

## **DECEMBER - JANUARY SERVICES**

Services are led by members of the Group Ministry Team\* except where noted. Worship at Isaac Watts is weekly as follows:-

- 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am\* – Toy and Gift Service (with a baptism) led by Rev Sarah Hall
- 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am\* – Rev Sarah Hall
- 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am\* – Rev Sarah Hall, Holy Communion  
6.30pm\* – Carols and Lessons by Candlelight led by Rev Mark Robinson
- 24<sup>th</sup> Dec 4.30pm\* – Carols Around The Tree led by Mr Chris Noyce
- 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 10.00am\* – Christmas Day Service at Avenue St Andrews led by Rev Sarah Hall
- 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 11am\* – Favourite Carols and readings - Mr Chris Noyce
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 11am\* – Mr Chris Noyce
- 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 11am\* – Rev Mark Robinson
- 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 11am\* – Rev Mark Robinson or Rev Wendy White
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 11am\* – Rev Sarah Hall, Holy Communion, followed at 12.15pm by a Church Meeting
- 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 11am\* – Rev Sarah Hall

For online worship go to:-

- <https://www.facebook.com/isaacwattsmemorial>  
OR
- [asauc.org.uk](http://asauc.org.uk) (the website of our sister church of Avenue St Andrews) to download the service script or download the audio as an mp3 file.
  - OR Telephone Church – dial 023 82352055 to hear the online service on your phone. Calls charged at the local rate.

You can also go to [dailydevotions@urc.org.uk](http://dailydevotions@urc.org.uk) for URC worship.

# ISAAC WATTS MEMORIAL CHURCH



# MESSENGER



**DECEMBER 2021- JANUARY 2022**

**www.isaacwatts.org.uk**  
*Magazine Edition No. 976*

### Ministers

Rev. Dr. Sarah Hall, Tel: (023) 80768004,  
[sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.hall.swhg@gmail.com) (Day off Thursday)

Rev. Mark Robinson, Tel: (023) 80575909,  
[mark.robinson.swhg@gmail.com](mailto:mark.robinson.swhg@gmail.com) (Day off Monday)  
(On Sabbatical leave until 13-12-21)

### Church Secretary

Mr R. Wake  
Tel: 80392055

### Church Treasurer

Ms S. Wood  
Tel: 80772451

### Lettings Officer

Mrs M. Renshaw  
[lettings.iw@gmail.com](mailto:lettings.iw@gmail.com)

### Gift Aid & Offertory Env. Scheme Secretary

Mrs J. Findlay  
Tel: 07912 656062

### Messenger Editor

Mr C. Noyce, Tel: 80781972, [ropleynoyce@googlemail.com](mailto:ropleynoyce@googlemail.com)

### EVENTS/MEETINGS

Saturdays 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am to 1pm Christmas Tree Festival, with tea, coffee and mince pies

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December – 12.30pm Christmas Community Lunch, and entertainment.

Wednesdays 15<sup>th</sup> December and 19<sup>th</sup> January – 7.30pm Prayer Group in the James Hall – all are welcome.

**Mondays in termtime – Boys' and Girls' Brigades** from 6pm to 8.45pm (separate sections for different age groups from ages 5 to 18). For more details (including exact meeting dates) please speak to BB Company Captain Mr Doswell (tel: 023 80872648) or GB Group Leader Mrs Naomi Howard (tel: 023 80873769).

**Fridays** - 2pm Badminton/Social Group in Church Hall

*It is hoped to resume the Thursdays – 10.30am to 11.30am, Nibble and Natter (held in the church) in the New Year.*

### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Dear Friends,

2021 may well be a year that many will want to forget, a year that fell short of what we would have expected – much like 2020 perhaps – but really, it is a shame to wish time away. Time given to us is precious and special even if we do not spend it in quite the way we had imagined! Wishing the year away in a hurry to get to the next year would also be to neglect that special season of Advent and Christmas.

So, on that theme, I was amused (but not surprised) to hear a certain retailer proclaim that Christmas is 'on' this year! What they meant was that a Christmas of their expectations, and an opportunity to make money, was 'on'. But of course, whatever occurs, Christmas will happen, whether or not shops do business and whether or not it is what we expected!

