



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025

No. 286

Brighton & Hove Methodist



Circuit of Sanctuary

Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton



A Letter from the Manse

Dear Friends

I really like the idea behind the meditation by Henry Van Dyke called 'Keeping Christmas'. It goes like this:

'It is a good thing to observe Christmas day. The mere marking of times and seasons, when men agree to stop work and make merry together, is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties in the middle distance, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow-men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death – and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always?
But you can never keep it alone.'

Will you 'Keep Christmas' this year?

Wishing you a blessed Christmas time,

Andy



Pastoral Care

Please pray for our friends who need our support at this time:-

Deaths:-

Julie Ellett (sister of Nancy Pollard & Brenda Gunstone),
 Sylvia Walder (sister of June Cooke)

In Nursing, Care & Rehabilitation Homes:-

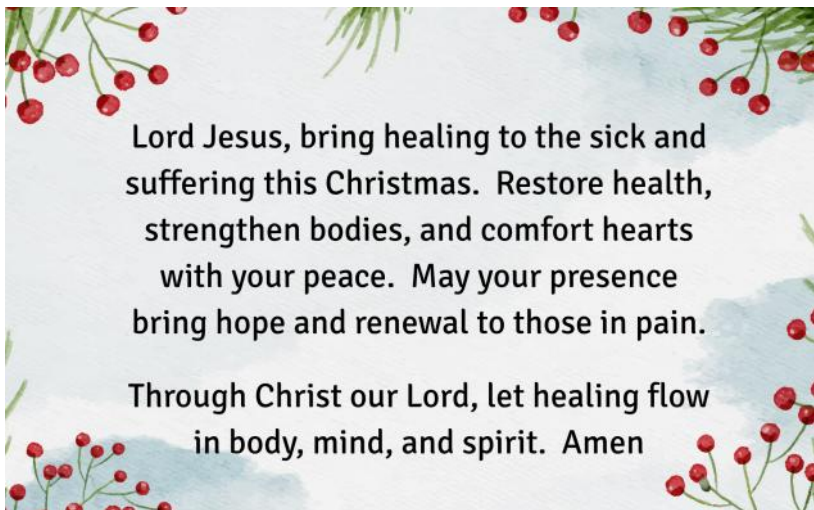
Joyce Badcock, Marian Jackson, Pat Knight, Graham Wall.

Please continue to pray for:-

The future of our church and circuit, its vision and mission. We also pray for those who are in bereavement, those who are frail, housebound or experiencing long-term health conditions.

Prayers for the World:-

We pray for our worldwide family thinking of those troubled by conflict, persecution, hatred and natural disasters. We ask that God works through us to bring peace and compassion into this broken and suffering world. Amen



Advent & Christmas

At Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

Sunday 7 December ~ Second Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, All Age Gift Service

(We would be grateful to receive either toys, toiletries or Christmas treats for the Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project)

Sunday 14 December ~ Third Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, Advent Worship

Sunday 21 December ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.30 am, Advent Worship with Communion

Christmas Eve

4 pm, Community Carol Service

with the VMCC and including Communion

(Tea, coffee & mince pies from 3.30 pm and refreshments afterwards provided by VMCC)

Christmas Day

10.30 am, Christmas Celebration!

Everyone Welcome!

Congratulations!



Sybil celebrating her 90th birthday
at Knit 'n' Natter



Kevin is 3 years old...
where has the time gone!



Emmanuel graduating with an
MSc in Physiotherapy with
Distinction



Shirley's 90th birthday celebrations

A Tribute to Andy Saunders

Many of us will remember the wonderful service we had in June celebrating Andy's life. After the service there was a collection for 'Acorn', the home where Andy lived for the last 18 months of his life. Quite a lot of money was collected and Andy's sister Ruth, along with some family and friends, delivered it to Acorn.

They have recently revamped the back garden; a large paved area fully accessible in all weathers, with some raised beds so that residents can participate in gardening if they wish. In August the beds were full of marigolds, tomatoes and raspberries.



They decided to put the donation towards some garden furniture and got a lovely bench, table and chairs. There is a open, covered area so that when the weather is inclement the furniture can be easily moved for protection.

I'm sure it will be enjoyed by all.

Rosemary Cuthbert

Small Team... Big Hearts!



We are blessed with a small yet wonderfully dedicated group of volunteers who faithfully wear many hats within our church family.

From tending to ongoing repairs, managing finances, running AV, stewarding, arranging flowers, making pastoral visits; to preparing refreshments, serving cups of tea, welcoming at reception, supporting our youth ministry and helping with our community lunches. Your quiet service keeps so much of our church life running smoothly.

