

THE INDICATOR

Beckenham Methodist Church



*A Christ Centred Community Church
Winter 2025*

MEMORIES

I've been struck over the last month about how often we are encouraged to 'remember'. Even before Remembrance Day, we hear the old rhyme of 'Remember, remember, the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot. I see no reason why gunpowder treason should ever be forgot'. We call to mind the time that the monarchy and parliamentary systems were threatened with overthrow, and how that was defeated.

Then we move straight into Remembrance Day on 11th November, with all its solemnity and pain. We remember on that day the cost of the peace that we now enjoy; the sacrifice of those who gave their lives to overcome human evil.

Then, soon enough after this, we again share Communion, with the words of Jesus echoing down through the ages; 'Remember me as often as you do this'. This is our reminder that there was another war against evil and death that was fought and won on our behalf by Jesus. A new peace was realised in potential, a peace that directs us to change the world for the better, until freedom and peace for all people is achieved.

I suppose that we could ask ourselves how we are meant to move forward in life if we are weighed down with the call to remember so much. I believe that the answer lies in Hegel's observation that 'The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history'. The key with all this remembering is to learn from it. Remembering something is not an act in itself, but there is a purpose, a goal to this. We remember the past so that we can act differently in the future.

What we learn from Guy Fawkes is that sometimes a 'desperate disease requires a dangerous remedy'. Are we willing to change things before they reach a point of crisis, requiring an act of violence to achieve freedom? Please understand that I'm not on the side of Guy, but I do question whether we should act righteously so that we do not put others in such a terrible position that they can see no way other than to use violence to achieve their freedom.

We learn a similar lesson from both terrible World Wars. The first war was born out of the greed of empire, and rampant militarism and nationalism. The second war was birthed out of the reparations required by the victors of the first war, creating an environment that allowed for the rise of one of the greatest evils of the modern age. Looking at the current rise of ultra-nationalism in the West and the scapegoating of minority groups, I wonder if we have learned anything from our remembering.

Soaring above all these lessons from the past is the one Jesus that seeks to teach us. The remembering we engage in during Communion, and around Christmas- and Easter-time is the act of remembering how the radical application of hope and love can conquer both evil and death. Christmas-time is so often reduced to ‘soft’ theology, but it is meant, in my opinion, to mark the birth of a radically different understanding of both how to live, and how to die. We live with love, and we die with hope because we remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. If he could live well, living out the transformative power of love, then so can we. If he could die, forgiving his persecutors and trusting in the yet-to-be-realised resurrection promise of God, then so can we.

I finish with the end of the poem ‘Still I rise’ by Dr. Maya Angelou:

Out of the huts of history’s shame

I rise

Up from a past that’s rooted in pain

I rise

I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

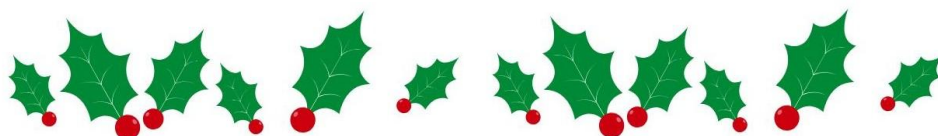
I rise

I rise.

May we each rise from the slavery of old habits, of the long-lost deeds of people in an unrighteous society which still hold us in thrall, and may we rise to a new life.

I wish a blessed and peace-filled Christmas to you and yours, from me and mine.

Love and peace,
Duncan

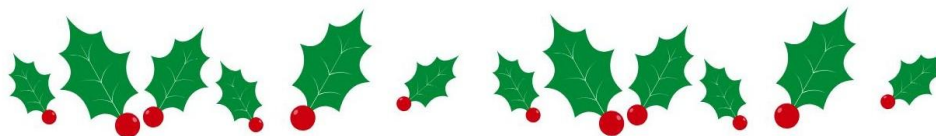


EDITORS' NOTE



We hope you find this Winter edition of The Indicator of interest. We wish to thank Sarah very much indeed for all the help she willingly gives us with the production each Quarter. We will always be pleased to receive articles or suggestions for the future. Thank you.

Valerie and Christine



PERSONALIA



David Dingley: We are sad to report that David died peacefully in hospital on the 31st of October. He was a member of the church for 25 years, attending worship regularly, and he had many friends. He was also a Local Preacher.

