





## **STAFF**

**Ministers:** The Revd Canon Dr Jennifer H Smith BA PhD  
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The Revd Steven Cooper BTh, MA(Cantab)

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(Supernumerary)  
The Revd Stephen Penrose (Supernumerary)  
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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! That is, happy Advent.

Finally, the church year has changed and we are finished (mostly) with readings from Luke, and we are into a new year from the first Sunday of December. This year's readings will mainly come from Matthew, as we begin our three-year cycle again. Matthew, Mark, Luke – the regular 3 years' cycle (with John creeping in for high days and holidays) forces us to look at all the corners of Jesus' ministry, and shows us different glimpses recorded by those who came in the hundred or so years that followed.

But meanwhile, we are getting ready for Christmas at Wesley's Chapel – for some of us this means travel, for others homecoming. And for all of us, it means chances for service, for study, and for growth. Advent is a time when we clear out the metaphorical stables of our hearts and homes for Jesus to be born again in us. It is a season of waiting, of preparation, and of repentance. Not that repentance gets much airtime in our popular culture! Or does it? It seems to me that much of the Christmas advertising frenzy is built on our longing for things to be better: recreate or create a beautiful time with friends, family of whatever shape, neighbourliness. The big retailers do not use the word repentance, but the message is clear: buy this, do that and turn your life around! Or better yet, turn someone else's life around: make your neighbourhood better, host the perfect celebration, welcome the stranger. Repentance sells. We still long for a better life. So consider what actual turning might look like in your life: not more tasks, or more to buy, but to relax into the compassion and love of God? Give yourself the gift of a little more scripture, a little more prayer this season. Small and regular. You are worth it.



And by all means, come to church and sing the big hymns and light the lights: we will celebrate together, and we will welcome those who have nowhere to go, and make visible those whom our world forgets to see. Hope, Peace, Love, Joy. Happy Advent, all.

**Jen**

## **Flags**



If you are a regular worshipper at City Road, you will have noticed that we have taken down the national flags in the sanctuary for the beginning of Advent. These flags represent those who worship in this community, or who have worshipped in it or have links to it, and the number has grown over the years. We are a wonderfully diverse gathering of God's people. And of course we are also one human family, beyond and above whatever label our passport has on it. At Pentecost, we will bring back the flags (also giving time for some repair and upkeep) as we make the special celebration of God's Spirit uniting all people, allowing them to understand each other across our many languages and cultures.

## **IDENTITY: 'Navigating Change' Conference 2019**

In late November our Superintendent Jen Smith was a keynote speaker at the 'Navigating Change' Conference hosted by SwanBank Church, in Stoke on Trent. This year's theme was 'Identity' over two days, several hundred church leaders gathered to pray, study, and encourage one another for the time of change that the Methodist Church is undertaking. With over half of our 4000+ churches having a membership of less than 17 people, we are changing shape. This is not just about churches closing, however: in many places they are choosing to come together or take a different shape, re-casting themselves to be where people are and to reach out to people whom traditional Sunday church has passed by. As we know, change is hard. It was a terrifically

exciting, courageous Conference. We are very glad that Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission was at the table resourcing the conversation, making common cause with churches across the country.

## **Lunchtime Music Recitals in January @ Wesley's Chapel**

**7<sup>th</sup> Tom Plater - Saxophone**

**14<sup>th</sup> Felicity Vincent - Cello**

**21<sup>st</sup> Catherine Leonard - Piano**

**28<sup>th</sup> TBC**



**Tuesdays @ 1.05p Entry Free of Charge**

**Christmas Eve  
Service for Families  
24th December, 3pm  
All Are Welcome**



## Hope and Revelation

*Our minister, the Revd Steven Cooper, writes...*

It is a real joy and a privilege to be embarking on my first Advent and Christmas with you as your minister at Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission—together with the incredible staff team here and in Wesley's house and the museum—and I offer some brief reflections on the meaning of this time.

We face, of course, a general election in the UK this month. As we do so, 'hope' is a theme that is prominent in many people's consciousness. In the election, for many it will be an experience of hopes being fulfilled; for some, hopes will be dashed. For others still, hope may seem far away, whichever way the election goes.

In the midst of all of this, Christians claim a hope that transcends worldly politics: hope in a light that shines in the darkness, and which the darkness has not overcome: Jesus Christ. Indeed we make the claim—the political claim—that Jesus Christ is *King*, over and above the political powers of the world. This is not a fanciful notion: rather it is a concrete statement of our aspiration for the kind of politics that we believe God is leading the politics of the world to become. This politics is one of universal justice, of reconciliation, of humility, of willingness to sacrifice, of real, powerful, universal love. All of this is reflected in the person of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate this month, and whom we proclaim lives in eternity with God, ever calling on humankind to follow; and to whom—even amid the political turmoil and rancour of our present time—we direct our praise. In our worship at Wesley's this December, this Advent, this Christmas, we remember these things.

As this is a double issue, I look forward also to January, as we celebrate then the joy of the Epiphany. What is Epiphany? It is something that sometimes gets subsumed into a general Christmas-time season of festivity—but Epiphany has real meaning in its own right. Christmas is a celebration of the hope

that we have in Jesus, the hope that comes from God's Incarnation as a human being, one who came as a light shining in the darkness, that the darkness cannot overcome. Where Christmas celebrates that sheer *hope* in all its wonder and mystery, Epiphany celebrates the fact of God *revealing* this to the world. To recall the opening of John's gospel, "the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

Epiphany is another word for "revelation", and it is important not only as part of this season, but as a celebration of the fact that God is one who *reveals* by God's very nature—and what a gift it is to all of us, to receive God's revelation. Epiphany marks the supreme revelation of God's glory in the Incarnation, but it also reminds us that God goes on revealing, in all sorts of ways throughout history, and indeed today.

