

**DECEMBER 2017**  
**JANUARY 2018**



# SOUTHDOWN

Joy to the World



**Southdown Ministry Team**

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**Newsletter**

Please provide copy by

E-mail by 10<sup>th</sup> of previous month

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**Weekday Activities**

<b>Pre-school</b>	
Weekdays (except Wednesday) 9.10am – 12.10pm in halls	
<b>Wednesday Group</b>	
Vivienne Kendall 629930 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesdays in the lounge - 8pm	
<b>Brownies and Guides</b>	
Tuesday	
17 <sup>th</sup> Rainbows	5pm
14 <sup>th</sup> Brownies	6.15pm
Wednesday	
9 <sup>th</sup> Brownies	6.15pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> Guides	7.30pm
Thursday	
17 <sup>th</sup> Brownies	6.15pm
17 <sup>th</sup> Guides	7.30pm
<b>Hall Bookings</b>	
<b>01582 769871</b>	



*Your intercessions are  
Asked this month for our  
leadership team on p.2 of  
the church directory*

**Mission Statement**

The aim of Southdown Newsletter is to help develop the Christian faith through reporting about worship, people and activities of Southdown Methodist Church.

## Great Expectations and New Beginnings

Dear Friends

There is a different buzz in the air...fireworks night has passed and the decorations in the shops have changed to all things Christmassy. I find myself getting excited at the thought of mince pies, mulled wine and Christmas Carols.

However, at the back of my mind as I reflect on the angel's visit to Mary to announce the news that she has been chosen by God to bear the Messiah (Luke 1:36-38), I cannot help but wonder at her fear.

Fear as she pondered: 'What will the family and the community say?' By bearing the Son of God, Mary risked losing all that she knew and loved including Joseph. Thus the angel had to make another visit, this time to Joseph to assure him of God's plan unfolding in Mary's life.

As we get excited over our expectations of Christmas, let us share a thought for those for whom this time of year brings a great challenge. Remember those for whom the expectation of presents and good food comes at a cost which they cannot afford. Share a thought too, for those who are lonely at this time of year - and for ourselves as Christians who are tasked with carrying the Good News of God's Son, the Saviour of humankind, at this time of faith apathy. Let us raise our voices as we declare '**Christ the Redeemer is born.**'

When all the tinsel and lights finally come down and the New Year dawns, let it be a reminder to us all of how God makes all things new. In each dawning day we are given a new start; in each new year we have an opportunity to make new promises with God, each other and ourselves to do things differently. I pray that our God, who gifts us the ultimate Christmas gift in Jesus Christ, will make our new beginnings bright. Let us hold on to His promises of remaining with us till the end of the age.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year *Mmasape*



Rev Mmasape Zihle



I recently came across one of my favourite Advent verses. Isaiah 11 predicts the coming of Christ and the verses 1 – 9 are a picture of the peaceful kingdom that will come in his time, especially in the words of

verse 9: *'The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion together and a little child will lead them.'*

Often little children speak the greatest truths, they thirst for knowledge and they can often explain things in ways that we can't. Frequently it is the children who can lead us.

We may think that at Southdown we do not have many children in our church but on Friday nights once a month we have plenty of them! Our Messy Church continues to thrive and to grow, sometimes to bring in more children and parents than we can contain and feed. If you have children in a church in this day and age you are considered to be lucky it is something to rejoice and be glad about.



We have a devoted team of people to help us in Messy Church - people from different places and churches including Nicholas and his wife from St Johns. If you would like to join this team let me know. You do not need any special skills, just a willingness to devote a couple of hours of your time in speaking with and helping our amazing, inquisitive and lively children. Plus it is a fun place to be!



Every year we have held a Christingle in church on Christmas Eve but this year we are changing the venue and we will hold a Christingle with our Messy Church children and families on **Friday 8 December**. We invite you to come and share in that time with us, making Christingles, worshipping and sharing refreshments from 3.45 till 5.30pm in the halls and talking with our Messy Church families.

It is terribly sad for the family and the church when we lose a dearly loved member of our congregation who has been with our church so long. We mourn with **Gill** and the family the loss of **Ken** at the beginning of November. Ken was instrumental in the work of our church, especially on the Service Action Team and in his devoted work for 'The Leprosy Mission.' He will also be remembered by all those friends who he drove to services for many years. He will be missed by us all and we send our sympathies and prayers to **Gill, David and Emma** at this time.

