

December 2023

Dear friends,

Happy Christmas! The last few months have flown by as we have engaged together in worship, fellowship and mission. We have encouraged one another in the good times as well as the more difficult ones.

Overleaf, you'll find plans for the end of 2023 and into the new year, and I invite you to participate as fully as possible: if there is anything we have discovered through the pandemic, it is that we are not created to be on our own, and the body of Christ is at its best when we can see one another for encouragement and outreach. But if you can't get to our gatherings, or are facing health or other difficulties, I would love to call with you at your home or hospital – my contact details are above.

Thank you for your prayerful concern for Timothy in recent days, he's in much better form.

May this season bring you the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of Jesus in abundance,

With love,

Ross

On behalf of the Church Council: Linda Dougan (Society Steward), Desmond Graham (Treasurer), Elaine Fairley, Fiona McCullough, Mark Gowdy and Michael Smyth.

Praying at Christmas

Rev. David Turtle (Circuit Superintendent and this year's Methodist President) wrote in the December Newsletter:

"Lots of us might confess to being overwhelmed by the awfulness of what has unfolded in the world in recent months and years (in Ukraine, Israel/Gaza and beyond). We can feel a sense of helplessness, and question how we can begin to respond, even in our prayers.

It may seem glib to suggest that, in this season of Advent, we might not focus so much on the question, 'What's the world coming to?' but rather, 'Who has come to the world?' And yet, if we truly believe that the One who came to be God with us is indeed the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Prince of peace, it is no empty, futile thing to pray into situations of global disruption and mayhem.

How can we pray? A few suggestions:

- In prayer, we remind ourselves that our Lord is the God of the nations. The world has not slipped out of God's hand.
- We pray that evil will not prevail and that those intent on violence will not have the last word.
- We pray for the innocent on all sides of all conflicts.
- Even if we don't know what to pray, we still pray. Because the moment we stop praying, we give over to hopelessness, stop living as people of the Kingdom, and become practical atheists. It is better to come with our faltering words in faith, than no prayers at all.

We live in a world where miracles are needed. As we reflect again this Advent on the greatest miracle: that our God loved us so completely that he sent his Son to be born, live, die and rise again for us, may we find grace to hold onto hope and keep praying for those in the places where hope is hardest to find."

Dromore Methodist Church – Winter 2023/4

Nativity Panto – after enjoying Play It By Ear’s fun presentation of the Christmas story last year, we decided to share it with 500 primary school children this year on 4th December! It was a busy but meaningful opportunity to speak Jesus over a generation.

Little Acorns – Wednesdays 9am-11am – our group for toddlers and their carers concluded the term on the 13th December, and returns on 10th January.

Carol Service – Sunday 17 December 11am – be reminded of the meaning of Christmas with Susanna Curry along with traditional bible readings and carols.

Sunday School Nativity – Sunday 24 December 11am – we come again with the wise men to worship the infant Jesus, led by our younger members.

Christmas Morning Worship – Monday 25 December 10am – a joyful celebration of Jesus’ birth, when we will be joined by our friends from First Presbyterian Church.

New Year’s Eve Reflections – Sunday 31 December 11am – we’ll worship together on New Year’s Eve in a more relaxed setting, the Minor Hall, with tea/coffee and pastries. The service will give us space to reflect on the year that has past and our hopes for the year that’s to come.

Covenant Service – Sunday 7 January 11am – a moment to recognise God’s loving promise to us and all the world, and respond in loving thankfulness and commitment.

Special Congregational Prayer Meeting – Tuesday 16 January 8pm (Manse) – in the *Prayer Focus Connexional Prayer Guide*, the Methodist President and Lay Leader write that ‘keeping company with God in a rhythm of prayer is part of what leads to life lived freely and lightly’. The Church Council invite you to this second termly prayer gathering for our church and community.

Monday Night United Bible Studies – our online studies in Romans, shared with Broomhedge and Priesthill Methodists, will recommence in January on Monday evenings at 8pm.

Guides Thinking Day – Sunday 25 February – we’re looking forward to being joined by the Girl Guides for their annual special service for renewing their promises and being thoughtful about the world.

Methodist Day of Fasting – Friday 1 March – part of a special season of prayer during Lent (14 February – 30 March), Methodists around Ireland will unite in prayer and fasting to seek God.

Invitations in Dromore and beyond – it’s good to be able to share in worship and prayer with other Christians in our town and on the Lagan Valley & South Down Circuit. Such invitations include: special carol services and Christmas concerts; Youth for Christ Games Night at T3 (Vic-Ryn) on 29 December; 24 hours of prayer with Dromore YFC on 9-10 January; New Irish Arts at Donard Methodist on 13 January; Philippa Hanna Concert at Priesthill/Maze also on 13 January. Please pray for the Alpha Course that will be running in Dromore High School in January (Ross is one of the leaders). Get in touch for more details about any of these.

We hold your details because you are a member of Dromore Methodist Church or have had a pastoral connection with us. If you no longer wish to receive information from us you can request to be removed from our records, or add to/amend them, by using the contact details overleaf.

Living wholeheartedly, as followers of Jesus, for the transformation of the world

WhatsApp group: www.bit.ly/dmcwa | Facebook: [DromoreMethodistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/DromoreMethodistChurch) | Instagram: [dromoremethodist](https://www.instagram.com/dromoremethodist) | YouTube: [dromoremethodist](https://www.youtube.com/dromoremethodist)