to explore. There might also be biscuits!



If you're interested in joining a home group, please get in touch with Sonia (soniaphillips12@yahoo.co.uk) and let her know your availability.

You would be very welcome.

Sonia Phillips

Using the gifts we have received so that as a whole Church we can offer ourselves to God in Worship

“We are a worshipping community: do the opportunities which we create to worship God make the best use of all the gifts we have been given?” An early priority for the new Church Leadership Team was to address this fundamental question. We offered a questionnaire in which we asked, what in our different styles of worship most helped us

to worship and feel God's presence as we believe that only by fully engaging people in worship can we release our many gifts.

Thank you to the forty or more respondents who came back to us. You enabled us to report fully to the Church Council in September.

The Sunday morning service in its different styles was appreciated by everyone: however, it was perhaps not surprising that we received a mixture of responses. Where these might lead us is a question which will remain under regular consideration.

It is quite clear that many value the traditional patterns and shapes of our worship, and the Sunday morning service in its different styles was appreciated by everyone. The resources we need to design and lead worship continue to change, presenting both opportunity and challenge. Our diversification as a Church community, and the pressures arising from the social and economic lives of young families which create new patterns of church attendance must be a factor in the opportunities we create.

Specific requests were for a quiet meditative service occasionally and another for more Bible study and teaching. We now have an opportunity to look at these comments in the context of being GIFTED. For some time it has been our practice to be involved in arranging and leading the worship we offer to God. The Methodist Church offers us considerable freedom in this direction. The Church Council is convinced that within the Church are additional gifts and talents which could enrich the worship we offer to God.

So, what might we expect in the future? Opportunities will be sought to diversify our patterns of worship to include a quieter service at 4pm once a month on a Sunday (see the list of seasonal events at the back of this magazine). In addition, we hope that we might find ways of rejuvenating the mid-week Wednesday morning worship. Messy

Church and Forest Church offer opportunities also for differing forms of worship. The need for more Bible study opportunities has been addressed through developing homegroups which are already being enjoyed by many.

Most of all though the Church wants to continue to hear from you – not only about what you might wish to see develop and how, but also about how you are being challenged to offer your gifts in worship

Mavis Fletcher

Using our gifts to help young children develop and their mothers to prosper

Toddlers Group is available for very young children from infancy to the age of five, so long as they bring along a responsible adult - Mums, Dads, Uncles, Aunties, Grandparents can all fit the bill. Together with the helpers we are a happy and noisy group who meet most weeks of the year.

We always tell the adults they can have as much caffeine as they need while they're with us – some of them need a lot to keep them going after sleepless nights. We also offer drinks for the children along with a huge selection of biscuits. Toast and tea bread are a speciality!

So, why do we meet? We want to use our gifts to enable children to socialise and gain new experiences and, just as important, to offer carers and, especially, Mums to have some adult conversation. The helpers are all Mums too and remember the feelings and pressures that can build for those at home with young children. The health and wellbeing of Mums is of huge importance to us as we seek to make all

welcome. Over the years we know how important this opportunity has been for some beleaguered mothers.

Of course, the volunteers also put the world to rights while working in the kitchen. Watching the young children exploring toys and new challenges, meeting new friends, avoiding what they may not be ready to face is all part of the fun. And then the moment arrives when the youngster is ready to move on – nursery or school – when it is time for farewells, and the joy of knowing that a job has been well done.

Toddlers' Group has been in existence now for nearly 60 years and numbers go up and come down as the birthrate and social policy for preschool provision changes. Consequently, we are well stocked with equipment and playthings, and a craft table adds to the fun (and mess). Each session concludes with a singalong in a separate space whilst things are safely put away for another week.

New members and helpers are always welcome. Just come, dip your toe in the water, and see if it is for you. We meet on a Friday morning between 9.30 and 11.30 and we are one of few Toddler Groups in the area to meet most Fridays during school holidays

Janet Porter

God's gifts at work in Sunday Club

Welcome Back!

We were very pleased to welcome back our wonderful children and young people to Sunday Club in September. Every child receives a 'Welcome Pack' each year, with the all-important registration form along with a few goodies. This year the glow-in-the-dark bouncy balls went down particularly well.



Our display features photos of children from Explorers posing as the characters they have been learning about.

Our Group Themes

In Explorers (KS1) and Pathfinders (KS2) the theme for the term has been Old Testament Heroes (and Heroines!).

We've used a variety of activities including games, songs, videos, discussion, drama and crafts to explore the stories of some key Old Testament figures. Explorers have used the focus of 'Hopes and Dreams', to link these

stories together, looking at Abraham & Sarah, Jacob & Esau, Rachel & Leah, Joseph, Esther and Ruth & Naomi. Pathfinders begin to look at the Bible in greater depth and detail, and have focused on Abraham, Moses, Deborah and David. To see some examples of our work, and the Bible verses we have been thinking about, you can look at our Sunday Club display board in church.



Pathfinders Plus (high school) follow either the lectionary readings or their own themes. This term they have been studying the books of 1 and 2 Timothy, again using games, discussion, a variety of media such as worship songs and video clips and drama to explore the Bible and how it relates to our lives today.

Our youngest group – Seekers (pre-school) is currently struggling for members. If you know of anyone with little ones looking for a child-friendly church, please do point them in our direction!

Forest Church Once a term, Sunday Club goes out and about in Highgate Woods for a Forest Church session. This term our session will



link into the Old Testament Heroes theme. We will be constructing our own shelter and considering the nomadic tent-dwelling life of many of the

characters we have been studying. We will also enjoy a hot chocolate inside our tent while we listen to some different versions of these stories and consider how God was with our heroes wherever they went. Developing this idea further, we will look at Psalm 18:1-2 and consider how God acts as a shelter to us today: "I love you, Lord! You are my strength. The Lord is my Rock, my fortress, my place of safety. He is my God, the Rock I run to for protection. He is my shield; by his power I am saved. He is my hiding place high in the hills."

