

HOCKLEY &
HAWKWELL
METHODIST CHURCH



LINK 2025
LET'S LIGHT UP
CHRISTMAS

A Christmas Message



Dear Friends,

It's Christmas! It's Christmas again—hooray! One of the things I love most about this season is the decorations, especially the lights that shine on Christmas trees and across our streets. They brighten the darkest time of the year. As I enjoy these beautiful displays, I'm reminded that Jesus is the world's true light.

The Bible says: "*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light*" (John 1:6–8, NIV). That light was Jesus Christ. On the night He was born, a bright star led the wise men to Bethlehem. The birth of Jesus is good news for the world, because He came to dispel the darkness of evil, comfort the broken hearted, and bring salvation and justice.

Have you caught the buzz of this good news of Christmas? And if so, how are you sharing it? Too often we share the good news and do good only at Christmas, as if it were a box to tick. But the good news of Jesus is for every day. Share it at work, at home, and in the community. Don't worry about what people might think—just share. Let every day be Christmas for you as you believe in the birth of the Saviour and put a smile on someone's face by doing good daily.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Yours sincerely,
Rev Agnes Sam

Zoom Bible Study



On Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm you can join in Zoom Bible studies, which are usually led by Rev Agnes. It's open to all.

<https://zoom.us/j/94827790660?pwd=I2cnXgWqogtb4222LfdLTc13yTgQem.1> Meeting ID: 948 2779 0660 Passcode: 425539



Reporting from the Circuit Meeting

In the last Link I said I would report back on the discussions about the distribution of ministers when Rev Zena leaves the Circuit in August.

The November meeting was held at Belfairs but there was no debate about the distribution of ministers throughout the churches because there was urgent business to do regarding Thundersley Church. The members there have decided to 'cease to meet' (a phrase indicating the intention to no longer worship). It has been agreed that the building and associated groups meeting there will become a Wellness Centre for the community. In order for this to happen, the Circuit had to agree to take responsibility for the Centre and all the associated ramifications had to be discussed, alternatives presented and decisions made by voting.

Important as this was, it was frustrating. We need some security and stability to be able to plan with confidence and have the chance to develop those plans. We are now on our fourth minister since Phil Warrey left. Agnes has shared some of her ideas with the stewards on how to develop and deepen our fellowship and together with her they are also trying to offer something different for the families and young people as they grow out of Brightstars and Messy Church. Having a change of minister would not be helpful

At the end of the meeting I spoke to the Superintendent, Rev Peter Moorhouse, to find out when the decisions were to be made about minister distribution and he told me that the Senior Leadership Team were aware of the number of changes of minister that had taken place here and although plans have not been finalised, it has been definitely agreed that Hockley (and Trinity who are in a similar position) will stay with the same minister when the reorganisation takes place. This was great news for the stewards and a relief. Peter also gave us permission to make this decision known to you.

So that's your Christmas present from the Circuit!! Happy Christmas!!

Another matter of interest is that Anne Briant has been accepted as a fully qualified local preacher. Her accreditation service will be on 18th January, at UMC Great Wakering at 3:00pm.

Deacon Sarah also reported that a small group of young people had attended 3Generate this year and as a result she is looking to start a Circuit Youth group.

The Circuit Transport Policy was approved and accepted. You may hear more about this as the Church Council works out the implications.

Another piece of organisational information is that on most third Wednesdays of each month, Welcome Wednesday is suspended so that Church Council can meet to discuss business and plans with Agnes.

Muriel

Church Council Stewardship Meeting



Here are some of the points from the meeting on 12th November:

- Anne has completed a Safeguarding Audit and a revised Safeguarding Policy was agreed
- Our Church services over Christmas were agreed – there are details in this edition of The Link
- Anne is looking at a Social Media policy
- The annual accounts were agreed subject to audit
- The repairs to the roof and front of Church were confirmed (see details below)
- It was agreed that we would have a “Greeting Tree” for Christmas messages, with donations to All We Can in lieu of the cost of cards and postage
- We’re making a donation of £100 to the Southend Food Bank
- Next year’s Annual Church Meeting will be on 7th March

Introducing Adam Markham



I grew up in Shoebury and began my policing career with Essex Police in 2008. In 2012, I transferred to the Metropolitan Police, where I have served as a firearms officer across Royalty and Specialist Protection, Armed Response, and now Aviation Policing at London City Airport.

