

UOMC News



Unity Oldland Methodist Church,
West Street, Oldland Common,
Bristol BS30 9QS

www.uomc.org.uk

We are part of the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit.

December 2024



WELCOME

Our Mission

Unity Oldland Methodist Church seeks to proclaim the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out our discipleship in worship and mission.

Relationship with God

- ◆ The worship of God in word and sacrament in the power of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ Celebrating the Good News and the love of Jesus Christ
- ◆ Encouraging growth in faith, discipleship and spirituality

Relationship with each other

- Continuing developing a welcoming and open fellowship.
- Working towards supporting and including everyone.
- Continue developing working with people of all ages.

Relationship with the community

- Serving as a focal point in the community
- Encouraging our relationship with other churches and community groups
- Reaching out to the local and wider community with God's love in Christ offering opportunities to express their spirituality.

UOMC NEWSLETTER

We welcome you to the Newsletter of Unity Oldland Methodist Church.

The Newsletter is published on the first Sunday of each month, except August. If you have any ideas how the Newsletter can be improved please do talk to Margaret S, the compiler.

In order to get your item into the Newsletter please can you let me have it a week before the first Sunday of the following month. **The next edition will be published on 5th January . Please can all items be with me by Tuesday 31st December by 5pm at the latest please.**

Please don't be shy whether you can send your item by email or something that is handwritten or verbal—but make sure I write it down! Photographs etc all are welcome.

My contact details are Margaret Slucutt (referred to as Margaret S) 07967102141 or email mgt.s@blueyonder.co.uk

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To contact her

Email is rook2rook4@yahoo.com

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Email: jo.stevens312@gmail.com

Being Blessed When It Appears There's Nothing There

What a month God has in store for us. We have entered into a new Advent season and a new Advent theme of "*Hush The Noise: Join the Love Song.*" Each week we will hear some very thought provoking takes on this Advent theme. We also have several Bible Studies running so I do hope you will avail yourself of one of these.

I'm just a bit hyped up because we have spent several weeks reading the book of Genesis for our Bible study which we have finished, but more than that I have spent the week with Hannah. Well, if you don't know the story of Hannah go read **1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2** God has been on fire in my head and heart. I will give you a quick re-cap of events in the life of Hannah. When we are introduced to Hannah, we are told that she is one of the wives of Elkanah, and he loves her more than the other wife, but here's the rub, Hannah is barren. God has closed her womb, but not that of the other wife who is pouring out children like milk poured out on breakfast cereal.

As you may know if you were a woman who had not provided your husband with children you were belittled, taunted, made fun of, had fingers pointed at you, and just all around bullied by others. And this was certainly the case with wife #2 Peninnah. She provoked Hannah to the point of tears and emotional distress. Hannah is socially disgraced, emotionally depressed and spiritually disturbed.

Every year Elkanah took the whole family to the temple at Shiloh to do the customary burnt offering. And every year Hannah would go to the temple to pray to God to be given a male child. And each year her prayers went unanswered until the time of God's choosing.

As I said, Hannah is socially disgraced, emotionally depressed and spiritually disturbed. If we listen carefully, we can hear this echo the life of Mary. A young girl who accepts the will of God on her life to bring the divinely conceived son of God into the world.

Hannah was not unusual in the Bible as there were lots of barren women. Sarah was barren until she was 90 when she bore Isaac, the promised seed. When you do the calculations, you realize that Rebekah was barren for 20 years before Jacob, the father of Israel, was born. Before Joseph, Samson, and Samuel were born their mothers had experienced a period of barrenness. Elizabeth was old in years when she bore John the Baptist, the forerunner to Christ.

The bible is full of stories of those who experienced barrenness only to experience a greater blessing. Maybe, just maybe for some of us this Advent season that is what we need to hear from God that barrenness, that having unfulfilled places is a prelude to greater blessings.

