***THE AVENUE***

**STANFORD AVENUE**

**METHODIST CHURCH,**

**BRIGHTON**

 December 2022 – January 2023

**Minimum Donation 50p**

**THE AVENUE**

**Minister: Revd Dan Woodhouse Tel: 01273 508704**

**E-mail: revdanwoodhouse@gmail.com**

**Church Office Answer Phone: Tel: 01273 554141**

**E-mail:** **stanfordmethodist@btconnect.com**

**Assistant to Minister: Major Connie Croly: Tel: 01273 875376**

**Editor: Martyn Coblenz: Tel: 07724 605610**

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**A LETTER from ANDY LOWE.**

Dear friends,

Dr Arnold Kellet, a Local Preacher from Knaresborough in Yorkshire wrote a poem called Christmas Dream which goes:

Hassle, bustle,

Parcel-tussle,

Whopping shopping,

Present swapping,

Baking, caking,

Mince-pie making,

Posting, hosting,

Turkey roasting,

Greeting, treating,

Over eating,

Lunching, munching,

Telly hunching,

Drowsing, dozing,

Eyelids closing...

Now the dreaming:

Stars all gleaming,

Angels singing,

Gospel bringing,

Baby crying,

Manger lying,

God descending,

All befriending,

Intervening –

That’s the meaning –

Shepherds quaking,

Sheep forsaking –

For us, like them,

The time for waking.

My guess is that for most of you who will read this the season of Advent and Christmas will be a mixture of those two verses. We will, however hard we resist, get involved in the hustle and bustle of the card writing, present swapping, turkey roasting, telly watching, game playing whilst longing to experience the mystery and wonder of God’s love, all befriending, to earth descended, made known in baby crying, and to know the ‘Peace’ we wish each other in the cards we write.

I enjoy Christmas but for many it is a difficult time because of loneliness, stress caused by the pressure to get things right, whether it be food cooked to perfection at the right time to suit all, the choosing of the right gift, the financial pressure it causes, the being with extended family which isn’t always a positive experience. And this year with the economic situation and energy prices, the war in Ukraine it will be even more difficult than usual,

It seems to me that that we put too much pressure on ourselves at this time of year and that it would be better to spread the Christmas experience over the whole year. The giving of small gifts at random times for no other reason than we want to give, the spending of quality time with friends and family, the sharing of our time without the pressure of rushing to the next thing on our list, maintaining contact with old friends on a more regular basis rather than the once a year round robin diary of our year. Of course this is much harder than doing it all in a mad frenzied, but once it is over it’s over, rush just once a year. But, if we were able to, I think we’d probably appreciate Christmas more and be able to enter more fully its wonder and joy. And we would also be able to make the message of Christmas real every day of the year.

The message of the Incarnation is that God is made known in the world. In Jesus we believe the Christ has most fully been seen in the world, certainly his followers thought so which is why we have stories connected with his birth, life and death. But the same Christ is made known to the world through us as people who allow that Christ to be born in us and be seen through us.

May you know the peace and joy of Christ in your hearts this Christmas, and may you be God’s gift and Christ’s light to all you meet.

Andy

**A Letter from Connie Croly – Assistant Minister.**

I would like to commence by wishing everyone a very happy Christmas. May the presence of the Saviour of the world be with you!

I love this time of the year. So much has happened during recent times. Due to covid, things have changed. We have had to learn to live with these changes. Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that ‘Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.’

A few years ago I was standing in the middle of a shopping precinct in London when I felt particularly moved. I listened to the sound of Christmas carols filling the precinct. I looked at the people passing by. Some of them were singing the words. But what particularly moving was that so many people were hearing the Christmas message. The sad thing is that some folks put the Christ away with the Christmas decorations as soon as the festive season was over.

Many will enjoy television programmes – and there are some really good ones. But it is possible to hide the Bethlehem scene behind our television sets, the giving of expensive presents, and overeating to name but a few. All of us should be aware of the danger of crowding Christmas with various things and so push the real meaning right to the back. Great things happen during the festive season.