We give heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them for their selfless service and servant hearts. If you feel called to help in any area, we are always grateful for new hands and hearts to join in this ministry of service.

DG Leadership Team



RAISING MONEY FOR
TEARAWAY TOTS AT
DORSET GARDENS METHODIST CHURCH

The PAN Club

WE HAD A FANTASTIC EVENING PAINTING WITH SOME LOVELY
CAKES AND SNACKS AND RAISED AN INCREDIBLE £360.



THANK YOU
Shirley Veater

WWW.SHIRLEYVEATERDESIGNS.CO.UK

Brighton & Hove Circuit at 3Generate

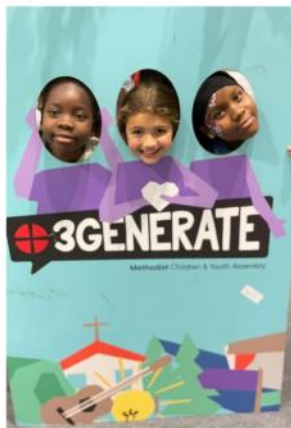
3Generate 2025 was an amazing experience for some of our youngsters and leaders! Keren and Kezia from DG and Georgia from Patcham headed off to Birmingham with Jennie, Louisa and Sam for a jam-packed weekend of worship, prayer, crafts, events and sports with 2000 fellow young Methodists and 800 leaders.

Everyone camped in the NEC and enjoyed a full schedule from a midnight finish on Friday and Saturday, starting with 7 am breakfast and finishing with a 10.30 pm communion service. The girls participated in dodgeball, tag rugby, football, basketball, wall climbing, caving, and inflatables. We also did journalling, bracelet making, surfing, star gazing, a meet up with others from our district, storytelling, met some animals, and much, much more. It was definitely 'A Journey of a Lifetime'

Sam Dyke

P.S. You can see some photos of our adventures on the next page...





When Christmas Isn't Joyful

Every December, the world around us lights up with carols, festivities, and the familiar message that this is 'the most wonderful time of the year.' Yet, for some in our congregation and wider community, this season can feel anything but wonderful. Christmas may bring pain, anxiety, or grief - perhaps the first one without a loved one, or a reminder of family that feels far away or difficult to connect with. The contrast between joyful gatherings and an empty home can be stark. Added pressures such as gifts, travel, food, decorations can turn into burdens rather than joys, especially for those already struggling. The expectation to be cheerful can feel overwhelming, and unresolved hurts or broken relationships do not disappear because it's Christmas.

Even as we celebrate Christ's birth with joy, Dorset Gardens offers a quiet space in our Prayer Chapel to acknowledge sadness, grief and loss. All are welcome to light a candle, find comfort in scripture or hymns, and seek out a volunteer if you'd like someone to talk to.

Our message is simple: ***It's okay to feel this way; you are not alone.***

Deeptima Massey

Thoughts for Quiet Reflection

- ✝ What symbols, images and actions remind me of God's love?
- ✝ I will share God's love with those who feel burdened.
- ✝ I will rejoice in Christ's presence with me today and always.



EMBRACING GOD'S CREATION IN WINTER

Though winter often brings gloom, cold and grey skies, God's handiwork remains alive all around us. If we take the time to look and listen, there is much to appreciate and give thanks for in creation this season.

Look out for...

Robins, with their bright breast and cheerful song;
 Tawny owls, haunting calls in the dusk;
 Goldfinches, flitting among the bare branches;
 Starlings gathering in murmuring swarms;
 Grey and red squirrels, busy in the frosty woods and
 hedgerows;
 Yew, holly and conifers, evergreen keepers of colour
 through the cold;
 Winter heather, adding soft purples to silent landscapes;
 Winter honeysuckle, whose scent may surprise you in
 colder air;
 Rowan berries, bright against bare branches;
 Snowdrops in late winter, a quiet promise of spring.

These signs of God's presence are reminders
 that even in the darkest, coldest days,
 beauty, life and hope endure.



Tell Out My Soul



When *Hymns & Psalms* was published in 1988 it was the first time that hymns for Advent & Christmas were given their own sections in our hymn book, whereas before they had always been listed in the same section.

This presented the opportunity to include a lot of new hymns in the Advent section. One of these new hymns was “Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord” by Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024) an Anglican Bishop and hymnwriter. Eight other of his hymns were also included in *Hymns & Psalms*.

Timothy Dudley-Smith wrote the hymn in May 1961 when he and his wife had just moved into their first house in Blackheath. He was inspired to write the text when reading a modern paraphrase of the Magnificat in Luke 1: 46-55 in the New English Bible. It first appeared in *The Anglican Hymn Book* (1965) and since has been included in nearly every hymn book in the English-speaking world.