The main lesson I learned from Hannah is that things happen in God's time. Jesus came to earth at the appointed time. God allowed Hannah to become pregnant at the right time for Samuel to be instrumental in the temple.

Our inability, our sense of helplessness and hopelessness are not barriers to God working in our lives. They are not barriers to God's blessings but may be the very props God uses to bring us in our brokenness before God's throne of grace that we might be blessed.

God's work began not just in the barrenness of Hannah's life but also in the distress of her life. And I believe this may be true for Mary and Joseph as well. The God who brought fruitfulness out of a barren womb in the life of Hannah is the same God who will bring fruitfulness out of the barren place of your life.

The key in all of it I believe was that Hannah turned to God in prayer. In her grief and anguish, she poured her soul out to the Lord God Almighty. Through her God raised up Samuel who was to anoint the kings of Israel and prepare the way for the King of kings to come.

I think there is a challenge here for us all. In our barren places, in our grief and anguish who will we turn to? *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his*

shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6 We should not allow the taunts of others to distract us from the presence of the Lord. The answer is found in turning to God in prayer. Maybe even through the tears of our hearts to lift them to God and to trust God to bring fruitfulness and blessing out of our barren places.

Thank you, Lord, for being everything we need at all times. We can count on you to guard our steps, bless the path ahead of us, and carry us when our strength is gone. Amen.

May your Advent season be filled with less noise so you can hear the angels proclaim, *“Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” Luke 2:14 Merry Christmas and may God bless you real good!*

P. J.





The liturgy suggestions for each service

[Advent 1: Hush the Noise \(1 December 2024\)](#)

[Advent 2: To Prophets Shown \(8 November 2024\)](#)

[Advent 3: Babel Sounds \(15 December 2024\)](#)

[Advent 4: The Love Song \(22 December 2024\)](#)

[Christmas Day: Hear the Angels Sing \(25 December 2024\)](#)

[Christmas 1: Hush the Hushing \(29 December 2024\)](#)

[Christmas 2: Jesus, The Love Song \(5 January 2025\)](#)

[Blue Christmas](#)

[Carol Service](#)



PASTORAL REPORT

Firstly I would like to thank you all for your donations for the Christmas family boxes, we had been asked if we could fill twenty boxes. We have achieved that and two other food boxes with the extras that did not find room in the family boxes. All these boxes are going to families on low incomes.

We sang in the choir concert “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas “. We had our Christmas crafts at Coffee Morning, we filled the Christmas family boxes and we celebrated a Winter Concert with The Community choir.

Advent is now coming, a time to prepare and think about how we’ve been, a time to get ready for Christmas.

We start this report with the sad news of the death of Marie Williams who passed away quietly in her sleep. Also Sheila Read who was at a care home in Bath has passed away too. Both ladies were members of our congregation and offered a great deal to our church family. Our condolences go to both families and their friends.

We keep our prayers for Christine Blake who suffered a heart attack and is waiting to have a stent put in her heart, at the BRI. We pray for Shaun, and the family he is staying with as they are all slowly recovering. We pray for the mother who is looking after all four members with their different health issues.

We also keep Susan and Adam in our prayers as they are so far away to be able to visit, thanks to the technology of the iPhones and iPads which can help to feel a little closer.

Lord we pray for those suffering from colds which seem to be a

bad strain at this time. Susan W has been one of our congregation who has been quite ill. We pray for Val Rawbone who has been able to come to church for a while.

Lord we give thanks for all are Zoom regulars each week and we are so pleased that you join us each week.

We thank Lynette for our Winter Concert with the choir, which we all enjoyed those who came to listen and those who sang, we thank you for raising a high amount of money for three charities.

We must not forget those who are housebound and are not left out from our church family.

God bless you
And a Happy Christmas to you all

Jo

[A Prayer for December 2024](#)

Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.