Sonia Phillips

Using our gifts to tell the Christmas story afresh

So, using our gifts...

How might we tell the Christmas story in a fresh way whilst maintaining its majestic meaning?

How do we attract children and adults to an event with that aim in mind and engage with them?

How do we show that Christmas is more than just getting presents?

How do we celebrate the joy of Christmas with all its noise and bustle but also promote awe and wonder?

So many questions with no easy answers but trying to respond to these issues has led to the creation of our Advent Celebration, now in its fourth year. We aim to provide an experience which will be meaningful both for children and adults and allow us all to celebrate Christmas with joy and wonder. The celebration is deliberately held on Advent Sunday (the fourth Sunday before Christmas) to set the scene for all the events in the coming weeks of December - parties, shopping,

pantomimes and concerts - when it is easy to forget some of the essential meaning of the season.

We appreciate that most children and many adults learn through doing and moving and so we begin our session with activities related to the theme and later move from 'station' to 'station' to explore different aspects of the nativity story. It is difficult to imagine celebration – at least in Methodist circles - without thinking of food or at least some refreshments and we therefore enable different sections of the church family to eat together and enjoy each other's company. The mood then changes as we move on to re-tell the Christmas story by using readers from our congregation to act out some of the key parts of the narrative.

A special atmosphere is promoted by the darkness and candlelight and the groups of children and adults process from one station to the next as the story unfolds. All the groups come together to consider the significance of what they have heard. This year '**Gifted**' will be the theme for our Advent Celebration on November 30th. Do sign up and join us. (See the notice by the kitchen hatch)

Carols are sung either at the beginning or the end of the celebration and after the blessing the children receive an Advent calendar from the church which features the story we have been relaying. Reading through this description, it sounds as if everything goes like clockwork and all aspects seamlessly run together – what could possibly go wrong? As you can imagine the potential for a few 'mishaps' is enormous! At the end of the event, when all the Sunday Club leaders are seriously thinking of lying down in a darkened room we remember, that over a hundred people will have once again experienced the Christmas story in a meaningful way.

Janet Wales

Reflecting on Our Gifts

Thanks to all who have shared their insights and experiences with us. Perhaps take a moment to consider your unique gifts. How might they further enrich your own life and the lives of others?

Church Family News

As ever, we wanted to share recent news of our ever-changing Church family. Please think about the people mentioned below and their families in the weeks ahead.

Baptisms

We have welcomed children from the following families into the fellowship of the world-wide Christian Church, as follows:

- Esslemont 25 April
- Ashcroft 4 May
- Kok 1 June
- Owoseni 31 August

We also welcomed Nazmeen on 13 July and Angie on 2 November.

Marriages

Anna and Luca – 2 September

Funerals

Elsie Hastwell – 30 July

Jean Whittle – 10 October

Darren and his family came to Preston some eight years ago as he joined the Circuit staff as a Children and Family Worker, based initially at Fulwood Methodist Church and then more widely in the Circuit. It has been a pleasure to have Darren and Cheryl as part of our

[illegible]

Darren is moving in early December to a similar position with the Methodist Church near Telford in the Midlands, nearer to his family roots (and in easier reach of Nottingham Forest home fixtures). It has been a pleasure to come to know Cheryl too and we thank her for her many contributions to our Church.

The Wordle was compiled by John Butterworth: several church members held conversations with people of all ages who have benefitted from everything which Darren has done and from knowing him as a colleague and friend.

Thank you, Darren, farewell and may God bless you in your work and family life.

The Editorial Team

A new memorial tree at the Watling Street Road entrance to remind us of Joyce Clarke



This Acer tree was recently planted in a large pot, by the glass doors to the Church, is in memory of my mum, Joyce Clarke. As a family, we wanted to plant a tree which Dad and I would see every Sunday morning.

We had a short thanksgiving service, with the family, as we planted the tree with Bible readings and a prayer. We also planted lots of daffodil bulbs around the tree which hopefully will look lovely in the Spring. Joyce passed away on September 1st, 2023. Her last words to Dad were 'Thanks for all the years', so we thought it would be appropriate to use those words on the plaque.

Judith

We have chosen to reintroduce a regular feature which many enjoyed previously. It is an opportunity to learn more about a person or family in the Church, in their own words. We do hope others will enable their stories to feature in forthcoming editions.

The Owoseni Family

Naomi introduces her family to us - Starting with the meaning of our surname. It means and represents “Great Wealth.” My name is OLUWAFADEKEMI (meaning GOD PAMPERS ME WITH CROWN) NAOMI OWOSENI. My husband is BABATUNDE (meaning FATHER RETURNED) MICHAEL OWOSENI. I and my husband got married in 2012, and we are blessed with 3 lovely kids, making us a family of 5.

Our first son is OLUWAFERANMI (meaning GOD LOVES ME) DANIEL OWOSENI. Our second son is OLUWADAMILARE (meaning GOD VINDICATED ME) JEREMY OWOSENI. Our daughter is OLUWATOMIWA (Meaning GOD CAME FOR) ELENA OWOSENI

We hail from the western region of Nigeria, popularly called the Yoruba. Our culture is best known for respect, integrity, and honesty. Our native food is “Iyan and Eforiro.” It’s a yummy dish made from blended boiled yam and vegetable soup, mixed with shrimp, stockfish, and diced proteins.