We also send our love and prayers to the family of **John Munt** who has died. John and his family had close connections with our church and he was well known in the community.

**Elsie Cooksley** has been in hospital for some time and we hope that she will soon be well enough to return to her home at Willow Court.

We look forward to the time of Advent and Christmas and hope that we will be able to enjoy it with all our church family and to make and renew acquaintance with others who may join us for our services especially at this time of the year.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas period

*Jenny*

## 5 ways to prepare for Christmas simply!



1. Remind yourself of the reason for the season.
2. Spend five minutes daily in silence. "Be still and know that I am God," is the command of Scripture. (Psalm 46:10) Spending a mere five minutes a day during the run-up to Christmas in silence before God can bring you closer to the spirit of Christ.
3. Claim the spirit of the innkeeper, and like him, help someone who is in a difficult place

during the season.

4. Forget the mince pies - feed your mind instead. Read again the messages embodied in some of the Christmas carols and readings. You'll find new meanings to the old familiar words.

## Ken Holmes 1938 - 2017

The Thanksgiving Service for Ken's life was held on 20 November and a packed church heard of the many varied aspects and interests of Ken's life.

We were reminded that Ken was a member of the Salvation Army, and remained so all his life, although he and Gill chose to worship with us at Southdown for many years. And we certainly benefitted from their input to the life and worship among us.

One of Ken's principle interests was music, and he was involved with several choral groups, both in Harpenden and in London.

When the opportunity arose during the 1980s and 90s he took part in most of our musical productions, like 'Jesus Folk' and 'Spirit' as well as the more musically-demanding productions of choral groups. We will certainly miss his contribution to our hymn-singing on Sundays.

Ken had a heart for the needs of those in need and for some years he convened the Service Action Team (SAT). During this time he developed a more strategic approach to our giving which greatly benefitted the charities supported by Southdown – a policy which we continue to uphold today. His particular interest was the care of leprosy sufferers via The Leprosy Mission.

Ken was especially interested in politics, local and global, and had succeeded in gaining a seat in local elections. Other interests included holidays abroad, walking wherever possible. He also enjoyed theatre and Radio 4 programmes. Overriding all of these, however, was his great love of family, his children and grandchildren. It was an important part of his life during his illness that all the grandchildren, especially the Australian youngsters, were able to visit.

During the past months of his illness, he and Gill have remained in our prayers, and we continue to pray for Gill in the coming months.



## Renewing the same old story

It's the same 'old story' – virgin birth, no room for Joseph and Mary in the inn, while shepherds watched their flocks by night, suddenly a host of angels appeared with the announcement. We cannot change the story. Maybe we can even rewrite it to fit our own hi-tech world. But this old story of the birth of Christ is absolutely amazing in that it offers new meanings, every year, and every time we look ahead to it.

It is because the meaning of Christmas is forever relevant to the lives of everyone in any situation at any given time. The infinite meaning and significance of Christmas are drawn, not on the world's ever-changing make up, but from the descriptions written by the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before.

What does Christmas 2017 mean to you? If we look at the prophecy of Isaiah (9:6) we can find what Christmas really means, in the heart of God. The impact of the Christmas story is drawn from the infinite names of Jesus. His names cater to all our needs

**'He will be called Wonderful, Counsellor'** - We are living in a sin-stressed world. We are trying to cure the effects of stress but the root of it can only be healed by the saving and transforming grace of God. The Christ of Christmas is a wonderful Counsellor beyond compare - he is always available; he is always attentive.

**'He will be called Mighty God'** - Modern man is trying, and marginally succeeding, to disassociate the notion of God from his daily life. We all need a mighty protector to help us combat the daily challenges. We wish each other 'A Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year'. Our productivity does not always mean prosperity but the future we see in God's promise in Jeremiah 29: *'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*



**‘He will be called Everlasting Father’** - Man was created by intelligent design, *‘For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth.’* This makes a human being the crown of God’s creation. The word ‘father’ embodies the work of procreation, protection and provision. God is the sustainer of Spiritual Life. Despite Adam’s disobedience God, in his mercy and grace, gave us Jesus on that special night to restore our relationship with him and to repair our spiritual life.