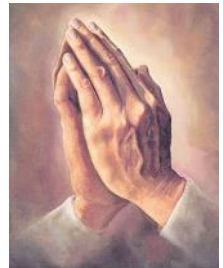
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Psalm 46: 10-11

Heavenly Father as we enter Advent, help us to stop our busyness each day and remember to be still in your presence. Speak to us and teach us so that we may rejoice at the end of Advent and sing the love songs of Christmas.

Amen

Thank you Pat



SERVICES IN DECEMBER

We continue to share our morning service 'live' on Zoom. Join Zoom Meeting

Code 842 0837 4335

Password 844 944

Sunday 1st December

10.30am Joy Harris with Worship Leaders

Stewards Phil & Roger

Sunday 8th December

10.30am Lynette Bower

Stewards Joy & Kay

Sunday 15th December

10.30am Rev P.J. Jackson Holy Communion

Stewards Susan & Debbie

Sunday 22nd December

10.30am Joy Harris

Stewards—Jo & Alison Britton

5pm Brenda Andrews will lead our Carol Service.

Wednesday 25th December Christmas day

10am Brenda and Alison

Sunday—29th December

10.30am Local Arrangement

Stewards—Catherine and Margaret



Sue Rickerby shares an update since Shaun Rickerby went to Ecuador

Here is a summary of the last 6 months! He settled into Ecuador very well and has been able to rent a house for himself near to where his fiancée (Salome) lives. Yes, they became engaged in August. He has also found a job teaching at a prestigious school, he is teaching Maths but he is teaching in English, in accordance with the school's policy. The children are around GCSE age but the school will set their own exams. Most of the children speak Spanish as their first language but have learned lots of English as it is an important language for them.

There has been a bit of a set back to this as on 1 November Shaun, Salome (Salo), her father and brother were involved in a bad car accident which was the fault of another driver. Shaun has fractured a T10 vertebra and a rib. He was able to have an operation on his back, carried out by the top specialist in the country (in a private hospital). Salo had lots of soft tissue injuries but no broken bones, her dad has 7 fractured ribs and her brother has around 12 fractures including leg and arm. (Her mum was out of the country, I think visiting relatives). All the patients are out of hospital and staying at Salo's parent's house, complete with various equipment and nurses, so it is like a mini hospital.

Shaun can now walk indoors but gets very tired, he can't do things like shower by himself or cook a meal. The others are recovering well too and they have tremendous support from friends and neighbours and the various churches they have all been involved in. It will be at least another couple of months before Shaun can think about going back to work but the school appear to be very keen to keep his job open for him.

Thank you
Sue

Sue our thoughts and prayers are with him & Salo as they recover.

Don't miss our **Coffee Morning** on **Saturday 7th December** 10am— 11.30am. There will be our usual Bacon Butties, Cakes, Marmalade, Tea and Coffee.



Thank you for your generosity.

Our Coffee Morning and Fayre raised £421.45 for our Church Funds

Our DEC Collection for the Middle East Humanitarian Appeal raised £220.

Our December Coffee Morning takings will be given to Action for Children. Thank you.

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News about Adam from Sue

Adam has published a book! It's a Kindle short story on Amazon publishing but if anyone is interested the title is Britannia: sovereignty among the stars. He is currently getting a paperback edition sorted and he has started work on another story.

That is brilliant news. We look forward to reading it.

Unity Advent Theme 2024

As usual this year we will be following a theme throughout our Advent services. The Worship Consultation has chosen to follow the Methodist church theme that is called **Hush the Noise, Join the love Song this Christmas.** You may recognise the words Hush the Noise from the Christmas carol. 'It came upon a Midnight clear' which was written by an American pastor, Edmund Sears, in 1850 and was based on the words of his poem. It is claimed that Sears wrote the hymn for use in a friend's Sunday School!

The services we will share in over Advent will encourage us to take a breath, to put aside the stresses of this time of year and concentrate on the messages delivered to us through the set Lectionary readings. The carol says:

**But with the woes of sin and strife, the world has suffered long
Beneath the angel strain have rolled, two thousand years of
wrong**

**And man at war with man hears not, the love song which they
bring**

O hush your noise, ye men of strife and hear the angels sing!