I recall helping with a meal for those who were homeless. It took place in a large spacious building. Behind it all was a well-known building firm. The firm provided everything. We were just there to serve the meal and encourage all to sing the lovely Christmas carols. We felt we were on holy ground.

I love carol singing. Let me share some of my experiences with you. I recall as a teenager singing carols on a street corner in Dublin, where I come from. There wasn’t a crowd of us. On the occasion I am thinking of there were three of us singing and one man playing a cornet. For me, the joy of Christmas was so real.

I remember another time being out with a group in Yorkshire. It was so cold that the valves of the brass instruments froze.... But his could not take away the joy of proclaiming the Christmas message.

We are so blessed with our Church. We can meet together for our services, quizzes, and lots of other events. The wonderful thing is that this is open to everyone. This Christmas we will proclaim the coming of Jesus to earth and the happenings of that first Christmas.

I have shared with you some carolling experiences. I want to share one more. I stood with a group singing, ‘Once is Royal David’s City. There’s nothing unusual about that, except that it was July. I was in Bethlehem. We visited one of the many churches there. We were invited to join in singing carols. After all, we were in the city of Christ’s birth. We sang carols. Christmas joy in July? Why not?

May God bless each one of you. Have a wonderful Christmas and experience the presence of the Christ of Bethlehem through the year.

*Connie Croly*

*Martyn – Thanks Connie for this lovely Christmas Message.*

**LUNCHEON CLUB**

**Lunch Club Christmas Party**

Our annual Christmas party will be held on Wednesday 14th December at 12.30 pm in the church hall.

This is free to all Lunch Club members. There will be a full Christmas dinner with a vegetarian alternative. This will be followed by tea, coffee, mince pies and after dinner mints. We will then have some carol singing and readings.

All church members are welcome to join us at a cost of £6 for the meal. We would be grateful if church members would like to come along, please phone one of us to book a place before Monday 5th December to give us an idea of numbers.

Ann 01273 887843. Josie 01273 276123 Christine 01273 500871

**We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year**

We will be taking a 2 week break over Christmas and Lunch Club will recommence on Wednesday January 4th.

*Martyn – Thanks for this Christine, I hope it all goes well.*

**Message from Pam Challis**

Thank you very much to all you lovely folk out there at the Avenue and elsewhere in the Circuit who sent cards and messages of sympathy following the death of Ivor.

They were all greatly appreciated and cherished.

Pam & Norman

**MUMURATION ARTS.**

Stanford Avenue Methodist Church's resident community theatre company has recently been awarded funding from the arts council to start an additional women's fire in Crawley. With the success of our project Wyld Mother's Fire in Brighton we are now looking to develop our work with new mothers in other areas of the south east. Parents have seen a lot of changes over the past years, with mother's particularly vulnerable to pandemic measures that stopped childcare provision, schooling and the support structures vital to bringing up healthy, happy children but also happy healthy mothers. Many groups have reported that the mental health pressures of pandemic measures have now lifted, but this is not the case for mothers. At our Brighton fire mothers told us about birthing alone, the lack of post-birth care and that their babies had never seen another child. As we move forward, we want to give a voice to new mothers and create support structures that are still lacking post pandemic.

**Fitness**

With COVID restrictions meaning we can now exercise as before Matthew has lifted many of the health and safety measures that restricted his activities during the pandemic. He has chosen to keep a cap on numbers as many clients enjoy a little more space than they might have accepted before. This has meant that many in his community have returned with a renewed appreciation of the joys of sharing a workout in a social setting. The shared experience of exercising together can't be underestimated. Many studies have shown that one of the most important indicators of long term health is regular social interaction. When you take this with another key indicator of long term health, exercise, you have a winning formula for physical and mental health. With clients ranging from 13 to 78, Matthew's classes show that enjoying the benefits of exercising can be enjoyed at any age and wherever you are on your fitness journey.

Matt

**SINGING GROUP.**

We are a group of Church Members who love to praise God in song. This year, it has been wonderful that we have been able to lead the singing during morning service, after the disruption of COVID.

Instead of meeting on Friday evenings, we now practise any unfamiliar items after Church when necessary.