In fact, if we think about the first Christmas, it was totally the opposite of what might have been expected and what we would expect for the Son of God, because the King of kings was born in a humble stable. In truth it was not what Mary or Joseph would have wanted for their baby either. However, God continually confounds human expectations, and behind the coming of the Messiah was a message more profound than any could imagine. Jesus, the Son of God and Light of the World, was born to live, teach, heal, die and rise again to show how much God loves humanity: how much God loves each one of us.

Moreover, the Light that Jesus brings is such that it can never be stopped or extinguished (as it says in John 1:5). It is a light that transforms people, and transforms against expectations. It is a light that shows us the way and leads us to go beyond limits set by ourselves or others to make a difference to one another in the lives that we lead. It is a light that we are called to demonstrate ourselves and to share with others. Indeed it is certainly not restricted to Advent and Christmas but is a light for all times and throughout our lives. So, whatever the Advent and Christmas season brings to us, hold on to that Good News and in 2022, let us be sure to keep showing and sharing that light with those whom we meet.

May I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a Prosperous 2022!

Chris

## **NEWS OF THE FAMILY**

Particular prayers are with Ruth Ovey, who is making progress after being admitted to Southampton General Hospital for a hip procedure following a fall in mid-November. She is now at the RSH for ongoing rehabilitation exercises. Prayers are also with the family of David Findlay, who has been unwell after a bout of Covid.

We look forward to the christening of Charlie Barber on 5<sup>th</sup> December, a second son for Nicky and Rob, brother for William (who was christened here a few years ago).

Our prayers and best wishes also go with Mark and Tessa as they move on to their new pastorate in January (as detailed in the last Messenger).

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICE NOTES**

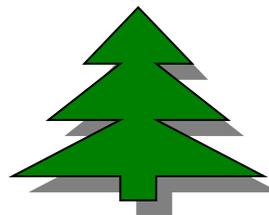
Do support our Christmas services, and take time to talk to others who attend. As ever, assistance with distributing cards to houses to invite people to our services will be appreciated.

Our principal services will be on the **19<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm**, and again on **24<sup>th</sup> December at 4.30pm**. As with last year there will be no service at IW on 25<sup>th</sup> December, however there will be a Christmas Day service at Avenue St Andrews URC at 10am, to which all are invited.

On **26<sup>th</sup> December** we will be having a service of **favourite carols**. If you have a carol or reading that you would like to be included, **please let me know by 19<sup>th</sup> December**. It would also be good if you could include your reasons as to why your carol is particularly special to you. Our friends from Avenue St Andrews are being invited to come and join us on this occasion.

## **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

The Church Christmas Card box will be out and in operation during December. To ensure that your card reaches the person intended please post no later than **19<sup>th</sup>**, and make sure that the cards will be likely to be collected by someone, since it may not be possible to distribute cards after that date.



## ***FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2021***

***At Isaac Watts Memorial Church.  
Winchester Road , Shirley, Southampton.***

***Saturdays 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December, 10.30am to  
1.00pm***

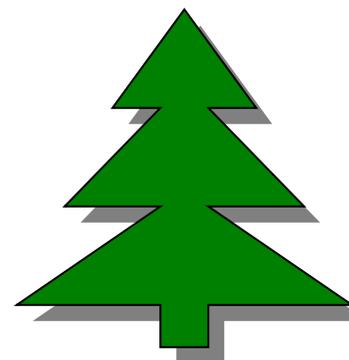
***Mince Pies, Hot and Cold Drinks***

***Come and visit us and look at the beautiful  
Christmas Trees decorated by various  
organizations***



***We would love to see you.***

***FREE ENTRY***



## **COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP**

Please note that there will be no Community Lunch or Fellowship meeting in January. The next lunch and fellowship meeting will be Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February. For more information about Fellowship meetings, please contact Mrs Iris Minard on 023 80767552.

## **A PRE-CHRISTMAS NOTE**

Re Christmas cards - this is just a message to say that I will not be sending Christmas cards to church friends this year, but I will be giving the money to a chosen charity.

I wish you all every blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

Jill Budd

Iris and Peter Minard wish all their friends at Isaac Watts Church a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. We will not be sending Christmas cards – too much writing for my arthritic hands. Best wishes to you all.