Dudley-Smith was born on 26 December 1926 in Manchester, England, to Phyllis and Arthur Smith. His father was a schoolteacher in Derbyshire who instilled in Dudley-Smith a love for poetry. Arthur fell ill and died when Dudley-Smith was eleven years old and shortly thereafter, he desired to be a minister. He was educated at Tonbridge School before studying maths and then theology at Pembroke College, Cambridge. After graduating in 1947, he began his ordination training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was ordained deacon in 1950 and priest in 1951.

After some years in Kent, he worked for the Church Pastoral Aid Society and in 1973 was appointed as Archdeacon of Norwich and as Bishop of Thetford from 1981 to 1991. He also served as president of the Evangelical Alliance from 1987 to 1992.

It was while serving with the Church Pastoral Society that he started writing hymns and he went on to write around 400 hymns. He became a member and honorary vice-president of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland; he was also awarded fellowships from the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada and the Royal School of Church Music. In 2003, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire "for services to hymnody". In July 2009 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Durham University.

When published in *The Anglican Hymn Book* (1965), "Tell Out, My Soul" was set to the tune TIDINGS by William Llewellyn. In 1966, the hymn was included in *Youth Praise*, set to a tune by Michael Baughen, GO FORTH. The text was later paired with an existing hymn tune WOODLANDS in 1969. It was composed by Walter Grestorix (1877-1949) in 1916, and first published in the *Public School Hymnbook* (1919) and set to the hymn "Lift up your hearts". This also appeared in the *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933). The tune was named after one of the school houses at Gresham's School, Holt, Norfolk, where the composer was director of music. It is this tune that it is most widely sung to and has always been the one in our hymn books.

In the 2013 survey, "The UK's Top 100 Hymns" conducted by BBC's *Songs of Praise*, "Tell Out, My Soul" was voted joint 51st alongside "Nearer My God, to Thee", "Lord, Jesus Christ" ("Living Lord") and "Give Me Joy in My Heart". In December 2018 I led one of our "Q" evening services on Advent Hymns and asked the congregation to vote which was their favourite and "Tell Out My Soul" was the overwhelming winner.

Ian Lamb



I felt a bit downhearted,
The winter seemed so long.
I longed to see a bright, blue sky
Or hear a cheerful song.
And then outside the window
A little flash of red;
A robin perched upon the fence
And all depression fled!
So now I look for him each day,
Though sometimes he's not here,
Yet like a little ray of hope
I like to feel he's near!

By Iris Hesselden



The Legend of the Christmas Spider

(or why you shouldn't be too zealous in your Christmas Cleaning!)



There was once a widow woman with three young children. They lived at the edge of a forest with lots of lovely trees. They were poor and the mother earned a meagre living by sewing for people in the village. Near their house the children found a small fir tree growing. They asked if they could dig it up and have it in the house for Christmas. Their mother agreed and they carefully dug it up taking care not to damage the roots and put it in a pot and carried it to stand outside the front door.

It was soon to be Christmas and the mother cleaned the house very thoroughly, brushing and sweeping everywhere. She took a feather duster and was about to brush away a big cobweb at the top of the kitchen when she noticed eight eyes peering down, two big eyes and six smaller ones. She realised it was a spider with three young spiders. "O you have three children too" she said, so she put the feather duster away.

It was Christmas Eve, the children were excited as they were going to bring their tree indoors and their mother was going to get some special decorations to put on it. Their mother went off to the village to deliver all the sewing she had been

busy with. She delivered it and got paid. Then she went shopping and got flour, dried fruits and spices to make the special Christmas biscuits. Then she went to the other end of the market to choose some decorations. While she was wandering through the crowds a pickpocket stole her purse. She was devastated as now she could not get any decorations. How disappointed the children would be. She went home but did not say anything to the children. They had brought the tree indoors and polished the leaves and were very excited. They went to bed. She made the biscuits - they turned out nice. Then she went to bed.

While she was asleep the spider slowly spun a rope and came down to the tree, she continued to spin her gossamer and went all around the tree, her young spiders joined her and they all spun the most wonderful gossamer all over the tree. In the morning they all got up and there was the tree, beautifully adorned and glistening.

This should be the end of the story, but when Christmas was over the mother carefully unwound the gossamer - which was very strong - and wound it round an empty spool. When she did some sewing she sewed a motif on the garment with the spiders thread so that it glistened in the light. This proved very successful and more and more people asked her to sew especially for them. Over time she became quite well-off with her sewing skills.