It will soon be Christmas and we are looking forward to participating in our Candlelight Service on 18th December at 6-30 pm. We will be practising our special items after Church during November and December.

If you would like to join us, please make yourself known to Angela Patching or myself you will very welcome.

We would like to wish all the congregation at Stanford Avenue a very Happy Christmas.

Janet Quantick.

*Martyn – It always sounds great on a Sunday when the group opens the Service.*

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

We continue to pray for June Lawson, Nadine & Gary Pugh, Ann Collins, Vic & Margaret on their recent loss, Sylvia & Ray Smith, Debbie Johnson, Jean Griffin, Doug Butler, Liz Wakeling & Amy Codling (Leaders of Scouts & Girls’ Brigade), Phil Codling, Ian Codling, Maureen Knell, Sheila Whyte, Jean & Geoff Starks, Wynn Funnell, Gill Challen, Margaret Trengenza, Pam & Norman Challis, the family of Brenda Nurcombe, Karen King & Family on their recent loss, Faye & Colin Stillwell on their recent loss.

As always, please let me know if you want me to remove any names, add to them or update us with news of any of the above.

We of course continue to pray for our Circuit staff as they minister to us – namely – Revd’s Andy Lowe, Deborah Cornish, Dan Woodhouse, Heather Leake Date, Major Connie Croly, Sue Harrington, and all our Lay Workers and Local Preachers.

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**MEMOIRS OF IVOR**

I must explain before I start that what follows is my memories of a very dear friend many years ago. In more recent times we have had little or no face to face contact. We have however always remained in contact, specifically at Birthdays and Christmas. Ivor was Godfather to all our children and always performed his duties diligently. Should the need ever have arisen, I know he would always have been there to help out.

Ivor and I first met in the mid-50s when he was living with his parents in Shirley, which, for those not familiar with the area, is near Croydon, and I was with my parents in Croydon. We were both members of Shirley Methodist Church where we were teachers in the Sunday school and morning Junior Church. The Sunday school was held in the afternoon in the Church Hall where there must have been about 6 or 8 classes each again of 6 or 8 children. Each week we had to tell a story which was published for us in a yearly book. We had to learn this story and tell it to the children in our class.

The Junior Church was organised somewhat differently and held on the same lines as the Church service itself. All families would start off the service together in the Church. Then after a hymn, prayer and a short address to the children by the Vicar, the children and their leaders would retire to an adjacent room in the Hall where they would have their own service, on exactly similar lines to that continuing in the Church, but specifically aimed at the children. Ivor and I were both leaders of this Junior Church selecting the hymns, writing and delivering prayers and the talk – no book to guide us this time. This junior church was a lovely idea and was the perfect way to introduce children to church membership and thence regular membership of the church.

In connection with Junior Church, the Methodist youth department used to hold a conference each year, I believe at Easter time, and I can remember Ivor and I going to at least three of these led by the famous (at the time) Eileen Tressider. I can remember us going to Culford which near Bury St Edmunds, to a boarding school which was in the same grounds right opposite Durham Cathedral and a third in Weston Super Mare. All thoroughly interesting and enjoyable.

On a personal level I went away at least twice with Ivor and his parents to holiday cottages, once on the Flynn peninsular in Wales and once to Cowes on the Isle of Wight. I believe when we were in Wales, we all went on a day’s outing, by paddle steamer, to the Isle of Man. We were frequent visitors to each other’s homes. When he came to us, we had many a game of table tennis and billiards.

As I started off by saying, this is all a very long time ago and since first I got married, almost 60 years ago, and a little more recently, but still a long time ago, Ivor married Pam, we have led our separate lives but always stayed in contact with each other. I have always valued Ivor as a very loyal and trusted friend who I know would always have been there for us should the need ever have arisen. Writing these short notes has brought back many happy memories for me.

*Martyn - Thanks to Dave a long lasting friend of Ivor. Unfortunately the item was late for the last magazine.*

**LINK TO HOPE SHOEBOX APPEAL.**

Can I say a really huge “Thank You” to all who contributed in any way to this year’s Shoebox Appeal.