God is also the giver of Eternal Life - but a person’s destination is determined not by what he has done during the days of his life on earth, but by whom he has given his life and trusted to take him there.

**‘He will be called the Prince of Peace’** - The proclamation of the coming of the Prince of Peace is timely and appropriate, not only in the time of Isaiah, as well as in the present time. Let us find joy of being a friend of the Prince of Peace

May you have a peaceful Christmas.

(Abridged from a sermon by Jofrey Bustamante)

*You are ‘Wonderful’, ‘Counsellor’, ‘Mighty God’,  
Everlasting Father’, ‘Prince of Peace’.*

*As Your children, we cry out for a fresh filling,  
and a new awareness of Who You are.*

*We choose by faith to make the ‘Good news of great joy’  
a reality in our own lives, so others can see us as  
lighted trees of life, pointing to You this Christmas.*

*We know one day every knee will bow  
and every tongue will confess that You are Lord.  
And we also know that peace on earth can only come  
when hearts find peace with You.*

*You are our Joy. You are our Peace.*

*You are Lord of lords and King of kings.*

*And we praise You as Lord - this Christmas and always.*

(Rebecca Barlow Jordan)

## Christmas at Southdown

Santa's reindeer have appeared in Southdown these past weeks, heralding the annual **Lights-Up** event on **1 December**.

Unfortunately the street will not be so brightly lit this year due to an issue with the cables that are used to supply the main lighting. But don't worry, as Rudolph's red nose will be the beacon!



Our halls will not be open but the girls from the uniformed organisations will be in the halls foyer with their stalls. Santa should also be in residence, provided he can make his own way while his reindeer are hanging around the lamp posts!

The children of Messy Church **Christingle Event** on **8 December** in the halls from 3.30 – 5.30pm.

**Come and join us!**

Our Christmas celebrations begin with our **Carol Service** on **17 December at 3pm**. Mmasape will lead us as we recall the meaning of Christmas in carols and readings. The service will be followed by tea.

(No morning service)

On **Christmas Eve** there will be the usual Sunday morning worship at 10.30am. At 3pm we are invited to join our friends at St John's for their annual **Christmas Story Walk**. This will begin outside the Co-op.



Kirsten Lees will lead our **Christmas Day** service at 10.30am

There will also be an opportunity to sing carols at **Walkers Court** later this month. Contact Jenny for date and time.

## It all adds up!

As stated in the last issue SAT has included the totals raised in support of our three charities during 2016/17.

Earthworks           £417.90

MWiB (EO)           £ 94.24

MHA                   £849.95

MSF                   £322.92

Fatima               £216.00

East Africa Appeal   £220.20

Grenfell Appeal     £209.48

Benevolent Fund    £ 40.01

Seniors' Outings   £117.30

All We Can           £ 10.07

Action for Children £ 4.92



As you will see this gives a total of £2,502.99

We have also passed on £50 to the Haiti Appeal from Tuesday @ 3.

For additional information, when you take into account monies carried across from last year, we still had £364.30 in the 'Coffee Fund (for Fatima)' at the end of last year, so we have our £216 safely put aside, plus a bit extra. (Figures supplied by Paul Dixon – Circuit bursar)

*(This total does not include the envelope contribution for The Leprosy Mission as we do not open these envelopes)*

Thank you so much for your generosity in supporting these needy causes. Look out for news of events in support of the charities chosen for 2017/18

## Breaking the chains of Leprosy

World Leprosy Day is celebrated every year on the last Sunday in January when we

have a chance to stop and consider those people who are affected by leprosy around the world.

This year the day coincides with a Local Arrangement Service on 28 January when we shall be including an envelope collection in aid of The Leprosy Mission (TLM). If you have been collecting for TLM please bring your gift to the service in an envelope with your name and address, especially if you gift aid.