As a family, we enjoy going on trips and bonding with our adorable children. I personally love singing, cooking, and planning events. About our journey to the United Kingdom, we decided to relocate in the year 2021. It was a tough decision to make, as we were well settled and established in Nigeria. As a matter of essence, it has always been our utmost desire to secure and give our adorable children a promising future. This basically prompted our decision. It’s been the most pleasurable decision we’ve ever made

Getting to the UK, we had our turbulent times settling, as it was not an



easy feat to relocate to a new land miles away from home. Coming into the United Kingdom via the student route, several official fees had to be paid along with tuition fees all at the same time. All these challenges, no doubt, made us stronger.

God indeed prepared a table before us, as my husband got sponsored by the company he currently works with after his studies. But the financial investment to move here was considerable.

My husband is now a project manager with a reputable company here in the UK, and I work as a support worker. It's been an amazing journey in our job roles, and God has indeed been faithful to us.

I cannot fail to mention the amazing and awesome Christian family with which God has blessed us, the Owoseni family. I refer of course to The Fulwood Methodist Church, Preston. You have all been very impactful, and very much feature in the picture of our settling down in Preston City.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to all the church community for their support and most especially, Rev'd Jane Wild for supporting our son in getting into high school a few weeks after we joined the church, and Jannice, Judith, and Veronica for always taking it upon themselves to help with the kids' school runs when it was stressful. They have been supportive and always present in our time of need. All in all, we are glad to call the UK our home.

Happy Christmas from Naomi and the rest of my family.

Where are they now? – Ben Jarvis

For those who don't know me my name is Ben Jarvis. I attended Fulwood Methodist from 1999 before I moved away at 18 to study trumpet



at the Royal Northern College of Music. I was introduced to the cornet at the age of 9 and played in several brass bands including Leyland, and as the principal cornet with Elland Band. Whilst I was with Elland, I was fortunate to be part of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, winning the Harry Mortimer award for best soloist.

I graduated from the Royal Northern with a first-class honours degree in performance and decided to further my studies by moving down to London to study at the Guildhall. I finished the two-year postgraduate degree with a distinction. London has brought many opportunities to play with different orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic and London Philharmonic. Indeed, I am writing this right now whilst on tour in Beijing, China with the BBC Philharmonic.

I've been lucky enough to travel all over the world, and especially across Europe with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and, as a freelance musician, music has also taken me as far as India, as well as to countries closer to home such as Spain and Ireland.

A real highlight for me came in 2023 when I performed as guest principal with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in Norway. But it has also been a humbling experience, learning how much further there is to go with my chosen career.

By the time you read this I will have been back in Preston for a little while and indeed you may have heard from me, because the Church has kindly agreed for me to use the facilities for practice at times when I am not working away. It is good to play my instrument in such a large space. I look forward to seeing friendly faces and should you hear a trumpet when you are in the Church building, please come and say hello!

Ben Jarvis

Celebrating Life Journeys Within Our Church Community

If you know of someone who might be willing to share their experiences in a similar way to Ben, we encourage you to speak with one of the editors.

Looking a little further beyond our own community we notice that friends have rather a lot on their plate at present – and it is not just their Christmas lunch.

Let us hold in our prayers two people as they prepare for future roles in the Christian Church. First, it is a delight to note that the Rev'd Mark Slaney has been nominated as President of the Methodist Conference for the period July 2026 to July 2027. Mark is well known to many readers of this magazine since he served as a minister in the Preston

Ribble Circuit for several years, latterly as the Circuit Superintendent Minister. Mark currently lives in Stirling and is Chair of the Scotland District and Chair of the Shetland District of the Methodist Church. We remember his warm, engaging and enthusiastic personality and, of course, give thanks for his spiritual gifts. God bless, Mark.

Also facing huge new responsibilities is the current Bishop of London, the Right Rev and Right Hon Dame Sarah Mullally. Early in 2026 she will be installed as the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the first woman ever to assume that responsibility which has existed for over a thousand years. Now, the new Archbishop of Canterbury is known to several people in Fulwood Methodist Church. Prior to her moving into fulltime work in the Church she was the Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health where for several years she was the boss (to put it in the vernacular) of our own Mr Malcolm Rae OBE. Indeed, several members of this church met her when she came north to Preston for Malcolm's retirement celebrations a few years ago. God bless, + Sarah.

Both these people face huge tasks in the days ahead and we are happy to assure them of our prayers and support as they prepare to meet them.

Ken Wales



“O Come, All Ye Faithful” is one of the most cherished and widely sung Christmas carols in the world. Known for its majestic melody and joyful lyrics, the hymn invites listeners to journey to Bethlehem and worship the newborn Christ.

Originally written in Latin as *Adeste Fideles*, the carol has a rich history and has remained popular for centuries due to its powerful message, beautiful music, and deep religious meaning.

Historical Origins

The carol is believed to have been written in the mid-18th century. The earliest known version is attributed to **John Francis Wade**, an English Catholic who lived in exile in France after the Jacobite rising. Wade worked as a music copyist and wrote or transcribed the Latin hymn *Adeste Fideles* around 1743. While there has been some debate about whether Wade actually composed the music or simply copied it, he is generally credited with the version we know today. The hymn originally had eight Latin verses, though most modern versions use only four or five. The lyrics celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and call on the faithful to come and adore Him, echoing the story of the shepherds and wise men visiting the Christ child.

English Translation and Spread

The carol became more widely known in the English-speaking world in the 19th century. **Frederick Oakeley**, an Anglican priest who later became Catholic, translated *Adeste Fideles* into English in 1841. His version, beginning with the words “O Come, All Ye Faithful, joyful and triumphant,” captured the spirit and meaning of the original Latin text while making it accessible to a wider audience.