The response was amazing, and we spent 2 evenings after the girls had gone home, putting the boxes together and many folk will have seen them in the church.

I was able to deliver 20 completed and wrapped gift boxes to the depot in Ferring on a bright sunny day.

When the thank you, poster is received I will put it on the Notice board in the Fellowship Room.

Again, many thanks Amy

*Martyn – Please say a big thank you from the Church to all at Girls Brigade.*

**9th Brighton Girls’ Brigade**

When we started Brigade again in September, unfortunately not all of the girls returned.   We are now only a very small group, and, on some occasions, we only have one girl attend.

Please, if you know of any young girls who would like to join us on a Wednesday evening, point them or their parents in our direction.

We are busy with badge work, and most weeks usually make something that can be taken home.  When a couple of the girls first joined us, they were not able to skip, but over the weeks this is something that they have mastered  and now really enjoy.

We all join together in wishing all the readers of the “Avenue” a Peaceful and Happy Christmas and New year.

Lis, Karen, and Amy

*Martyn – Please everyone, try & help them out with new members.*

**REMEMBRANCE DAY.**

What a lovely service we enjoyed on 13th November with our own Geoff Harrington taking the service & his youngest son Tim laying the last post on his guitar. We heard about some history of those that were killed during the First World War. It is always good to remember those that gave their lives for our freedom today.

It was also good to see two of our members in Church wearing their service medals namely John Merrington & Jim Gibson. You can see them proudly showing them off below.





**7th Brighton Scout Group.**

Here we are nearly Christmas, how time flies.

Cubs have made Bird Boxes to gain DIY badge over the last few weeks.

Now progressing with Local History, have found out about

Trams,Booth Museum,Aquarium,Volks Railway, Daddy Long Legs. and also famous local people, Including Fatboy Slim aka Norman Cook and Nick Cave!!

Scouts have been doing various challenges e.g. Dropping an egg without breaking it, needs to have some covering around it.no mess! Cooked sausages outside.as well as basic Scouting Skills.

On 6th December we have our Annual Carol Service starting at 6.15pm

All are welcome to attend, Mince Pies and Mulled wine to follow.

We have a Cub who will be going to the Mayors Parlour in February to receive his Cub Scout Silver Award.

Only a few weeks until Christmas then back on 10th January 2023.

All that’s left to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Thanks for all your support as ever.

Liz Wakeling (Group Scout Leader)

7th Brighton Scout Group.

*Martyn – Thanks Liz you have all certainly been busy. Keep up the good work.*

**BEATITUDE FOR THE AGED.**

Blessed are they who understand

My faltering step and palsied hand

Blessed are they who know my ears today

Must strain to catch things they say

Blessed are they who seem to know

My eyes are dim, and wits are slow

Blessed are they who look away

When coffee was spilt on the table today

Blessed are they with a cheery smile

Who stop to chat a little while

Blessed are they who never say

You’ve told that story twice today

Blessed are they who know the way

To bring back memories of yesterday

Blessed are they who make it known

I’m loved, respected and not alone

Blessed are they who ease the days

On my journey home in loving ways

**FOOTPRINTS.**

Upon the shore, I walked with Him at even

And I looked back upon the path we’d trod

And in the sand, I traced our way at even

And I was glad I’d walked through life with God

For side by side we’d journeyed through together

All through the world’s wide wilderness of care

And side by side we’d journeyed through to even

Safe at his side the Lord my God had brought me home

But in my joy, I caught a strain of sadness

To give me pause when thinking of my way

For on the shore I saw he’d left me lonely

When I had most the need of him to stay

When I was tried, he’d left me worn and wondering

He’d left me alone when I was fighting fears

He’d left me tread the steepest slopes in solitude

Before he came back to my side to dry my tears

But the Lord drew near to me in comfort

And in his tenderness, he made it plain

That in times when dread and darkness threatened

He was my shield and shelter from pain

For on his shoulders he was gently bearing

And on his shoulders, I from harm was free

The single trace of footprints of the Master

The single trace of footprints shows he carried me

Son on the shore I walk with him at even

I face the latter days of life secure

For if my pilgrimage reserves me sorrow

The footprints show that He is strong and sure

If I am near the gates of heaven weary

No longer strong enough to stride alone

The footprints show that he is there to carry me

The footprints show the Lord my God will bear me home.