Outside of work, I enjoy travelling to experience different cultures, camping with the kids, and both watching and competing in strongman events.

In 2015, Becky and I moved to Hockley, where we later welcomed our daughters, Betsy and Mabel, who are now 9 and 6. We began attending Hockley & Hawkwell Methodist Church when Betsy was two, and it quickly became an important part of our family life. Mabel made her first appearance at the church when she was just 4 days old, and since then

faith has become a significant part of my life—thanks in large part to the love and fellowship we've found within the Hockley & Hawkwell Methodist community.

As I've grown closer to God, my life has become more peaceful and joyful. Faith has grounded me, given me perspective, and enabled me to do things I never thought were possible. It continues to be a source of strength, purpose, and encouragement in everything I do.

Adam



The Greeting Tree

There will be a tree at the back of Church before Christmas so that our Christmas Greetings to Members and Friends can be displayed. We hope that you will, as in recent years, donate the cost of your cards and postage to All We Can so that once again we can buy some “Extraordinary Gifts” to help transform the lives of people living in poverty.

Please have a hangar or punched hole on your card.

You can make a donation by:

- placing cash in the box that will be at the back of Church
- making a bank transfer online using these details: Account: Hockley & Hawkwell Methodist Church /c No. 00895598 Sort Code 20-70-93 Reference “All We Can”. **If you donate in this way please inform Patrick at hmethstreasurer@gmail.com.**
- Using the card reader, also at the back of Church. Chip and Pin, Click and Pay, Google Pay or Apple Pay, etc. **Please add the description “All We Can”.**

A Christmas Wish from Di

May it be Christmas in your heart this day,
May the great love that beckons all mankind
Become for you the life, the truth, the way,
The star that burns forever in your mind!
When, as it must the snow begins to melt,
When the red berries, one by one, have died,
Shall we remember how the wise men knelt?
Or how God's love is often crucified?