This English version quickly gained popularity, especially in Victorian England, a time when Christmas traditions, hymns, and carols were experiencing a revival. The carol was published in many hymnals and became a regular part of church services, particularly on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Why It Became Popular: There are several reasons why “O Come, All Ye Faithful” has remained so popular:

1. **Up lifting Message:** The lyrics focus on joy, adoration, and the divinity of Christ. The call to worship is both personal and communal, drawing people together in celebration.
2. **Memorable Melody:** The tune is strong, stately, and easy to sing. Its repetitive structure and rising melody create a sense of triumph and grandeur that fits the Christmas season perfectly.
3. **Widespread Use:** The carol is sung in churches, schools, concerts, and homes. It has been translated into many languages and adapted into numerous musical styles, helping it cross cultural and denominational boundaries.
4. **Emotional Connection:** For many, singing this carol is a cherished part of Christmas tradition, evoking memories of family, worship, and celebration. "O Come, All Ye Faithful" has stood the test of time as a powerful and beloved Carol. With its rich history, inspiring lyrics, and beautiful melody, it continues to invite people around the world to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and join together in joyful worship.

Researched by Allison Jarvis

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Is this a suitable point for a little light relief?

The editors were amused to come across these wonderful misunderstandings of Christmas carol lines. Can you add to them?

- *We three kings of porridge and tar*
- *On the first day of Christmas my tulip gave to me*
- *Noel, Noel, Barney's the King of Israel*
- *The cattle are blowing the baby away*
- *Hark, the hairy angels sing*

Perhaps you know of other examples you could share with us. Or maybe you could post in the Suggestion Box the best and worst

Christmas Cracker jokes you encounter this year. All good fodder for a future Christmas edition perhaps.

Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School – Boosting the school book collection to encourage reading

Recently, we were delighted to receive a message from Ava, a year 6 pupil at RAMJS

Thank you for the excellent books we have gained, we all enjoy them thoroughly! We find them very fun to read and are excited for more! There's a book for each genre-lover, we are looking forward to reading them all and we will thank you all for supplying these amazing books! All of us will enjoy them and will share with the others, and these will encourage new readers to try newer types of books. We promise to take care of the books and encourage each other to try them! We find them all very time worthy and makes us not want to stop reading them. It has us questioning "what will happen next?" We feel there is a book for everyone to enjoy reading. Thank you ever so much! We will definitely enjoy them for as long as possible! All teachers and pupils will enjoy reading these! Some people might even buy some books of their own because of these!

Thank you!

From **Ava – year 6.**

The volume of books available to children at RAMJS continues to grow in size, thanks to you – remember many books are not on these bookshelves are also located in classrooms and with the children

Just a reminder that Eva (Good as New Shop) or I will gladly receive books that perhaps your children and/or grandchildren have grown beyond and take them to RAMJS. The staff are delighted with the 200 or so we have taken in recent times.

Ken Wales

A Selection of Seasonal Puzzles to Enjoy

These puzzles will be amongst those available during the Advent Celebration on 30 November. This is your chance to get a head start!

First, some Word Ladders

Word Ladders – How to Play

These are simple puzzles where the aim is to move from a first word to a final word by following a few straightforward rules.

You may only change one letter at a time. For example, although ‘bat’ may become ‘but’, it cannot become ‘bus’ in one step.

- Each time you make a change, the letters you insert must create a recognised word. For example, ‘bat’ can become ‘hat’ but it cannot become ‘bzt’.
- The letter in each position in a word, moving downwards, can change only once or remain the same.

To illustrate how this works, here is a simple example:

- DRAM
- DRAB
- CRAB
- CRIB

Word Ladder 1

THREE

STRAW

Word Ladder 2

WORK

MARY

Word Ladder 3

WIRES

GIVES

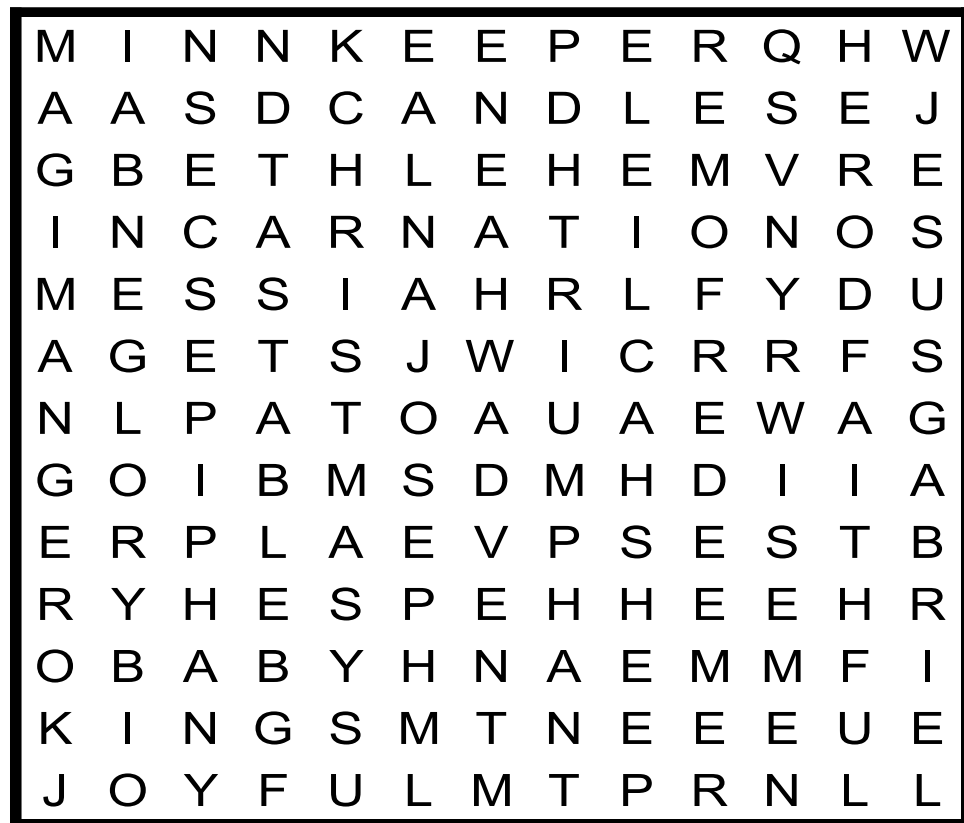
Word Ladder 4

BUSH

CAKE

Word Search

And then, a WordSearch which needs no introduction. Find out how many words overlap with the crossword solution.