A Thanksgiving Service for his life took place on Friday, 5th December. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his sister in South Africa and to Robert.

THE CHRISTMAS ROBIN

Have you ever wondered why robins are so popular. They appear on many Christmas cards even though there is no mention of them in the Christmas story.

However, there is a legend that on the night Christ was born a small grey bird was in the stable and fanned the fire to keep Jesus warm and his breast turned red because of the flames. Another legend suggests that a robin was at Christ's side at the crucifixion and a drop of His blood caused his breast to turn red.

A more credible explanation came about when Christmas cards were first sent. This was nearly 200 years ago. It began as families began to make cards for their friends and family. It wasn't until 1843 that the first Christmas cards were produced commercially. This coincided with the introduction of a formalised postal system with postmen employed to deliver mail. The early postmen wore a black beaver skin hat, blue waistcoat and a long scarlet coat. Almost immediately they were nick named 'robins'. This led to card producers to come up with new ideas for the cards and a robin started to commonly appear often holding a card in its beak or pushing its beak through a letterbox apparently delivering the Christmas card. Even now similar illustrations of robins are easily found on modern Christmas cards.

Luckily we see robins throughout the year but at Christmas time the pretty red breasted bird is a cheerful symbol of the festive season.

Happy Christmas to you all

Margaret C

BIRTHDAYS

To all those celebrating a birthday in December, January and February, we wish them a very enjoyable day.

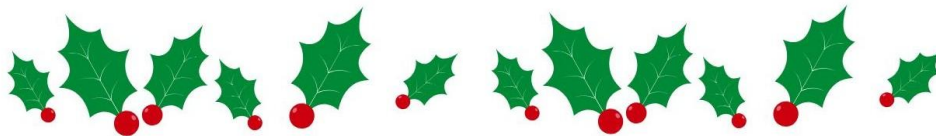
FUND FOR HUMAN NEED



Thank you everyone for your donations each Sunday after service to this really good cause, enabling us to send a sizeable sum to the Trustees each year.

Further good news is that from 1st September 2025, the Cupalt Foundation has made an award to the Fund for Human Need to cover their running costs which means that 100% of donations and funds raised will be going to those in the most desperate need.

Valerie



WHAT THE DONKEY SAW

No room at the inn, of course,

And not that much in the stable,

What with the shepherds, Magi, Mary, Joseph, the heavenly host –

Not to mention the baby

Using our manger as a cot.

You couldn't have squeezed another cherub in

For love or money.

Still, in spite of the overcrowding,

I did my best to make them feel wanted.

I could see the baby and I

Would be going places together.



SOUTH LONDON SINGERS PRESENT

A FREE

Christmas

CAROL CONCERT

SATURDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2025
AT 7PM

BECKENHAM METHODIST CHURCH
BROMLEY ROAD BR3 5JE

Join us for an evening of festive cheer, including choral
Christmas classics and sing-along audience carols

Reserve your free ticket at southlondonsingers.org.uk to secure your place
Support us in bringing music to the community | Donations welcome

South London Singers | Registered Charity No. 800934

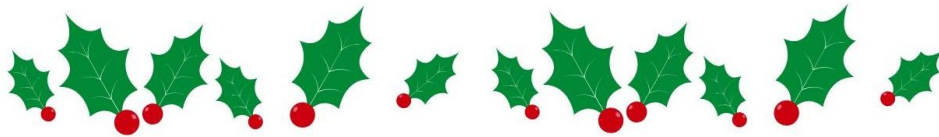


Get tickets here!



MUSICAL NOTES BY DJ

The South London Singers will present their annual **Christmas Carol Concert** at the church again this year on **Saturday 13th December at 7pm**. **Admission is again free but we do ask for donations at the door** to help defray expenses. As well as pieces for the choir alone, there will be a chance for the audience to join in the singing of some favourite carols. Included in the first half will be a performance of "Fantasia on Christmas Carols" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Accompaniment on the organ and piano will be provided as usual by Jack Stone and the choir's Director Christopher Braime will conduct. Interval refreshments will include a seasonal warm drink and mince pies. **We encourage pre-booking without charge via our website** (see poster) to be sure of a seat.