Iris (and Peter) Minard

## **PROPERTY REPORT**

There have been plenty of developments during the Autumn. Firstly the wayside pulpit fronting Winchester Road, and arranged in a V-shape, has been replaced again after succumbing to weather-induced deterioration. The new boards there have been supplied by Spectrum Signs at a cost of £1380. The accompanying meeting details have also been updated, although this took a little longer to complete owing to some misprints and omissions that had crept in and needed to be corrected.

Secondly, the outside former emergency door beside the Church Hall stage, and the fire exit door from the little Sanctuary, have been replaced with new push-bar doors (cost £2,985). Approved by Church Meeting some years ago, this completes the replacement of external doors and ensures we meet fire regulations with respect of the second door, which is a fire exit not just for that room but the Middle Room and main worship area as well.

Thanks to the generosity of our friends at Chandler's Ford we have been able to obtain a number of items from wall clocks and spoons to stacking chairs. At the time of writing seventy of the latter have arrived and a further twenty-four will come in December. These chairs are lighter and stack more compactly and safely than our wooden church chairs. As a consequence, eighty of the latter have now departed to a new owner in London. I am grateful to Rob Cole for arranging their disposal.

Like many people we have not been immune from the crisis among

gas suppliers. Having secured a new deal with CNG (our supplier since 2018) in July, we were unpleasantly surprised to find that the latter firm collapsed on 7<sup>th</sup> November. All CNG customers were transferred to Pozitive Energy, however our advisers did not recommend them due to previous dealings and likely very high costs. As a consequence, and after comparing various alternatives, we are commencing a contract with SSE from 1<sup>st</sup> December. We will therefore have had three weeks on high tariffs with Pozitive Energy, before switching to our new supplier. Although the result is a rather smaller rise, this will have an impact on costs and probably on letting charges eventually (after having previously agreed a modest rise in the New Year for rates for the Church Hall and James Hall), although it is too early to say exactly what that will be.

On the subject of lettings Mandy Renshaw, our Lettings Officer, has been extremely busy and our halls are now in frequent use, as is the main worship area twice a week (it is being used by the Romanian Church on Wednesday and Saturday evenings). The Chinese Fellowship are also using a number of our rooms for teaching purposes on a Saturday, and the Filipino Church use our Church Hall on a Sunday. The smaller Apostolic Church have resumed their meetings in the James Hall on Saturday afternoons. These lets have been progressing steadily and thanks to Mandy's patient approach various minor issues have been sorted out. It has been good to see our premises being used by Christian groups too, rather than simply for secular lettings.

## **CHRISTMAS COMPLETE 2021**

Donations at the Toy and Gift Service will go to the annual SCRATCH Christmas Complete appeal whose information is detailed below:-

Once again SCRATCH are looking for your help to ensure no child goes without presents to open on Christmas day. Our needs are: -

- Age relevant toys (our age range is new-born up to 17-year-olds)
- Toiletries / stationery / makeup suitable for teenagers
- Books (we have plenty of pre-school books, the particular need is for those suitable for 8 years and over).
- Games and puzzles (especially those suitable for older children).

- Arts / Crafts / Colouring sets
- Sweets and Chocolate (with a sell by date of at least 31/01/22)
- Christmas wrapping paper
- Sellotape
- Large carrier bags
- Large cardboard boxes
- Batteries (various sizes) - see other items wishlist below

You may find it easier to purchase from our Amazon wish lists so that your kind donations come directly to us (please go to [www.scratchcharityuk.co.uk](http://www.scratchcharityuk.co.uk) for the relevant website links).

Donations of new toys, gifts and wrapping paper and tape can be brought to us at any point up until 15 December. Second-hand donations could only be accepted up until 3 December. Address - 33 Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate, Southampton, SO14 0SP.

We cannot accept any war type toys / guns of any sort, large ride on toys, large dolls houses and similar.

If you have any questions, please e-mail [CC@scratchcharity.co.uk](mailto:CC@scratchcharity.co.uk)

## CHRISTMAS COMPLETE 2020

Last year, with your help we were able to provide a parcel of 7 or 8 toys to 2393 children and young people from over 1200 families across Hampshire: an increase of over 15% from the previous year. Here are some of the lovely comments we have received: -

One lady cried when she opened the gifts, she was blown away. It has made such a difference she says and cannot believe what was in the parcels: they were perfect and she cannot thank people enough. The choices are so thoughtful and she is just so overwhelmed and her children will love them.