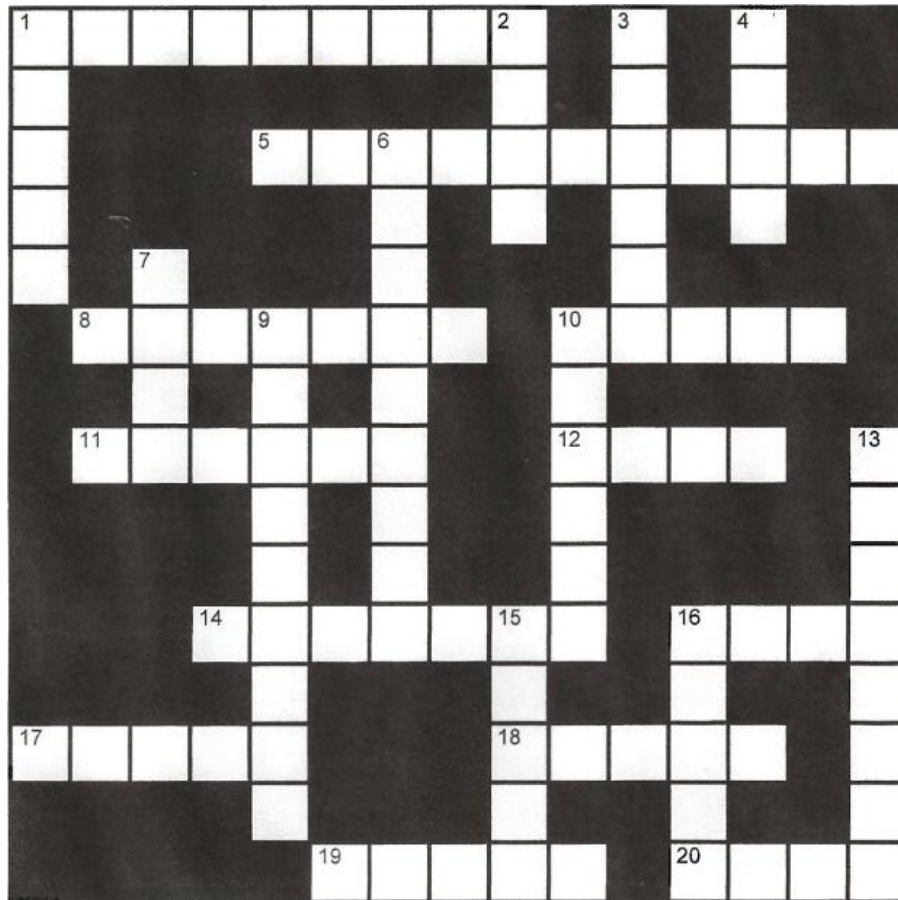


Can you spot:

Advent Baby Bethlehem Candles Christmas Epiphany Faithful Gabriel
Glory Herod Incarnation Innkeeper Jesus Joseph Joyful King Love
Magi Manger Mary Messiah Redeemer Sheep Shepherds Stable Straw
Triumphant Wisemen?

A Christmas Crossword

Inevitably a Christmas Crossword! A simpler approach this time.



Across

1. Birthplace of Jesus in Judea (9): this clue refers to the town where Jesus was born, historically recognised as a significant location in Judea.
 5. God becoming flesh in human form (11): this clue describes the theological concept of God taking on human nature and being

born as a man.

8. Adoration offered to God (7): The act of showing reverence, honour, and devotion to God.

10. The Son of God and Saviour (5): Refers to the central figure of Christianity, acknowledged as the Saviour and Son of God.

11. Period of preparation before Christmas (6): The season observed by Christians as they ready themselves for the celebration of Christ's birth.

12. Celestial guide for wise men (4): The heavenly object that led the wise men to the birthplace of Jesus.

14. Promised deliverer prophesied in scripture (7): The figure foretold in religious texts as the one who would bring salvation.

16. Wise men from the East (4): The learned visitors who travelled from distant lands to witness the birth of Jesus.

17. Young person (5): Refers to a child or adolescent, often present in nativity scenes.

- 18. Divine radiance and splendour (5): The manifestation of God's glory, often depicted in nativity stories.
- 19. Instruments rung in celebration (5): Musical items traditionally used to mark festive occasions, including Christmas.
- 20. Sacred and set apart (4): Something that is considered holy and dedicated for religious purposes.

Down

- 1. Coming into the world (5): The act of being born or arriving in the world, central to the nativity story.
- 2. Mother of Jesus (4): The woman recognised as the mother of Jesus in Christian tradition.
- 3. Animal shelter where Christ was born (6): The humble place where Jesus's birth took place, surrounded by animals.
- 4. Manger used as a bed (4): The feeding trough that served as a cradle for the newborn Jesus.
- 6. Festival celebrating Christ's nativity (9): The annual event marking the birth of Jesus Christ.
- 7. Precious yellow metal (4): A valuable substance often associated with gifts brought to Jesus.
- 9. First to hear the angelic announcement (9): The group who were visited by angels and given the news of Jesus's birth.
- 10. Earthly father of Jesus (6): The man who acted as the earthly guardian of Jesus.
- 13. Scene of Christ's birth (8): The tableau depicting the birth of Jesus, often displayed during Christmas.
- 15. Heavenly messenger (5): The spiritual being who delivers messages from God, particularly in the nativity account.
- 16. Precious resin brought as a gift (5): One of the valuable offerings presented to Jesus by the travellers from the East.