**CHRISTMAS QUIZ.**

1. Which country started the tradition of putting up Christmas Trees.
2. How many ghosts show up in *A Christmas Carol*?
3. In *Home Alone*, where are the McCallisters going on holiday when they leave Kevin behind?
4. How many gifts were given in total in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' song?
5. In which Christmas movie does Tom Hanks play 6 of the characters?
6. How many of Rudolph's fellow reindeers' names start with 'D'?
7. Which city has been donating Trafalgar Square’s Christmas tree to London every year since 1947?
8. What is the best-selling Christmas single of all time?
9. What time is the King’s/Queen’s speech traditionally broadcast on Christmas Day?
10. What was the UK Christmas number one in 2010?

**FUNDRAISING UPDATE.**

October and November have been busy months for fundraising events. The fashion show on 14th October was such a fun evening with Mags, Jeni and Lorna taking to the cat walk with the professionals modelling a few of the large selection of ladies clothing and accessories available. The total raised as £304.80.

Pete & Lisa gave us some tricky questions at our Quiz on 29th October, but I think we all learned some facts we didn’t know! Another great evening and another £260 raised.

Our Annual Christmas and Craft fair on 26th November was an amazing day with so many visitors, some who had never been to one of our events. With the Christmas music playing and so many lovely things available on the stalls, it definitely was beginning to look a lot like Christmas. The total went up and up and my Sunday evening message was £1533.00. An incredible amount.

These events could not take place without the support of so many of you. Thank you for your generosity of donations of items, money and time.

We have lots of ideas for future events which you can see in Dates for Your Diary, so keep a look out for them.

We still need your thoughts and ideas for celebrating our Quasquicentiennal in 2023. 125 Years our Church has stood on the corner on Stanford Avenue and Southdown Avenue welcoming worshippers and visitors, and we need to celebrate this. Please let any of the Stewards or fundraising team know what you think.

Many thanks from your Fund-Raising team.



Christmas for children is magical. But there are children all over the UK who will wake up on Christmas morning to nothing but a cold house. no toys under the tree, no Christmas dinner or maybe no dinner at all.

Your support could help stop children going hungry. Your gift could help make sure children have the essentials. You could help keep children warm. And you could help put the magic back into Christmas.

Go to Action for children be a secret Santa appeal



Year to date:

February 2022 boxes and donations £263.46

Summer coffee morning £473

August Boxes donations £ 88.90.

Total £825.36.

Thank you all!

Ways to donate/ get involved.

Stanford Avenue Christmas carol service 18th December 2022

Be a secret Santa AFC appeal go to acf secret Santa appeal

Telegraph appeal go to 01512841927

telegraph.co.uk/2022appeal (thanks to Margaret for this info)

*Rudolf Steiner.*

In the deep ground of our soul lives, sure to triumph, spirit sun; true forces of our feeling mind can sense it in the inward life of winter; and hearts springing hope sees the triumph of sun spirit shine in blessed Christmas light, as an image in the highest life in deep winters darkest night

*From Symphony in blue Kate bush*

I spent a lot of time looking at Blue The colour of my room and my mood: blue on the walls out of my mouth; the sort of blue between clouds, when the sun comes out, the sort of blue in those eyes you get hung up about.

When that feeling of meaningless sets in, go blowing my mind on God: the light in the dark, with neon arms, The meek he seeks, the beast he calms, the head of the good soul department

Happy Christmas thanks for all your support for AFC

God Bless you all Gaynor.

**MEDITATION & MUSIC.**

The date of the next Music & Meditation meetings are :-

21st December

The meeting takes place at 2-30 – 16-00 pm in the Fellowship Room.

Best wishes Sylvia Lord.