Unusually, our themed services will run not just throughout Advent but beyond, so we start on Advent Sunday and finish at Epiphany. Each service will include its own liturgy and will encourage us to sit still and reflect, to take time to listen to the voices of the angels and 'hush the noise.'

The Worship Consultation hope that you will enjoy the services that are being prepared for you and as always, we appreciate your feedback.

Wishing you a joyful Advent and Christmas!

Joy and Alison

Funerals of friends.

Sheila Reeds funeral is at Haycombe on Monday 2nd December at 2pm and will be led by Brenda Andrews.

Sheila's family welcome any member of our congregation who would like to attend.



Marie Williams funeral is on 18th December at 1.15pm at Waterside Chapel, Westerleigh Crematorium. Followed by refreshments at The Old Manor House Hotel, 5 Bristol Rd. Keynsham BS 31 2BA. Babs, Marie's daughter would be extremely grateful if you would respond via her Facebook page if you are planning to attend, particularly for refreshments, so that she can organise the catering accordingly.



**A photo of our magnificent Community Choir
at their concert last month**



Study Groups through Advent:-

**At Church with Rev. PJ. 1st and 15th Dec.
4pm.**

On line led by Mrs. Pat Lansdale

2-3pm *ON MONDAYS* Titled 'They Sang'.

25th Nov. Benedictus. 2nd Dec. Magnificat.

16th Dec. Gloria. 23rd or 30th. Nunc

**Dimittis. (To be agreed by the group)(Please
contact Margaret S ring 07967102141 or
email mgts@blueyonder.co.uk.for the link
and study information.)**

With Brenda Andrews

Thursdays Nov.28th, Dec.5th, 12th, & 19th,

2-30pm at 6, The Keep,

led by Mrs. Brenda Andrews.

Christmas Eve 4pm.

**Sing Carols in the Car
Park.**

(Inside if wet)



**ALL SERVICES START AT 10-30AM EXCEPT
WHERE STATED.**

year is:-

Our Theme this

'Hush the noise –

and listen to the Love Song.'

Dec 1, Joy Harris with Worship Leaders

Dec 8, Mrs. Lynette Bower

Dec 15, Rev. P. Jackson

*(This Service will include the sacrament of Holy
Communion)*

Dec 22, Mrs. Joy Harris

At 5pm Brenda Andrews & Friends

'Carols by candlelight'

Dec 25th CHRISTMAS MORNING 10am

A short act of Worship

led by Alison and Brenda

Dec 29th Local Arrangement led by

WORSHIP LEADERS

Jan 5th Rev. David Deeks

Our Covenant Service.

**We look forward to welcoming everyone to
our services and events.**

70 years of memories from Norma Cradock

Firstly I would like to thank everyone who came to my special occasion in October. It was just lovely to see you all. Especially I want to thank PJ who so generously shared her service with me. I spoke then of the many wonderful people who guided and supported me over the years but there are some other stories there was not time to tell-so here they are with a repeat of some of the things I did say that morning



I spoke about my dear little Sunday school teacher Mrs Harris a tiny lady whose feet didn't touch the floor as she sat on an adult size chair. We spent many a happy hour watching those tiny feet swing back-and-forth as she told us about Jesus. Little did I know then that I would have a daughter called Mrs Harris one day. One very special thing that she did for us was to give us every week a small illustrated text that we had to place in our bibles in the correct place. As a result we knew our way around both Old and New testaments as few children did then and I fear still fewer today.