Ken Wales



Join Us for an Inspiring Year of Book Club Adventures!

As we approach 2026, it's an opportune moment to reflect on our shared experiences during the latter part of 2025 and prepare for the exciting journey ahead in our church Book Club. This year we decided to move away from concentrating on reading a named book each month in favour of following a specific theme. We wanted to give our members more choice in the books that they read; to encourage a greater involvement in our discussions; and to widen the scope of those discussions. Based upon our experiences so far, this had been a success, and we trust that next year our meetings will be filled with meaningful dialogue, friendly fellowship, and of course, the joy of discovering new books and ideas. Oh, and eating biscuits and maybe cake – a very important part of our meetings!

Why Join the Book Club?

Our Book Club isn't just about reading; it's about building a community. Finding a space where we can come together to share our thoughts and insights is invaluable: our Book Club offers a sanctuary for open conversation, where every voice is heard, and every perspective is

valued. It's a beautiful way to deepen our connections with one another and grow in our faith.

Whether you are a seasoned reader or just curious about the world of books, we invite you to join us. Each month, we select a different topic to focus on, encouraging discussions that inspire personal growth and collective understanding.

What to Expect in 2026

Our meetings are held monthly, on the second Tuesday of the month. As the year unfolds, we will suggest possible books within most of the topics in advance, providing everyone with ample time to choose, read and reflect. You can use the suggested list to choose a book, or you are perfectly free to choose a book that interests you within the theme. We aim to create an atmosphere where each member feels comfortable sharing their thoughts, struggles, and insights. Expect collaborative discussions where questions are encouraged, and differing opinions are respected.

Upcoming Reads to Look Forward To

To spark your interest, here are the topics for next year's sessions.

13th January - The best book I ever received for Christmas

10th February - Space and the Future

10th March - Nature and Travel Writing

14th April - "Life Impossible" by Matt Haig

12th May - This book made me laugh

9th June - The Methodist Church's chosen Bible book of the year

14th July - The most satisfying novel I ever read

11th August - Learning from the past – can we?

Get Involved!

As we prepare for this new season, we encourage you to invite friends and family to come along with you to the Book Club. The more diverse our group, the richer our discussions will be! Additionally, if you have suggestions for books or themes that resonate with you, please share them with the group. Your input is valuable, and we want this to be a collaborative effort. Don't forget to mark your calendars for our first meeting in January. See you next year!

Chris Porter

Church Events and Gatherings

Why not mark your diaries and update your wall calendars with the following opportunities to come together in the next few weeks. Connect, celebrate and share in worship and fellowship.

22nd November Farmers Market and Christmas Fair with extra stalls, crafts and children's games **29th November** Sing to the Lord—6pm at Fulwood Methodist church. A festive evening of carols and celebration arranged by The Kingdom of Life Church and dedicated to the birth of Jesus

30th November, 4-6pm with the Sunday club Advent celebration,

2nd December A.M. club and Friends at Fulwood Christmas party at The Ancient Oak, Cottam

7th December Gift Service – gifts to be donated to the Women's Refuge and Ribbleton Ave Methodist Junior School.

7th December 7th 6.30 singers from the circuit combine to present "Stargazers", a Christmas cantata by Roger Jones to be held **at Hope Church**.

12th December The Company of Voices give a concert at **Lune Street Central Church** in aid of Street Pastors 7.30pm

14th December Messy Nativity,

21st December Carol Service at 5:30pm – there is no morning service at Fulwood

23rd Dec 10.am Christingle making

24th December Christingle service at 3:30pm, followed later by Midnight Holy Communion at 11.15 pm

25th December Christmas Day morning service at 10.00 am

28th December 10.30 am cafe service with bring and share lunch

30th December 2-4pm, Community Afternoon Tea, arranged by the Knitters

For future notice:

Parade Services – 7th December (gift Service), 8th March and 14th June.

Alternative Taizé/quiet services –Sunday 16th November and Sunday 11th January 2026, Sunday Feb 8 all at 4pm

January 14th 2026 at 7.30pm Worship planning meeting

28 January 2026 at 7.30pm – Human Jukebox – more information later in the Magazine

New developments

There are two new developments which are likely to lead to new opportunities for the Church and the wider community.

1. You may already have seen publicity from Mike Cushing and the Worship Band about an evening of modern worship songs and other items being planned for 28 January 2026 at 7.30pm. Posters and other publicity now appearing in the Church will give further details: tickets will be on sale soon. A date for your diary.
2. The second relates to the use of the Church on a regular basis by an outside group who will offer a Gentle Space for Grief. This to support women-only event is for 18 – 55 year old women who through life-changing experiences such as loss, illness or separation feel the need to be with others to explore their feelings in a safe space. It is good that the Church is being used in this way and you and your friends and neighbours may feel that you can benefit from it. Notices will be in Church from time to time.

The sessions are hosted by B.L.O.O.M By SMA and our Church leaders are fully aware of this development. We wish them well.

Seasonal prayer and reflection

Here are some ideas for prayer and reflection over the holiday period..

This prayer, and the one which follows, were written by Christine Odell as part of a collection of Advent and Christmas prayers for our Church. Christine of course is the wife of the Rev'd Peter Sheasby, a previous minister of this Church. If you would welcome knowing more about this collection from Christine, please speak to Mavis Fletcher.