The following week, on **Sunday 21st December at 6pm** we have our traditional **Church Family Carol Service**. It is hoped to form a small choir to take part in the service and anyone interested is asked to speak to me about that. We are so pleased that one of our own young people, Nehara, will be playing for that service as well as on Christmas morning.

DJ



FROM THE VESTRY

Keeping a church running involves many different people with various roles and responsibilities, carrying out lots of different activities, I've been attending a Methodist church all my life and I'm still learning about how everything is organised, what is a 'must' and what is a 'nice to have' and who does what and requirements change over time of course.

From the vestry this time, I thought it might be helpful to share some key information with everyone, about how things are currently organised at Beckenham, in case you were also wondering, but never dared ask!

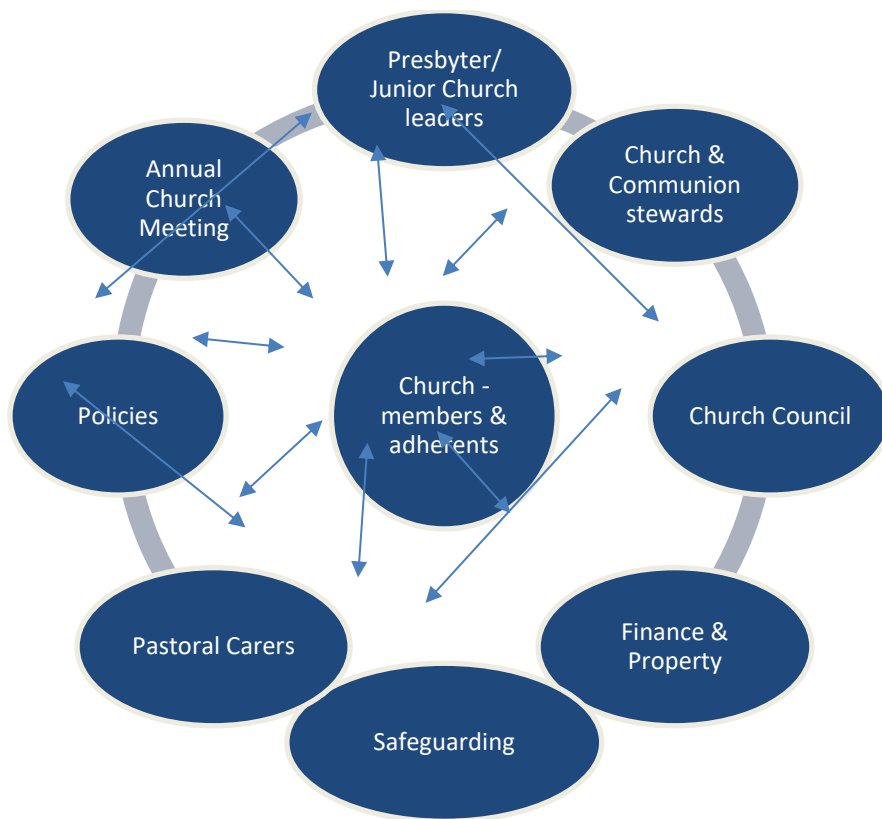
Our members and adherents are at the heart of our Church life and we gather to worship, generally, once a week on a Sunday morning. There's a whole lot of other activity, however, which goes on, either seen or unseen, which enables us to continue to worship, in a safe, secure and legal environment.

Below are the various roles and activities that are a 'must' for every Methodist Church:

- **Presbyter/Minister** leads the Church and has overall responsibility for everything that happens
- **Church Stewards**, including Senior Steward – generally serve for a period of three years - currently 6 at Beckenham who assist the minister with the running of Church services and other Church activities
- **Communion Stewards** – currently 3, plus 2 'on standby' – prepare the Church for Communion, clear away the elements after Communion and ensure there are adequate supplies of 'bread' and 'wine'
- **Pastoral Carers** – a team of 11 who keep in touch with members and adherents assigned to them and let the minister know of any pastoral issues. Every member and adherent is assigned a pastoral carer. If you're not sure who yours is, please ask Jenny Nichols
- **Junior Church leaders** – currently 1 lead person with others assisting as required, when children leave the Sunday service for their own age-appropriate worship and activities