It was the Sunday School secretary, Mr Farley, who suggested to me, when I was just 16, that I should ask for 'A Note to Preach'. I thought he was joking because although I had taken several Sunday School sessions and spoken at adult services and guild meetings, all the preachers in the Circuit seemed to me to be not only very old, but for the most part male. However the Leaders' Meeting, as we called the Church Council in those days, supported the request and so I went ahead. The Superintendent Minister was a really lovely man called Dr Alfred Lamb. He was a great preacher and very academic. I believe he had seven different degrees. He sent me an actual note, which he said I must carry with me whenever I preached, presumably because he

thought I was so young I might be challenged. He told me too, that an asterisk would appear beside the name of the preacher who was to supervise me during my 'On note' period. "It will be" he said, "the first, but I hope not the last, time you appear as a Star on the plan". Later he sent me to the Circuit church, Easling Broadway, which was very grand and knew it. Dr Lamb said to me with conspiratorial grin 'hold 'em over the pit Norma. You'll get away with it, but I wouldn't dare.'

and we fell in love, and all talk of young ministers was silenced.

It was Mr Kembray who was to be my mentor. It was rather a scary thought, because he was very much of the old school. He dressed very formally in pinstripe trousers with what I think was called a cutaway coat, a shirt with a butterfly collar and a silk cravat with a pearl tie pin. I needn't have been scared. In one evening he taught me how to construct a service, how to write a prayer and how to choose hymns (not just my favourites). He then sent me away to do my first Order of Service. At my parents' insistence I wrote "Address" rather than "Sermon". I think they were always afraid that I would become conceited and they thought Sermon was too pretentious a word. But when I showed Mr Kembray he did not approve. He said wagging his finger sternly, "your address is where you live; you will be preaching a SERMON, and don't you forget it". Dear Mr Kembray I hope I never did.

After that first quarter I was moved to On Trial. Mr George Howell became my Supervisor, and I began my studies. I was also studying A-level religious education at the time and learned later that I could have been exempted from the local preacher exams. I'm glad I wasn't because the two worked so well together. All the study in those days was done by correspondence course. My Old Testament tutor was the Reverend W Dean Turner. He really opened the Scriptures for me, and I learned to love the Old Testament in a way that I had never done before. Having completed Old and New Testament and Christian Doctrine exams and preached my trial sermon, just

before my 19th birthday I was received onto full plan.

Immediately, ladies in the Circuit, started saying now we must find a nice young minister for Norma. She would be such a help to him and she could run the sisterhood. Well, with all due respect to the many lovely women I've known who were ministers wives, to be married to a nice young minister and run the sisterhood was not the summit of my ambitions for my life. A month or two later I met Colin, and we fell in love, and all talk of young ministers was silenced.

Round about the time we were married I was made National Wesley Guild President, and this involved travelling around the country and preaching at various guild anniversaries. It was on one such occasion that I experienced my most embarrassing moment as a preacher. It was in North Wales and we had had a lovely weekend and they were so warm and welcoming. Announcing the final hymn on the Sunday evening and wanting to pay a compliment to our hosts I found myself saying "We close with that great hymn which I and many other English people will always associate with Wales. **Guide me O thou great Jehovah pilgrim through this barren land!**" "I wanted to unsay the words but it was too late. Fortunately though, they were so lovely that they were not offended but indeed either took it as the compliment it was meant or thought it was funny.

In 1959 we moved to Bristol because of Colin's job with the BBC. First we lived in Longwell Green and then moved here to Oldland Common, and raised our family of four girls. It was a great joy to me when in later years both Colin and our daughter Joy became local preachers themselves. Like me Colin is now retired but Joy continues to preach and I know you will forgive me if I say that Colin and I think she is one of the finest preachers in the Circuit. Another coincidence is that she was trained by Bev Harris, whose nephew Paul she later married. That of course is how she became the second Mrs Harris in my life.

One of the great privileges for me has been training new preachers. Ros Sledge, Veronica Jackson, and our own Pat

Lansdale and Lynette Skuse among them. One of my favourite stories is when Lynette came with me to Clowes (which became Summerhill). She preached a splendid sermon and after the service the steward said to us in his lovely Bristol accent “The mantle of Elijah has fallen on Elisha. We shan’t need Elijah anymore. But as Lynette pointed out to me after the service on the 27th of October that must be 30 years ago, so I’m afraid the Circuit had to put up with Elijah for sometime after that.