For the First day of Advent by Christine Odell

“Before the world was created, the Word already existed;
He was with God, and he was the same as God.
From the very beginning the Word was with God.....

The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son."(John1:1,2,14)

Thuds on the doormat are even more exciting at this time of the year, as we receive cards and letters from friends and family near and far. Our own cards and letters are amply repaid by communications that bring the folk we know and their news into our homes and lives. Words are of central importance in our lives, letting us share our existence with others.

This first day of Advent, let us ponder on what it means to believe that, with the coming of Christ, God's Word to us became a human being, God's message delivered for all the world.

Loving God I thank you,
For your Christmas message to me and all the world,
For sending your Word as a human being, Jesus,
And for sending him with all your love.
Make me aware of what you have said through him
That he may be the Word of Life for me,
And may speak through me to others.
Help me always to be sensitive to those in need of words of love and friendship; I pray especially for.....
I say the words of this prayer in the name of your Word of Love made flesh, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

And then this prayer for the 24th day of Advent also by Christine Odell and from the same collection of prayers. More information about this collection is available from Mavis Fletcher.

For the Twenty Fourth day of Advent by Christine Odell,(perhaps we should now read this in the context of The Greatest Gift.)

"....while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and

laid him in a manger – there was no room for them to stay in the inn.”
(Luke 2;6,7)

The last day of our Advent Calendar has arrived! Today on most traditional calendars, we fling open the double windows to reveal the stable, replete with Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, a few animals and maybe angels, shepherds and Wise Men! Tomorrow will be Christmas Day. Our Advent journey has reached its destination! The nativity scene may belie the realities of the birth in the stable or cave, but its cheerfulness expresses the joy of this season.

Welcome, Lord Jesus,
Welcome into your world and ours!

Thank you for coming
As a vulnerable human being.,
To share the joys and sorrows of life with us
And transform our humanity by your divinity.

Thank you for coming
As the Son of Almighty God
To break down the barriers
That divide us from God and from one another.

Welcome, Loving Saviour
Both this Christmas and every day. Amen

We also offer you this prayer - which comes from the URC Handbook of Prayer for 2025:

A reflection for New Year's Day.

Today starts a new year
And as busy, diligent people our inclination
Is to get straight down to business.
But perhaps today Your word to us

Is that you would prefer us to do –
Nothing?
No planning,
No ambitious resolutions,
No gritted teeth to signify
Our desire to change the world,
Change our church, change ourselves.

Instead, maybe You are inviting us
To take a back seat and simply gaze
At all the wonder and turmoil
That surrounds us.
That way we might learn to see and watch
To notice and above all else,
To listen

At this New Year we'll learn to take
Your time, not ours, and if by doing so
We would become wise, we'll delight
In having learned the holy discipline
Of an attentive pause.

Written by Ian Fosten, who describes himself 'as in retirement and looking after the historic Wrentham Chapel, near Lowestoft, helping run a small community theatre, and has a modest ministry of writing and editing'

THE FULWOOD METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE

This is the first occasion for 125 and probably more editions which has not been introduced by Roy Smith acting as the Magazine's editor. That is a phenomenal record and those who have worked on this edition now realise the immense gift which Roy has offered to us all. We dare say, and indeed hope, that Roy will be keeping an eye on this and future editions. We wish him well – and ask him to excuse us for any obvious breaks with tradition, some which may be deliberate and

others possibly oversights. We hope Roy will continue to contribute from time to time as the mood takes him, especially by telling us more about aspects of our cultural and folk tradition in which he is so knowledgeable. Thanks, Roy.

The content of this edition has been co-ordinated principally by Ken Wales, assisted by Mavis Fletcher and Allison Jarvis, whilst John Butterworth and Sonia Phillips have worked behind the scenes on production. Others have assisted us too – coffee and smiles always help. A special thanks to Jane who identified our theme and was always there.

Looking to the future, the Church will need to gauge the future demand for, and potential of, the magazine whilst weighing the costs and benefits of differing approaches to engaging with each other through the written word.

Maybe you have gifts which could contribute – artistic (can anyone draw and compose cartoons?), technical, writing, organisational, production and so on. Maybe you have ideas about future direction. If so, please do not hesitate to speak to any of the people named above or with Jane. Your gifts might take us in exciting new directions.

It is possible too that you already have thoughts about the sort of Church magazine you would like to see produced here at Fulwood and have ideas about future articles. If so, please put your ideas and thoughts into the Suggestion Box.

We foresee two further editions of the magazine led by a temporary team. One would be published just before Lent, the next in the summer previewing the next Church year which of course will start in September. Further details about submission of articles will be in the Church Notices.

We are grateful for copies of Church magazines we have received from Carlisle Methodist Church, the North Cumbria Circuit, the parish of

Ingham, Ampton and the Livermeres, the North Bedfordshire Circuit, Winborne Minster and Knaresborough Anglican Team Ministry, amongst others who contact us regularly. Interesting and full of ideas which do help us!

It is usual for these editorial notes to

- Thank our contributors
- Thank our advertisers and to request that when needs arise we each consider using their services
- Thank you for reading, and may we ask you to share this edition with others.

We thank you all gladly.

This autumn we have been reminded on several occasions of the links we have with our twinned Evangelische – methodistische Kirk in Recklinghausen, Germany. We hope to bring you an update on those contacts in the next edition.

The Temporary Editorial team

Additional information about Fulwood Methodist Church – Sunday Services and Worship at other times.

Each Sunday, from around 10.00AM – The Church is open for fellowship and there is an opportunity to sit quietly, if you prefer, and usually to hear the hymns and other music chosen for the day.

10.30AM – MORNING WORSHIP AND SUNDAY CLUB - At this point we all meet in Church to worship God within our tradition. All ages are welcome to meet in the Church for 10.30. Most weeks we provide a safely supervised creche for very young children whose parents/carers prefer to use such provision at any stage during our time together. In addition, there are other separate spaces to which those who wish can retreat if they find that necessary!