**LAST DAY for FEBRUARY – MARCH 2023 magazine contributions will be MONDAY 23rd JANUARY.**

You will be able to send contributions via E-Mail: stanfordmethodist@btconnect.com, or, by post to Stanford Avenue Church with ‘For Magazine’ on the front of the envelope.

**WHO AM I?**

**My favourite TV programme is The Darling Buds of May**

**My favourite film is Little Women**

**My hobbies Needlework & Knitting**

**I have lived in the same Road for 86 years**

**My ambition was to raise a happy family**

**My favourite food is Dark Chocolate**

**My favourite colour is Pink**

**My favourite animal is a Guinea Pig**

**My favourite country to visit is Australia**

**I was born in Brighton**

**PAUSE FOR THOUGHT**

I’ve just listened to the song “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas” and it is.

It began to look a lot like Christmas back in August. I went to a Garden Centre and saw Christmas decorations, gifts and cards. Looking at the cards only two gave a hint of the real meaning of Christmas. On one there was a snow scene with a well lit Church in the centre, another had Mary dressed in beautiful clothes nursing what looked like a six month old Jesus in a very pleasant looking stable.

Recently I told that story at a meeting, Afterwards one lady said a couple of weeks ago she was looking at a large display of Christmas cards, but there were no religious cards at all. She asked a young worker if that had any real Christmas cards. He went off and came back with some, but none were on show.

I always get very nostalgic at this time of year. I remember Christmas at Dorset Gardens Church (the old one).My parents were caretakers there and we lived next door. All the family came, and we went to the Christmas morning service. The Church was always packed with people of all ages. The back to 33, Dorset Gardens were we had lovely meals, games and a lot of laughter. All very wonderful. My favourite memory is of us all gathering around the piano and singing lots of carols. We always sang the following: -

Cradled in a manger,

meanly laid the son of man his head

sleeping his first earthly slumber

where the oxen had been fed.

Happy were those shepherds listening

To the Holy Angel’s word

Happy they withing that stable

Worshipping their infant Lord.

Happy all who hear the message

of his coming from above.

Happier still who hail his coming

And with praises greet His love.

Blessed Saviour, Christ most holy

In a manger thou did’st rest

Can’st thou stoop again, yet lower

And abide within my breast.

And to those who never listened

To the message of thy birth

Who have winter, but no Christmas

Bringing them thy peace on earth

Send to these thy joyful tidings

By all people, in cradle lowe

Be there heard the Christmas anthem

Praise to God, the Christ has come.

This year, for many it will be a very different Christmas, with everything so expensive, do they have enough for presents, food heating?

Let’s think of them, and the lonely, sick, dying on the streets etc. Those who will be caring and nursing people.

That said, I hope you all have a Blessed Christmas.

Here’s to a peaceful 2023.

Love & Prayers

Wynn

*Martyn – Once again a very thought provoking and loving message. Thanks*

**CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED.**

Please, please, please send me your items for the Church Magazine. Especially as Wynn has finished her item on being a Red/Bluecoat. I’m sure that some of you have some very interesting stories or items that others would be interested in.

Please send them to the stanfordmethodist@btconnect.com or drop them through the Church letterbox.

**ANSWER TO WHO AM I.**

**GILL CHALLEN**

**Look out for the next one in the February /March issue.**

**ANSWERS TO CHRISTMAS QUIZ.**

1. Germany
2. Four
3. Paris
4. 364
5. The Polar Express
6. Three Dancer, Donner, Dasher
7. Oslo, Norway
8. Bing Crosby – White Christmas
9. 3 pm
10. When we Collide by Matt Cardle

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.**

4th December World Aids Day Service 18-00 - Dorset Gardens

6th December Cub/Scouts Carol Service 18-15

18th December Christmas Service for Families & Young Children 16-00

18th December Carol Service 18-30

20th December Local Preachers Meeting 19-30 - Hove

25th December Christmas Morning Service 10-30am

28th January Quiz

22nd February Ash Wednesday Service 19-30 – Dorset Gardens

18th March Spring & Craft Fair

23rd March Circuit Meeting 19-30

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