Hi. I would like to say a massive thank you to you all at Scratch for our Christmas box for the kids; it's a massive help. Keep up the amazing work you guys are amazing, if I can help in anyway please don't hesitate to ask, Thanks.

Hi, I just wanted to personally thank everyone for the box of gifts I received for my children this week. It has been an extremely hard year for our family with the sudden loss of my Mum along with a huge financial struggle of Covid. I was so worried I wouldn't be able to give them the Christmas they are used to or deserve. Thanks to your kindness the additional things I received really made all the difference and I feel like they all have enough to open! Kind regards and a merry Christmas.

Hello, I've just received a Christmas present package from SCRATCH and I thought I'd just message to say THANK YOU so much for everything you all do. It is massively appreciated by myself and I'm sure everyone else that you all help. Your generosity is immeasurable and it means a lot.

As a word of encouragement, I chatted with a Mum this morning who collected her parcels from us yesterday. She said that the gifts were just perfect for each of her 4 children and she wrapped them all last night. She was really appreciative of the obvious care that had gone into selecting the gifts. Thank you!



## Stepwise is making a difference!

### What is Stepwise?

Stepwise is an integral part of *Walking the Way – living the life of Jesus today*, the United Reformed Church's focus on whole-life discipleship and mission.

Wessex Synod is delighted that Stepwise is now part of the life of the Synod with people having completed the first stream, while others are just about to start. A Synod Stepwise Advocacy Group has been

formed and they have been working hard to make sure that all the procedures are put in place to ensure that Stepwise has been able to happen through the last 18 months.

Stepwise is a programme of learning and discipleship development for everyone – including you! – whether you are exploring and enriching your personal faith life, discerning where God’s call on your life may be leading, preparing for a new direction, or developing a specific role within your community or church.

One key aspect is that, as a Stepwise participant, your group will have a facilitator and you will also have a mentor who will be with you throughout your Stepwise stream. The Synod Advocacy Group is ensuring safe recruitment and orientation of voluntary facilitators and mentors.

What is a Stepwise Stream? Stepwise has five streams: Faith Filled Life, Faith Filled Worship, Faith Fuelled Leadership, Faith Filled Confidence and Faith Filled Community. Everyone starts with Faith Filled Life, and then after that depends on you! You don’t have to follow any set path through it.

Stepwise is open to anyone who is keen to reflect on and develop their Christian faith. If you’re ready to be stimulated and challenged – and want to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others – then Stepwise could be just what you’re looking for.

Stepwise is learner orientated and designed to draw on the strengths and to address the needs of individual learners, in the context of their communities and churches. The programme emphasises the vital importance of people learning from their daily lives, wherever and whoever God calls them to be.

There are different start times, so there should be a group that is convenient for you – either online or in person.

This is what you need to know:-

- All participants wanting to engage in the Stepwise programme will have to begin with completing Faith Filled Life
  - If you want to participate in Faith Filled Life, go to our Synod website and fill in an application form, and send this to Ruth Heine, [development@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:development@urcwessex.org.uk)
- You will then be contacted by a member of the Synod Advocacy Group.
- Synod will identify where the learning Hubs will be located within the Synod, and what online offering there may be.
  - Groups will be formed logically for participants and will be registered with Synod. This will connect you for your login for your online learning.
  - You will have a mentor throughout Stepwise, and if you are unable to identify one from your church, you will be given help to find one.

If you want to know any more about this, please contact Mary Thomas [dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-s@urcwessex.org.uk) or Ray Stanyon [dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk](mailto:dso-n@urcwessex.org.uk) (Information from Wessex Synod)

### **GROUP MINISTRY TEAM**

Most worship at Isaac Watts is led by members of the South West Hants Group Ministry Team, which comprises the following people:-

Sarah Hall and Mark Robinson (stipendiary ministers)  
Bernie and Gwen Collins (retired ministers)  
Joan McGavin (elder and member at Avenue St Andrews)  
Chris Noyce (non-serving elder and member at Isaac Watts)  
Mandy Renshaw (elder and member at Isaac Watts)

### **CLOSING DATE FOR FEBRUARY 2022 MESSENGER**

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2022.

N.B. All uncredited items are by the Editor.