Looking back over the 70 years I remember so many lovely congregations especially those of which I have been a member. I thank them now with all my heart for all their love and support. It has been wonderful to be one of Mr Wesley’s preachers. It used to say on the cover of the syllabus of studies for local preachers on trial “Show yourself to be a workman that has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth“. These words originally addressed to Timothy (2 Timothy 2 verse 15) should be engraved on the heart of every preacher, as I hope they have been on mine.



EVENING FELLOWSHIP @ UOMC

You may remember that at the Annual Church Meeting it was requested that we have a regular evening fellowship evening on a Sunday.

This started at the end of July and now runs at 4pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month.

The group is focusing on Bible Study with material from the Bible Society.

All are very welcome.

**FILM NIGHT Friday 13th December
7.15pm for a 7.30pm start.**



**Refreshments available.
If you need transport please let us know.**

At Santa Claus's super-secret toy-making facility, Mr. Claus entrusts his son, Arthur, to carry out an ultra-important Christmas mission.

Our next One25 cake collection is on Tuesday 10th December. I will be in our car park between 7.15pm and 7.45pm.



If anyone needs a pick up from their home address please let me know. Our contributions are always received with thanks. I will as usual deliver on Wednesday morning.
Margaret.

You may remember that One25 support the women who are sex workers and live on the streets in various ways. They have just taken delivery on an electric van so they won't have to pay for carbon charge. This means more money can be spent supporting those in need. We can share more next month after a small group of our bakers visit One 25, later this month.

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The New Room

The New Room has lots of great things happening in the build up to Christmas.

Christmas Carols on 11th December in the New Room Chapel 1pm—2pm. This will be the choir's last performance this year.

**Free Drop-in Christmas Craft 14th December
After a great joy in the Christmas market, join their FREE Christmas crafts and let your imagination fly!
Take some time out from Christmas shopping.**

BRISTOL & SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING WOMEN'S GROUP

DATES: 3rd Wednesday Evening of the month: 20th October,
18th December, 15th January, 19th February, 19th March...

TIME: 7-9pm

VENUE: Little Stoke Community Hall, Little Stoke, BS34 6HR

Open to all Deaf and HOH Women (18+) BSL Interpreter
Refreshments provided

Email bdhohwg@gmail.com for more information or follow



Bristol Deaf & Hard of Hearing Women's Group

Proudly supported by



Centre for Deaf and
Hard of Hearing People

HOME INSTEAD provide a film afternoon on the last Friday of the month, not in December, for older people particularly for those with or caring for people with dementia at UOMC. However all are very welcome.



More news about these film afternoons in the January Newsletter.

What goes on at UOMC

**Talk to Susan Weaver if you have any queries about bookings.
07460082852.**

Services UOMC have a morning service at 10.30am and there is a Zoom link for those who wish to join us from their digital equipment. The link is on the service plan page.

50:60s Group—Meet monthly please contact Brenda Andrews on 07484 705597.

Wriggle Giggle Hop –Each Tuesday morning 10.30am—12 noon For young children and their parents or carers. Not 10th September.

Social Group—Each Tuesday afternoon, 2—4pm this group meet to share conversation, information and activities. Run by an outside organisation for the benefit of all. .

ONE25 Cake collections in UOMC Car Park between 7.15pm—7.45pm on Tuesday 10th December.

Coffee morning— Saturday 7th December 10am—11.30am for UOMC Funds

Crafting Friends—Wednesday 4th & 18th December 2pm –4pm

Nita Nata—Wednesday 11th December from 2pm—4pm.

Film Night— Friday 13th December Arthur Christmas’ 7.15pm for 7.30pm start.

Board Games - Dates to be confirmed for this quarterly group.

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