- **Finance** – the Treasurer ensures that the church adheres to the law and to Methodist Church policies, in respect of anything to do with money; there is also an Envelopes Secretary and a Gift Aid secretary. Two unrelated Church members count up the weekly and other collections
- **Property** – the Property Coordinator and a team of 6 people oversee and coordinate all activities to do with the Church building and its fabric
- **Safeguarding** – a local safeguarding officer, who supports the Minister and Church Leaders by overseeing all safeguarding matters and everyone who accesses the Church and its premises. They ensure relevant policies are in place and visible, record and report safeguarding concerns, coordinate training, promote good safeguarding practice across Church activities and building users, support safer recruitment, attend relevant meetings and provide reports to the Church Council
- **Church Council** – the ‘governing body’ of the Church, which meets three or four times per year and which is formed of Church members, some elected and some co-opted from other groups and committees, all of whom are managing trustees, beholden to charity law. The Church Council oversees and reviews what has happened and what is due to happen in the Church; including, but not limited to, outreach work, approving major spending plans and reviewing and approving the suite of Church policies
- **Annual Church meeting** – an annual open meeting for all members and adherents, with reports from the various Church groups and committees

Some roles involve people being elected to a position and others are when someone volunteers to undertake a particular job. Many people have more than one role too. And of course, none of these roles or activities exist in isolation. Everything is inter-connected, as the diagram below shows.



And then, let's not forget the 'nice to haves', such as Eco Church, reps who attend Churches Together in Beckenham, after service tea and coffee volunteers, towel and tea towel washers, welcome stewards, gardeners and those who volunteer for the various outreach activities, such as Joy's Kitchen and Stay and Play.

And at Beckenham, we're also very fortunate to have two lay members of staff, our Church Administrator, who does much of the work that in the past would have been done by Church members and the manager of Joy's Kitchen, our community café.

As you can see, there's so much to running our Church, as well as what happens on a Sunday. I hope you've found all this information enlightening and helpful.

Wishing everyone a peaceful and blessed Christmas

Sandra – Senior Steward



A MESSAGE FROM JOY'S KITCHEN – Winter 2025

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas here at Joy's Kitchen. This year's festive menu will include baked potatoes and toasties with turkey, cranberry and brie, homemade mince pies, non-alcoholic mulled wine and a gingerbread latte. We look forward to seeing you all.

The autumn menu of baked potatoes and homemade soup has proved very popular, so much so that we intend to make baked potatoes a regular feature and homemade soup will make an appearance more regularly. During November, we held another very successful coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support, raising over £350 with donations still coming in. Thanks as ever for your support of these events by donating cakes and eating them!



Speaking of charitable donations, the Joy's Kitchen committee has decided that 10% of last year's operational profits will be donated equally to, five charities that were nominated by the Joy's Kitchen volunteers:

- Bromley Dementia Hub
- Bromley Mencap
- Christian Blind Mission
- Mission Aviation Fellowship
- Support Dogs UK

We will close for Christmas on Thursday 18th December and reopen for the new year on 5th January. Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year from everyone at Joy's Kitchen.

Chloe, Joy's Kitchen Manager

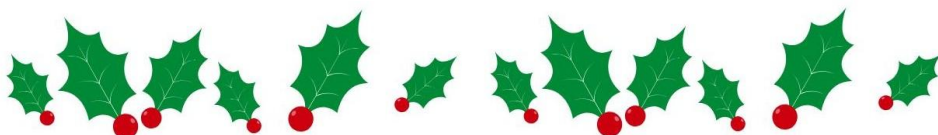


PRAYER TIME

Prayer Time meets on Sunday mornings
before Service in the Wesley Lounge
between 10.10 a.m. and 10.25 a.m.

CHRISTMAS PRAYER POEM, **ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON**

Loving Father,
help us to remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.
Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.
May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.
Amen.



OUR JUNIOR CHURCH IN THE EARLY 1960's

Having survived boarding at school for 11 years and then University, I ended up coming to our Church regularly on Sundays. Our next door neighbours were the Bartholemews. You can see a plaque to them in the Church. They were very devout Methodists and one of them, I think, encouraged me to “do something” at the Church. (That was the one who made notes about the sermon!)

So, for some reason, I asked the leader of the Senior department of the Junior Church, Victor Berrill, if he would like some help, other than my playing the piano for the 2 hymns we sang. He said I could help with the top class who had about 6 teachers taking it in turns. That seemed alright. On duty perhaps every six weeks.