We now decorate our Christmas tree with tinsel which glistens in the light; but is it ever quite as beautiful as the spiders fine gossamer?

Submitted by Rosemary Cuthbert



Smarties Cake... A Family Favourite!

1/4 pint (150ml) milk

2oz (50g) caster sugar

1oz (25g) cocoa powder

3oz (75g) caster sugar (2)

3oz (75g) margarine

1 egg

5oz (150g) self-raising flour



2 x 6-7" (15-18cm) Cake Tins, lined

Oven 190° C (gas 5)

1. Warm milk, sugar and cocoa together in a saucepan until sugar dissolves then bring to the boil-stirring. This must boil to cook the cocoa. Leave to cool.

2. In a bowl cream together caster sugar (2) and margarine then beat in egg. Mix in the chocolate mixture alternately with the flour.

3. Pour into prepared tins Cook for 30 minutes or until firm and shrinking from the edges. If using one deep tin allow about an hour in the oven.

4. Sandwich together with chocolate fudge icing and decorate the top with Smarties.

Chocolate fudge icing: 2oz (50g) butter or margarine, 8oz (225g) icing sugar (sieved), 3 tablespoons milk. Place ingredients in heat-resistant bowl over a pan of gently steaming water with 2 tablespoons sieved cocoa plus a few drops of vanilla essence. Remove from heat allow to cool until thickens to a spreading consistency. This can be used as a filling as well as an icing.

Decorate even for Christmas!

Jean Morley

Bible Sudoku

Every row, every column and each of the nine smaller boxes of nine squares should be filled with a different number from 1 to 9. Some numbers are already in place. When the grid is complete, decode the numbers in the shaded squares to spell out the name of a character from the Bible. Every row should be read from left to right, starting at the top. (The solution can be found on the back page)

								3
5			8	9	7			
	7				4		9	
	5				1	3		6
	3			6			5	
6		7	9				1	
	2		1				8	
			5	7	8			4
1								

Code:

¹ A	² B	³ D	⁴ H	⁵ L	⁶ N	⁷ S	⁸ T	⁹ U
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Name:



A Prayer for Winter

Dear Lord of hope,
Be close to me through the winter months,
When days are shorter and darker,
Let me feel your presence.
When winds blow stronger and colder,
Let Your love warm and comfort me.
Keep me safe in my going out
And my coming in.
Let me always remember -
I never walk alone.

By Iris Hesselden
taken from an old Friendship Book





Covenant Service

On Sunday 4th January, we will be commissioning all who contribute to the life and ministry of the church.

This special service is an opportunity to affirm, bless, and give thanks for the many ways people serve within our church community. All are warmly invited!



SERVICE OF HEALING AND COMMUNION

At Dorset Gardens Methodist Church

**Fourth Sunday of every month
at 6.30 pm**



MATTHEW 15 vs 30 & 31

**GREAT CROWDS CAME TO HIM, BRINGING THE LAME,
THE BLIND, THE CRIPPLED, THE MUTE AND MANY
OTHERS, AND LAID THEM AT HIS FEET; AND HE
HEALED THEM.**

**THE PEOPLE WERE AMAZED WHEN THEY SAW THE
MUTE SPEAKING, THE CRIPPLED MADE WELL, THE
LAME WALKING AND THE BLIND SEEING. AND THEY
PRAISED THE GOD OF ISRAEL.**

Worship Programme at Dorset Gardens

See Page 5 for details of Advent and Christmas Services

Sunday 28 December

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Deeptima Massey

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

Sunday 4 January 2026 ~ Covenant & Epiphany Sunday

10.30 am, Covenant Service

Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 11 January

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Geoff Harrington

Sunday 18 January

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Stella Goddard

Sunday 25 January

10 am, Circuit Together Service

At Woodingdean Methodist Church

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park - Here at Dorset Gardens

Sunday 1 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Jonathan Gravestock

Sunday 8 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship with Communion

Led by Andy Lowe

Sunday 15 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Ken Smith

Ash Wednesday - 18 February

11 am, Circuit Ash Wednesday Service

Led by Andy Lowe and Karen Bell - At Dorset Gardens

Sunday 22 February

10.30 am, Morning Worship

Led by Andy Lowe

6.30 pm, Service of Healing and Communion

Led by Cynthia Park

SANBALLAT

Bible Sudoku Solution:



The Spring 2026 edition of Newsletter will be published on Sunday 1st March 2026. Any items for inclusion must reach the Editor, Deeptima Massey, **by Sunday 8th February 2026**. Email: office@dgmc.org.uk

Disclaimer: "The items contained within this newsletter are personal views and not necessarily the views of The Methodist Church".