## Christmas Trivia Quiz

1. Who decided the date for Christmas would be December 25th:  
Pope Clement V    Emperor Constantine    Napoleon    Charlemagne
2. Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December. Who is the patron saint remembered on the 26th of December  
Matthew    James    Stephen    Peter
3. Traditions of Christmas around the world will tell you that Santa Claus is known by many names. What is the French name for Santa Claus?
4. When does the Russian Orthodox Church celebrate Christmas?  
Dec 24    Dec 27    Jan 1    Jan 7
5. The Christmas cracker was invented by:  
Tom Smith    John Smith    Mark Smith    Peter Smith
6. What year was the first commercial Christmas card made in:  
1764    1843    1856    1902
7. What do traditional Ukrainians put on their Christmas tree for good luck:  
Candles    A Bird's Nest    A Spider's Web    Goose Feathers
8. Which country does St. Nicholas originally belong to?  
Germany    Turkey    Russia    Romania
9. What is the capital of Christmas Island?  
The Settlement    St. John    Flying Fish Cove    Dolphin Bay
10. Brenda Lee was doing what around the Christmas tree:  
Walkin'    Skippin'    Jumpin'    Rockin'
11. Which country can be credited with the creation of the Christmas beverage, egg nog  
France    Germany    Holland    England
12. Which popular Christmas song was written by James Pierpoint?  
White Christmas    We wish you a Merry Christmas  
Jingle Bells    Rudolph the Red-nosed reindeer

## Looking forward with faith, hope and trust

*It's just another New Year's Eve,  
Another night like all the rest.  
It's just another New Year's Eve,  
Let's make it the best.  
It's just another New Year's Eve,  
It's just another Auld Lang Syne,  
But when we're through, this New Year  
You'll see, will be Just fine.*

These words are the chorus of a Barry Manilow song 'It's just another New Year's Eve'. Possibly there are many people who look at each new year as 'just another year.' But I guess it depends on what your previous year has been like.

Hopefully it's not a matter of the same old thing. Importantly it is good to look back at the previous year to see the many experiences (good and bad) we have faced. We must believe these are stepping stones in our lives that help us grow. Certainly, it is important for us to learn from our past and to incorporate the wisdom we have obtained to help us in the future. No matter the situation, the Lord is with us. He will lead and guide us as we seek Him.

Probably we've all had periods when we have cried out to the Lord for help. The answer could well have been a question from him, 'Who have you blessed lately?' Even when we feel low we still need to give, and in so doing we, too, could be blessed. It's a kingdom principle to give and it will be given to you.

Let us pray that in this new year 2018 our lives will be full of blessings as we trust God, share His love with those around us, and walk into each new day with great confidence of God's faithfulness. Then as we look into the New Year we can look with fresh eyes filled with faith, trust, and hope.

(Martha Noebel *CBN reading plan* - Web search)



The material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 18 – 25 January 2018, has been produced in the Caribbean. There are 1.4 Million Christians living in the Caribbean region, across a vast geographical spread of island and mainland territories. They represent a rich and diverse tapestry of ethnic, linguistic and religious traditions, with a complex variety of governmental and constitutional arrangements.



The contemporary context is deeply marked by the history of the colonialism which stripped people of their identity, dignity and freedom. Christian missionary activity, closely tied to the colonial system, seemed to support, encourage and excuse it. During five-hundred years of the colonial system, scripture was used to justify the enslavement of the indigenous people. In a dynamic reversal, those same scriptures became the inspiration and motivation for people to reclaim their liberty.

Recognising the hand of God in the ending of enslavement, the Caribbean Christians offer Exodus 15, a song of triumph over oppression, as the motif of the Week of Prayer. The hymn, The Right Hand of God, reflecting the song of Miriam and Moses in praise of the liberating action of God, has become the anthem of the ecumenical movement in the region.

Like the Israelites, the people of the Caribbean have a song of victory and freedom to sing. Yet, contemporary challenges continue to enslave and threaten their dignity.

(CTBI Website)

## **Churches Together in Harpenden** **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service**

High Street Thursday - 25 January 2018 at 7.30 pm

PREACHER; Bishop Paul McAleenan

(Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop - Diocese of Westminster)

PRESIDING MINISTER: Rev Dr David M Chapman (District Chair BEH Circuit)



## Are we living by The Book?

A recent survey by YouGov into the relevance of the Ten Commandments in society today has revealed that some of these no longer hold sway in the UK. The question asked was:

*Regardless of whether you are a Christian or not, which of the Ten Commandments do you believe are important principles by which to live?*

Two of the Commandments are enshrined in criminal law (You shall not commit murder and You shall not steal), and consequently these were considered important by 93% of responders. Maybe you wonder how the other 7% justify their answers!