I therefore studied the material given to me and took my first class. Afterwards, I said something like “see you in 6 weeks time” to which Victor replied I had the job every week! He was a Headmaster. I did not argue and I then took that class for 4 years!

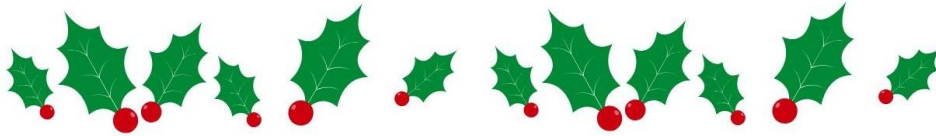
I always tried to make my lesson interesting, in particular asking my class questions so involving them. They were all intelligent teenagers, and so we had no problem discussing things. About thirty years later when I taught again in our Senior department I found it difficult. Then we had to have 2 teachers and often only one child.

Once I said to Victor Berrill, could I hold the class in Kelsey Park. It was lovely weather and it would be a change. I think he paused before he agreed, but one morning myself and 4 or 5 14/15 year old girls walked to the park, sat on a bench just inside the park, (where a flower bed is now), we had our talk and then I brought them back safe and sound. I was about 23 at that time. Times were very different then. There was no official safeguarding and people seemed to come to Church on Sunday mornings, (or they dropped their children at Church and collected them later!). Our senior department had 50 children on the books and Junior department had 60 or more, with a total of about 12 teachers.

Talking to DJ recently, he pointed out to me that if I had not resigned after 4 years he and his class would have moved up to my class. On being questioned he admitted that his class could be “quite lively!” Was it a lucky escape for me or them?

It was a very great privilege to be allowed to teach these young people. The future of any Church rests with our children and their parents. I applaud all those who help with our young people. It is vital work.

David K



TWO ADVENTS

Quietly dignified, lovingly attentive, the young man leads his fiancé, mounted on a donkey, along the hot, dry, dusty road to Bethlehem. Their destiny, a life of simplicity and toil: humbly and obediently they have accepted the responsibility for bringing the priceless gift to an impoverished world.

City centres teem with frenzied crowds persuaded by the marketing teams to purchase sophisticated gifts guaranteed to bring lasting joy. Crowds rush headlong through an arid Advent, deceived by a mirage, poignantly ignorant of the one perfect gift - God's free gift of love.

Twinkling lights and festive decorations seduce the unwary to purchase more than they can afford. Carols blast from every shop door proclaiming love, peace and joy. Harassed mothers and covetous children contradict the illusion and speak of tension - while the retailing magnates smile at their success.

There are no twinkling lights in Bethlehem, no welcoming hotel room, no special provision for the world's Saviour. The birth pains begin in a quiet stable, the animals alone witnessing the love and peace of the arrival of Jesus. Just one bright star tells of the joy of the world - but the world isn't looking.



CHURCHES TOGETHER in BECKENHAM

The next event in the Local CTiB calendar is the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** which is held from Sunday 18th of January 2026 until Sunday 25th.

This year the theme is:-

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling (Ephesians 4:4)

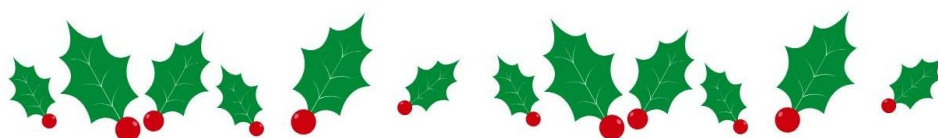
I am pleased to report that here at Beckenham Methodist Church we will be contributing to the week on Monday 19th with a Craft Afternoon (11am-2pm) exploring the theme of Christian unity with free tea, coffee and a scone for people engaging with this.

A Taize Service will also be held at Beckenham Baptist Church at 8pm.

There will be further events during the week so please watch the weekly notices for details of this. I hope we can be represented at some or all of the planned events.

Rita Bishop and I continue to represent the Church at the clergy/lay meetings and if anyone has any questions or would like more information please speak to either of us.