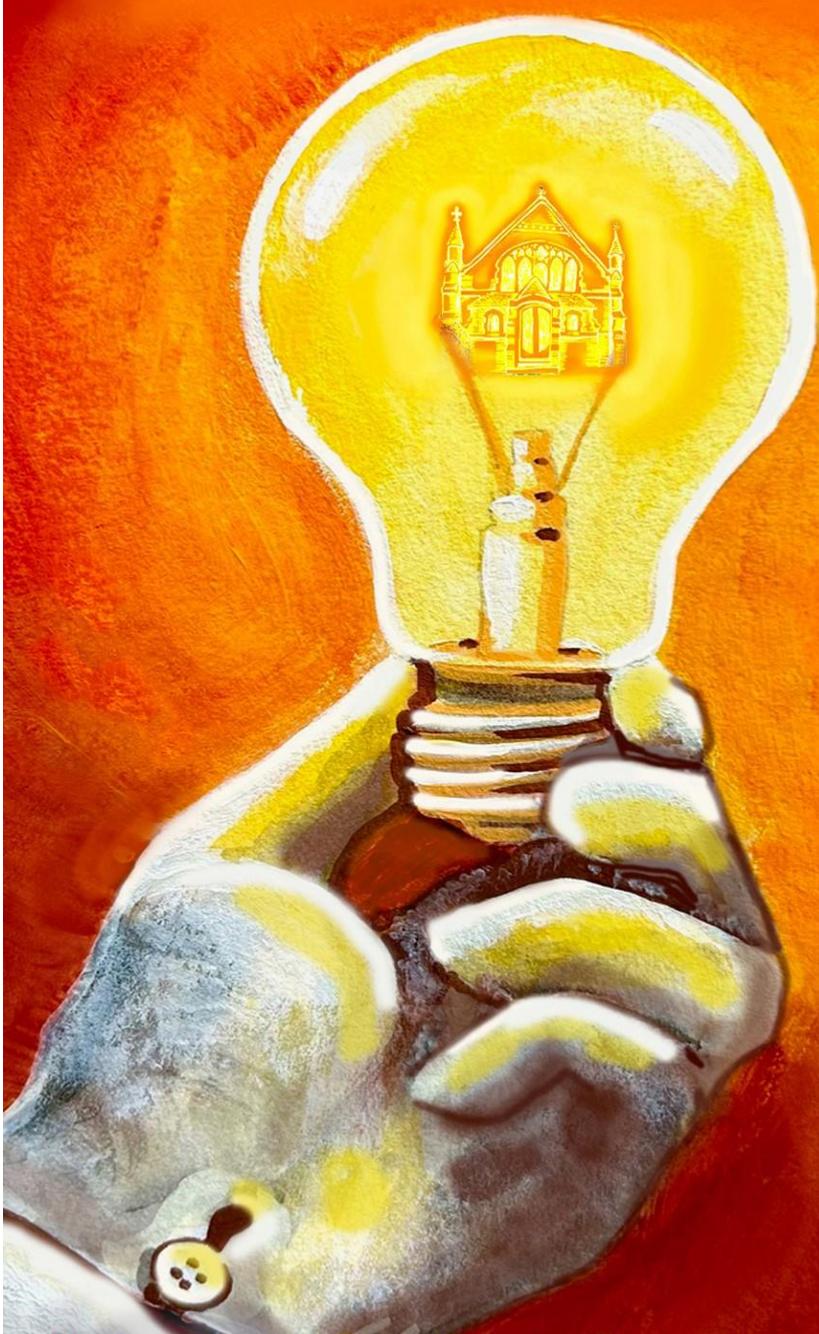


May you remember Christmas when the sun
Comes pouring through the leaves at summer's height:
Or when some distant busy day is done
And the first star grows faintly on your sight !
May you remember Christmas in the rain!
Or Christmas in the labyrinth of years!
May you remember Christmas in your pain,
and Christmas in your joy and in your tears.

If when we take a little flame to start
The steadied candles on the tinselled tree
There could be, too, a candle in the heart
To burn and burn for all the world to see!
How it would spread that light - how it would, then,
Turn it's bright beams upon the way ahead
Searching for Christmas in the hearts of men
searching for life in places that were dead

This ,then, my gift; and this my wish for you,
Not you alone-but all whom you hold dear:-
That there may be a Christmas running through
The threads of this and every other year.

Di



LET'S LIGHT UP

**TOY & GIFT & PARADE SERVICE
SUN 7TH DEC 11.15AM**

**BRING TOYS & GIFTS OR GIFT VOUCHERS FOR
THE SAFE STEPS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CHARITY**

**MESSY NATIVITY 4 - 5.30PM
TUES 16TH DEC CRAFT & NATIVITY PLAY FOR ALL, PARTY TEA.**

**CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT
SUN 21ST DEC 4PM
CAFE CHURCH TEA & MINCE PIES. BRING A LIT
TABLE DECORATION. NO MORNING SERVICE.**

**CHRISTINGLE CHRISTMAS EVE
WED 24TH DEC 4PM BRING AN ORANGE
BRING FAMILY & FRIENDS FOR A SPECIAL START TO CHRISTMAS**

CHRISTMAS

TOY & GIFT and PARADE SERVICE

Sun 7th Dec 11:15am
Led by Rev Agnes Sam

Refreshments from 10:30am. We're asking again for toys and gifts for the Safe Steps Domestic Violence Charity which now covers all ages. Please provide gifts unwrapped but in a gift bag. Gift tokens also welcome.