Other replies as follows (by percentage):

You shall not bear false witness  
87

You shall not commit adultery  
73

Honour your father and mother  
69

You shall not covet 61

You shall not worship idols 31

You shall not take the Lord's name in vain 23

I am the Lord thy God 20

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day 19

### 5 Commandments for 2018

Take care of the rest of creation - thou shalt not destroy

Do as you would be done to - be responsible for your actions.

Be respectful of the rights of others.

Act for the greater good.

Look after the well-being of your mind and body - know yourself.



## The means to an end - Embracing technology

Following previous articles on the way the Church of England is rapidly moving ahead into the technological era – with card readers and ‘glamping’ opportunities - it now reaches more people through social media, Twitter, Facebook, blogging and texting than through traditional church services.

Faced with falling congregations, the C of E is finding digital engagement a powerful and important part of its ministry and mission. For instance,

Bishop Baines has been running his own blog ‘*Musings of a*

*restless bishop*’ since 2008 and is a regular user of micro-blogging site Twitter. He says, ‘*The Church is not always good at responding to a changing communications or media world. Social media means that we have to move from 'getting our message out there' to interactivity, interconnectivity and engaging in a conversation.*’

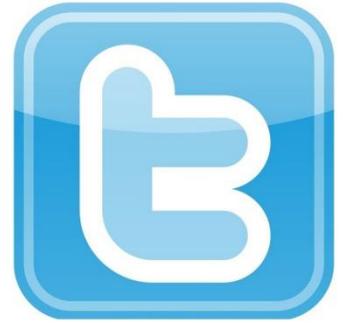
But he believes this is changing and that the Church is developing good social media communications. ‘*The new world of digital media is one that we embrace.*’ he told the BBC.

The need to engage in the conversation, rather than just broadcasting, seems to be at the root of the Church's desire to get online.

The **Twurch of England** is a site which aggregates C of E tweets, there are: over 400 tweeting clergy, 25 tweeting bishops and one tweeting Archbishop of York. Cathedrals, dioceses, Church House and Lambeth Palace are also all on the micro-blogging site.

The ‘Twurch’ is contributing to a revitalization of the C o E, and the Church maintains that it is the only web community of its kind in the UK.

Just to reassure you – Southdown, among most other Methodist churches, has an on-line presence, and we communicate via Facebook. This newsletter also goes out electronically – but your editor does NOT ‘tweet’!



<b>December</b>		
3	Holy Communion Rev Mmasape Zilhe	10.30am
10	Roy Swanston	10.30am
<b>17</b>	<b>CAROL SERVICE</b> <b>Mmasape Zilhe</b> <b>(followed by tea)</b>	<b>3.00PM</b>
24	Re Mmasape Zilhe	10.30am
25	<b>Christmas Day</b> <b>Kirsten Lees</b>	<b>10.30am</b>
31	David Crew	
<b>Messy Church</b> <b>Jenny Cope 01582 768087</b>		
<b>December halls</b> 3.30pm – 5.30pm		
<b>Tuesday at Three</b> <b>Jenny Cope</b>		
Meeting in the church 3 – 4pm		
Diary for December		
5	Christmas lunch (12noon)	
12	Mmasape	
19	Carol Service & tea	
<b>Discussion Group</b>		
Wednesdays in the lounge 8pm (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday) 13 December Advent study		

**Trivia Quiz answers**

1. Emperor Constantine
2. Stephen
3. Pere Noel
4. Jan 7
5. Tom Smith
6. 1843
7. Spider’s web
8. Turkey
9. Flying Fish Cove
- 10 Rockin’
11. England
12. Jingle Bells

**New Year Quotes**

Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing. Believe in yourself. And believe that there is a loving Source - a Sower of Dreams - just waiting to be asked to help you make your dreams come true.

*Sarah Ban Breathnach*

You get a new year, you get a new start, you get a new opportunity.

*Billy Butler*

As the old year retires and a new one is born, we commit into the hands of our Creator the happenings of the past year and ask for direction and guidance in the new one. May He grant us His grace, His tranquillity and His wisdom!

*Peggy Toney Horton*

In the New Year, never forget to thank to your past years because they enabled you to reach today! Without the stairs of the past, you cannot arrive at the future!”

*Mehmet Murat ildan*



**United Reformed Church**  
**Closes 17 December hurry!**