Christine



CHRISTMAS CAROLS MIS-HEARD BY CHILDREN

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
With the jelly toast proclaim
Sleep in heavenly peas
O come, froggy faithful
The cattle are blowing the baby away
Hark, the hairy angels sing

FLOWERS IN CHURCH



ROTA for December, January, February

DECEMBER

Sunday 7th

Sunday 14th

Sunday 21st

Sunday 28th

Flowers provided by:

Comfort Lawson

Valerie Wilson

CHRISTMAS

Circuit Service

Flowers arranged by:

Mary Jackson

JANUARY

Sunday 4th

Sunday 11th

Sunday 18th

Sunday 25th

Flowers provided by:

Barry Stewart

Yetunde Olufunwa

Brenda Hotham

Paulette Tomlinson

Flowers arranged by:

Mary Jackson

Margaret Hazlewood

Richard Phizacklea

Margaret Cornwell

FEBRUARY

Sunday 1st

Sunday 8th

Sunday 15th

Sunday 22nd

Flowers provided by:

Ena Hamblyn

Valerie Wilson

David & Angela Keall

Sheila Priestman

Flowers arranged by:

Richard Phizacklea

Margaret Hazlewood

Flowers arranged by providers unless otherwise stated.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY SERVICES

Beckenham Methodist Church, Bromley Road
at 10.30am (unless otherwise stated)

Sunday 7th December

Rev Duncan MacBean +
Holy Communion

Sunday 14th December

Bennie Harms +
Gifts for Food Bank

Sunday 21st December

No Morning Service
Carols 6.00pm
Rev Duncan MacBean

CHRISTMAS EVE

ORPINGTON Rev Eric Bediako Nativity 4.00pm

BROMLEY Rev Karen George Nativity 4.00pm

COMMON

BROMLEY Rev Karen George Communion 11.15pm

CHRISTMAS DAY Rev Duncan MacBean 10.30am Service

Sunday 28th December

Circuit Service Hosted by Mike Tinson at **ORPINGTON**

Circuit Service Hosted by Rev Blanchard-Kowal at

EMMANUEL CHURCH, SIDCUP

Wednesday 31st December

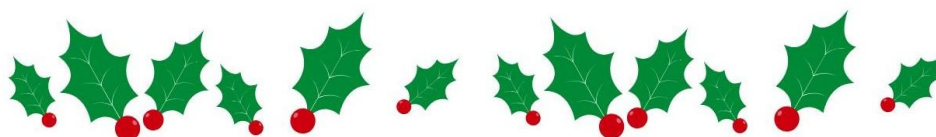
Rev Hannah Faal-Heim

Watchnight Service 10.30 pm at **FREEMAN GHANAIAN**

NEW YEAR SUNDAY SERVICES

Beckenham Methodist Church, Bromley Road
at 10.30am (unless otherwise stated)

Sunday 4th January	Rev Duncan MacBean + Covenant Service
Sunday 11th January	Rev Derek Stanworth
Sunday 18th January	Rev David Morris (Pulpit Swap)
Sunday 25th January	Alison Driscoll
Sunday 1st February	Rev Duncan MacBean + Holy Communion
Sunday 8th February	Christina Messenger
Sunday 15th February	Maggie Ayres
Sunday 22nd February	Rev Hannah Faal-Heim



DID YOU KNOW?

December 1st is Antarctica Day.

December 2nd is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

December 4th is World Wildlife Conservation Day.

December 5th is World Soil Day.

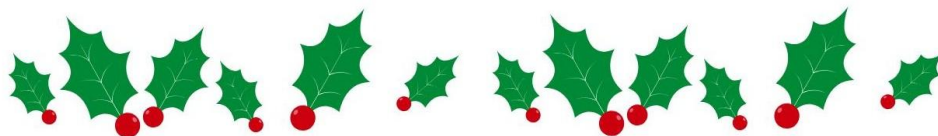
December 9th is International Anti-Corruption Day.

THE INKEEPER

John was very excited. He had been given a part in the school Nativity Play. Just a small part. He was the Innkeeper, and the only words he had to learn in response to Joseph's request for a room for the night was 'Sorry we don't have any room'. He practised hard and really began to feel like the Innkeeper. On the night of the performance John was so excited; the lights, costumes, the audience all added to the atmosphere and little John suddenly became part of that scene 2000 years before. He was involved.