LET'S LIGHT UP

CHRISTMAS

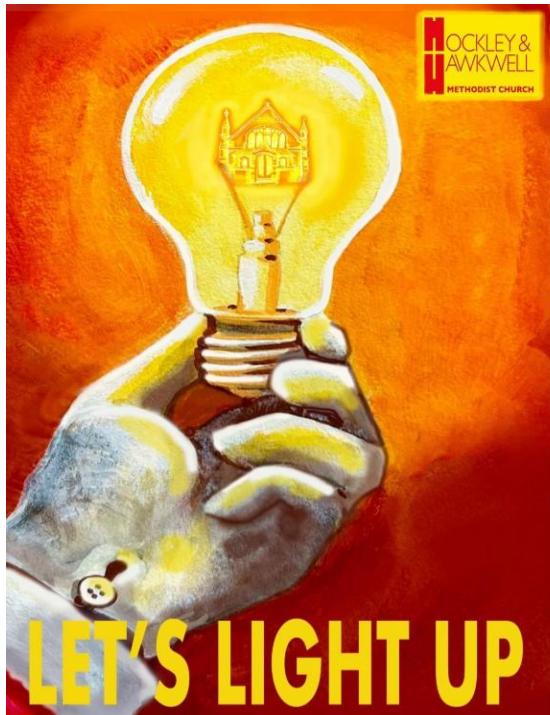
Messy Nativity

Tues 16th December
4:00pm – 5:30pm.

Christmas Crafts and a Nativity play for all to join in. Please bring or wear a costume or just bring a headdress. And we'll share a Party Tea. All welcome.

LET'S LIGHT UP

CHRISTMAS



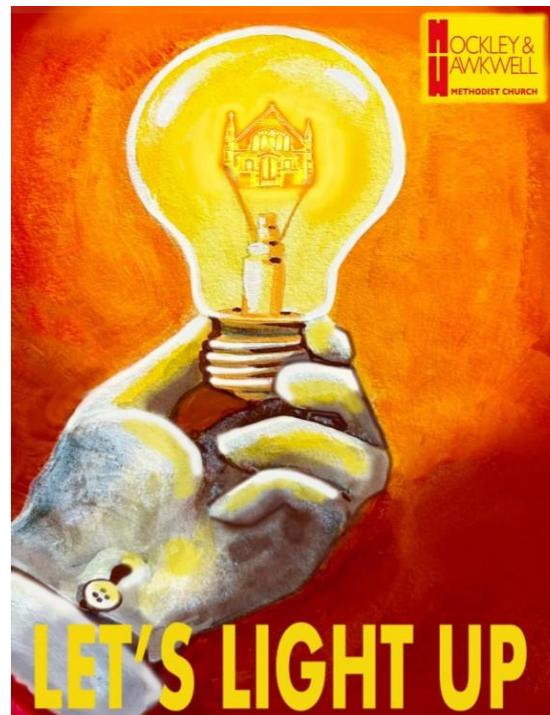
Carols by Candlelight

Sun 21st December
4:00pm

Café Church format with tea/coffee and mince pies served during the service.
Rev Agnes Sam will lead us.

Please bring a lit table decoration.

CHRISTMAS



Christingles on Christmas Eve

Wed 24th December
4:00pm

An event for all the family with
Rev Agnes Sam. Bring an
orange, make Christingles
together, find out what they mean

CHRISTMAS

Services after Christmas Eve

Thursday 25th December Christmas Day

No service at Hockley but there's a United Service at Rochford Methodist Church starting at 10:30am, led by Rev Agnes Sam. If you would like a lift, please speak to one of the Stewards

Sunday 28th December – Christmas Wind Down!

11:15am -Café-style Church led by the Stewards. Tea, coffee, etc. in Church. Bring your favourite present, share your pleasure in it.



Upcoming building work



A water leak was recently detected on the front wall of the Church behind the sound system controls. The source of the leak has been investigated, and the Church Council has agreed to remedial works.

The work will require scaffolding at the front of the Church, externally, on the patio area. Work was originally intended to begin in the week commencing 15th December 2025 but has been delayed until 20th January (weather permitting). The work is likely to take 3 - 4 days

Access to the Church and car park will not be affected.