Normally everyone meets in Church for a short period of worship before the children and young people move to their Sunday Club which is organised according to age and led by staff with appropriate training and experience. Once each month (normally on the second Sunday),

and on other special occasions, All-Together worship enables the children and young people to remain in Church for the whole service. Some such services are also Parade Services involving the uniformed organisations.

Once each month, usually on the first Sunday, morning worship includes a celebration of Holy Communion to which all are invited.

WORSHIP AT OTHER TIMES. Special arrangements are made for services during Christian Festivals. Occasionally, a quieter service is arranged for around 4.00pm on a Sunday afternoon. These are clearly advertised beforehand in our weekly Notices and on the Church website.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals can be held by arrangements which need to be made through the Rev'd Jane Wild (01772 715134). Please ring her as necessary.

A Church mini-bus service is available on most Sunday mornings and for special events. This is a free service and information about routes, and the timetable can be obtained most Sunday mornings at Church.

11.30 AM (approx.) – after our worship concludes, many people remain to enjoy light drinks such as coffee and tea, to make new friends and to share news.

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How Fulwood Methodist Church is overseen

The Church is overseen by a Church

Council which is chaired by the Rev'd Jane Wild. Most of its members have been elected on an annual basis.

The Church Council has in turn appointed a Leadership Team whose members hold specific responsibilities currently as follows:

God for All – Ladipo Adepoju

Property – currently vacant (but see below)

Worship – Mavis Fletcher

Outreach and Service – Karen Flynn

Finance – Angel Dunnett

Learning and caring – Laura Ayles and Sue Penrith

Communications – Sonia Phillips

Governance – (but see below)

Relevant Circuit staff are also members of the Leadership team

The Secretary of the Church Council – Judith Hodgson – also attends the meeting

John Ferris, Mike Ellis and Martin Burt are lead members of the Property Committee and one may attend where appropriate.

The Church Council has also agreed that the following shall serve

- as Communion Stewards – John Butterworth, Jacqueline Clarke, Anne Garsed, Sue Hogarth, Judith Hodgson, Olivia Parkinson, Laura Ayles
- as Sunday Stewards- Sue Salisbury, Lara Adepoju, Judith Lowe, Judith Gallagher
- as Worship Stewards – Edna Armstrong, Veronica Frost, Sarah Harrison, Janet Lowes, Chris Oldham

The Church is grateful to so many people, named or unnamed above, who give of themselves to create an active, positive and inclusive Church. Please support them with your thoughts and prayers – and a smile! Please consider whether you have gifts which could serve God and our fellowship.

Opportunities for children and young people

We regard the provision of appropriate activities in a safe environment to assist with the wellbeing and development of children and young people is given a high importance in Church. The list below is correct at the time of going to print and is intended to provide interested people with an initial point of contact. Please visit the Church at the time indicated if you wish to find out more.

SUNDAY

10.30AM Sunday Club	Janet Wales
---------------------	-------------

MONDAY

4.45PM Squirrels -(4-5 yr)	Ketran Eastham
5.45PM Beavers - (6-8 yr)	Fiona Jackson
7.00PM Cubs – (8 -10 1/2 yr)	Dave Killingback

TUESDAY

7.00PM Scouts – (10 1/2 – 14 yr)	Chris Thomas
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THURSDAY

5.45PM Rainbows – (5-7 yr)	Jane Myatt
6.15PM Brownies – (7 –10 yr)	Diane Bird
7.30PM Guides – (10-14 yr)	Hannah Jones

FRIDAY

9.30AM Toddlers Group with parents/carers

Janet Porter

6.30PM Escape – (7-11 yr)

Supervision under review

8.00PM Youth Club

Supervision under review

Regular weekly and other activities for other ages

You will always be made welcome if you come along to visit sample any of the groups which are mentioned below. Information correct at time of print.

MONDAY –

6.30PM Every second Monday of the month – Out of Embers: A Bereavement Support Group held at the Black Bull – The Rev'd Jane Wild

6.30PM Every third Monday of the month Alternative Church is held at the Black Bull. A chance to socialise, with food and drink as you prefer, and for discussion, usually led by our Minister – Wendy Bennett

TUESDAY

10 – 12 Noon Weekly – the Church is open to all for tea, coffee, warmth, chat and the Good as New Stall.

10AM (fortnightly) – the A.M. Club meets fortnightly with a varied programme of speakers and activities – Dave Topping

2.00PM (fortnightly) – Friends at Fulwood; a women's group also with a varied programme – Edna Armstrong

5.00 – 6.30ish PM (every 3rd Tuesday each month) – Messy Church (friendship, fellowship, fun and food, for all ages) - Delma Whitman

7.00PM – Bible Fellowship (every 1st Tuesday of the month) usually led by the Minister – Margaret Holmes

7.00PM – Book Club (every 2nd Tuesday of the month) - fellowship, friendship, books and biscuits – Janet and Ken Wales

WEDNESDAY

10.00 AM UNTIL 12.30 Welcome Wednesday – food, activities, games, warmth and friendship and, of course, the Good as New shop - Edna and Ray Armstrong

10.30AM Midweek Holy Communion, prayers and discussion usually led by our Minister

7.30/8.00ish - WoW – a monthly Women's group – Wendy Gaskell

THURSDAY

10.30ish – L'Arche community meet for soup and crafts. Visitors welcome

2.30PM - Knitting Group – it does what it says on the tin with needles and wool! And it keeps the members in good spirits – Veronica Frost

FRIDAY

9.30AM – Toddlers' Group for Under 5s and parents/carers – Janet Porter

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