Then came his big moment. Joseph knocked on the door of the inn, and the Innkeeper said his words perfectly. 'Sorry we don't have any room', but as Joseph and Mary turned and started to walk away, the little Innkeeper now so involved in the story shouted, 'No, no, come back, you can have my room and I'll sleep in the stable'.

Christmas is not a date, but a state of mind.



R N I B

See differently

ROYAL INSTITUTE for the BLIND

The use of postage stamps is dwindling but we have managed to collect 2 kilos over the past year, for which the RNIB will receive £40.00. This amount will pay for the Talking Book Services for one person for a year. 2 kilos is a lot of stamps so please continue saving British and foreign stamps. I hope we will all receive some Christmas cards by post in spite of the increased cost and so give a boost to next year's collection. A box is on the table by the door into the Atrium for your donations.

Thank you.

Ena

TOP OF THE PEW - 2025

On a dark and freezing cold November evening in Petts Wood and after more than 50 years of trying, a team from Beckenham Methodist Church finally won Top of the Pew – the Bromley inter-church general knowledge quiz.

A team of David Jackson, David Bishop, David Morris and Sandra Storch beat a team from St Augustine's with St Luke's, from Bromley Common and incidentally, the current title holders. It was a tightly-fought competition, with questions on food and drink, second lines of Christmas Carols and pubs and clubs among others, all of which tested everyone's knowledge and memory. The final score was 77 to 74.

Each year, teams and spectators are asked to donate to a local charity at each quiz and this year's charity was Bromley Homeless. Two representatives from this charity were actually present and gave a very interesting talk about their work. At the end of the evening, they were presented with a cheque from this year, for £924.00, which will be a great help in the work they do.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year, as a spectator and refreshment provider at 'home games' and we look forward to defending our title in 2026. We'd like to dedicate our win to everyone who has been on the team over the years – we finally did it!

Sandra & David x 3





The Top of the Pew trophy dates back to the start of the competition in 1973; less two years for lockdown, that makes 51 years. The competition is open to any worshipping community in the Borough of Bromley with often 32 or more taking part. Many fewer these days unfortunately but it's always a good chance to get to know people from other churches. 17 or 18 different ones have been winners over the years Bromley

Methodist won once in 1979, Bromley URCs 4 times, St George's and St Barnabas once each and now Beckenham Methodist after very many years of trying! Almost all other winners were R. Catholic and Anglican churches in Bromley.

DJ

Christmas Wordsearch

Y	R	A	M	U	Y	R	A	T	S
M	S	T	A	B	L	E	G	S	N
E	G	C	A	D	I	F	S	O	W
H	H	B	L	Q	V	U	D	J	H
E	E	O	H	T	S	N	G	O	P
L	G	L	Q	E	E	I	B	Y	E
H	C	Y	J	C	A	R	O	L	S
T	R	D	O	N	K	E	Y	B	O
E	Z	H	C	R	U	H	C	X	J
B	T	S	I	D	O	H	T	E	M

bethlehem	Methodist	church	carols
donkey	Stable	Joseph	Endon
Jesus	gold	star	Baby
Mary	joy		



CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The foodbank needs your help!

To help feed someone in need this Christmas: fill a bag with one of each of the following and drop it to us 2-12 December.
(Drop off times on our website)

www.livingwell.life

Tinned Ham/Corned Beef
Tinned Salmon
Tinned Veg
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Soup
Pasta
Coffee
Tea bags
Hot Chocolate

Long life milk
Jam
Rice Pudding/Custard
Festive Biscuits
Festive Chocolates
Cereal
Toilet Roll
Shampoo
Shower Gel

Nothing with alcohol in please



**Or donate to our
Crowdfunder and your
donation will be DOUBLED
by Aviva!**



Charity number: 1157385

USEFUL CONTACTS

Beckenham Methodist Church

(Registered Charity No. 1138006)

Bromley Road Church BR3 5JE

0208 650 2763

Minister: Rev Duncan MacBean

minister@bmcb3.com

Senior Steward: Sandra Storch

Church Administrator (including room bookings):

Sarah Reed

Tel: 07570 230555

Email:- office@bmcb3.com

*n.b. Normal working week is Tuesday to Thursday 10.30am to 2.30pm,
with Mondays from home.*

Web Site: <http://www.beckenhammethodistchurch.co.uk>