Peter Bennett

On behalf of the Property Committee

The Coffee Rota



We still have a few vacancies for volunteers on our coffee rota.

June retired from the rota this year after many years of providing refreshments for us on Sundays, and Vivien has moved away. My thanks go to them for their unfailing support. Anne and Valerie have successfully stepped in and also managed to hold the fort between them whilst my new hip has been healing. Many thanks for that, ladies!

If anyone would like to join us, we would be happy to explain your duties. Nothing too arduous, and only a commitment of approximately one Sunday in four. If you feel you can help, just give me a call on 07483839546

Many thanks,

Di

Christmas Bazaar – THANK YOU!

Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to everybody involved in the organising and running of the Christmas bazaar for all your time, effort, donations and everything else in between, **£712.75** was raised for the Church which is fantastic. We are extremely grateful for the help, support and generosity of everybody. Thank you.

Gill, June & team

Gill's Recipe for a Christmas Bazaar

- 1 Remember that you can't do it on your own
- 2 Begin by talking to the Church Council **especially** the Minister
- 3 This is a **Social and Fundraising** event so **ensure** that there are lots of opportunities for as many areas of Church life as possible to get involved (**very important**).
- 4 **Fail to prepare/prepare to fail**
- 5 A successful Bazaar depends on all the Church family joining in
- 6 So as a Church we should give ourselves a deserved pat on the back!
- 7 Save the date for the next Christmas Bazaar immediately after the last one – it's on 14th November 2026, always the Saturday after Remembrance Sunday (*and it's already in the Church online Calendar!*)



Jane and Gill
and a wonderful team!



PS I still have some **Meaningful Chocolate Company Advent Calendars**, which include the story of Christmas. They're not available in the shops but phone me on 07518027291 and you can have one for £4.50.

Gill

Used Postage Stamps



Just a reminder that we are still collecting used postage stamps which go to the charity providing guide dogs for the blind.

If you manage to save a few over the Christmas period especially, there is a basket at the back of the church in which to place them. Every little helps!

Many thanks to all who have contributed this year.

Di

Benfleet Methodist Church – Fusion+

Fusion is a Youth Group split into two sections, one for children up to year 6 and one for children in years 7 to 11. There are around 30 youngsters in the lower group and up to 20 in the older group.



Until now Sharon has run the two groups which run consecutively on a Friday evening but it is very tiring going from 5.00 pm through to nearly 9.00 pm so we are seeking a leader for the older group which meets from 7.00 to 8.30 pm, setting up from 6.45 pm. It is principally an occasion for social activities but there is a quiet and reflective time during each week and the children are encouraged to participate in this.

There is a fuller job description together with details of the remuneration.

If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity please contact: Richard Reeves reeves221@btinternet.com or 0780 176 8478

WESLEY THEATRE GROUP PRESENTS

Wesley
THEATRE GROUP

Alice in Wonderland
A Pantomime by Ben Crocker

FRI 5 DEC 7.30PM
SAT 6 DEC 2PM & 6PM
WESLEY HALL, ELM ROAD | LEIGH-ON-SEA

BOX OFFICE 07813 553080
BY KIND PERMISSION OF BEN CROCKER PANTOMIMES | BOOKING ESSENTIAL

TICKETS: £7
CHILDREN: £5
FAMILY TICKET (2A & 2C): £20
BUY ONLINE: WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/WESLEY-THEATRE-GROUP

Christmas Festival

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
High Street, Great Wakering

SAT 13TH DECEMBER
10.30am - 3.00pm

Visit our Wonderful Christmas Displays

Raffle & Tombola

Teas/Coffees/Cakes/Lunches

Greeting Cards

Bric-a-brac

SPECIAL ATTRACTION
Great Wakering Academy choir singing from 11.30 am

Come and join in the fun

Thanks to everybody who has contributed to this issue of The Link but especially to Billy again for the front cover. We hope you all have a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas

Muriel & Mike

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