We experience God's revelation in a whole variety of ways in the life of Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission: in the ways that we may see something of God's glory in our worship; in the insights that we gain in sharing together around the meaning of our faith (for example, in our conversations this January around marriage and relationships); in the sacrificial love that we show to one another and to the world around us as we practice our faith of 'social holiness'; and in so many other ways that often take us by surprise. It was a particular delight to share with eleven of our children and young people in taking part in 3Generate last month—the annual national youth assembly of the Methodist Church, where the theme of the event was "Where is God in my story?" This was an occasion where new discoveries about God were being made left and right. A full report of the experience will follow in the next issue of *Window on Wesley's*. This *God who reveals* is one of the most amazing discoveries of Christian faith: it's what excites me as I get up every morning.

So I pray that God blesses you with hope this Christmas, and as we enter the New Year and Epiphany I pray that you and I will

discover new revelations of God's wonder and glory in our own lives, and together in the life of our church, in the year ahead.

May you have a holy Advent, a merry Christmas, and God bless you!

**Steven**

## **Family Consultation at the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House**

The Museum has been awarded a grant by the London Museums Development team to run two consultations aimed at increasing our engagement with families. The first will take place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December at John Wesley's House during our 'Georgian Christmas' event.



There will be family activities and trails to keep the children entertained and it should take no longer than 20-30 minutes. If you're able to help it would be much appreciated – just drop in any time between 11.00-2.30.

The second consultation will run on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January, 10.30-12.30, with the aim of gathering information to plan

autism friendly museum openings or activities. Travel expenses can be covered, refreshments provided and a £10 Amazon voucher will be given as a thank you to those families that take part. If you are interested, or would like more information, please email Gemma, Learning & Community Engagement Officer, on [iso@wesleyschapel.org.uk](mailto:iso@wesleyschapel.org.uk)



**WORK, REST AND SUCCESS** – a conference for those looking preparing for work, looking for work or looking to change career  
Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019 10-5pm. Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission, 49 City Road, London. EC1Y 1AU



**We'll have four streams:**

**Creative Arts**

**Business, Law & Finance**

**Science & Tech**

**Health, Education & Social Care**

If you are interested in coming along or if you work in any of these industries and would be interested in helping shape the event please contact Sally Rush [cw@wesleyschapel.org.uk](mailto:cw@wesleyschapel.org.uk). More details out soon.

**WORK, REST AND SUCCESS THE CONCERT** – music and words from young talent coming from Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission and Soapbox Islington Youth Centre taking place at Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019 7:00 – 9:30PM artists booked include:

**Caspian's Island (who feature Ken Burnett)**  
**Aaron Appz Anderson**  
**(known to us as Aaron Appiah Anderson)**  
**Leah Cadogan (one of our young adults)**  
**Sopha Tony Touch – (our global mission fellow)**

We'd love as many of you to come along as possible. Tickets are going to be on sale in early January. Also if you'd like to volunteer to be part of the Wesley's team delivering this please let Sally know.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL  
& LEYSIAN MISSION

“He will come...”



December 2019

5th Advent Reflection

12th City Carol Service - 12.30-1.30

19th Lighting the Longest  
Night

26th Chapel Closed

[wesleyschapel.org.uk](http://wesleyschapel.org.uk)

Thursdays at 12.45 - 1.15pm

**Do you know anybody who is aged 18-30 who would want to chill with others &/or join in with regular prayer and bible study? Yes? Then let them know of the following opportunities:**

**Saturday December 7th –Winter Wonderland – Meeting 10:45am outside Green Park Underground Station –we have several tickets still available for ice skating**

**Sunday 15<sup>TH</sup> December – Holy Habit lunch and Bible Study:– What have we gained from the Holy Habits? Meet 12:30 at door of Wesley’s Chapel and Leysian Mission**

**Saturday January 4th – Movie Night 7:00pm at Wesley’s Chapel and Leysian Mission – a chance to chill after Christmas**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January –lunch and Bible Study:– Introduction to So What’s the Story..... meet 12:30 at door of Wesley’s Chapel and Leysian Mission**

**February 1st – Stand Up Comedy – time & venue to be confirmed**

**ALSO WE ARE LOOKING TO TAKE A GROUP TO GREENBELT FESTIVAL AGAIN: 28<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020**



**If you know anybody interested in coming along to any of these events please contact Sally Rush**  
[cw@wesleyschapel.org.uk](mailto:cw@wesleyschapel.org.uk) **Tel: 07483146777**

## **London Citizens Delegate Assembly**

It was a great evening at the London Citizens Delegates Assembly on 20th November held at the Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in Shaftesbury Avenue.

6 of us from Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission attended, so we had a full delegate to vote on the five important issues which the Assembly wanted to prioritise for challenge to the Mayor at the Copper Box in April 2020.

The 3 top issues of concern were:

- Youth Safety (tackling knife crime)
- Housing and Homelessness
- Climate Change

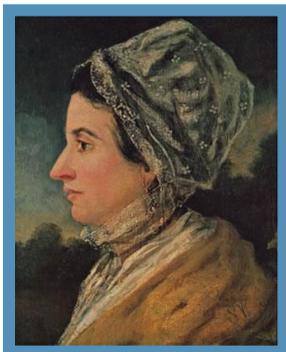
Money was also raised for the hire of the Copper Box which costs £70,000.00 and holds 7,000 people. It was a great night packed with people and activities.

***Betty Maynard – Trustee & congregation member***

### **SERENDIPITY THIRTY**

#### **Susanna Wesley: Her Life and Times – Part 6**

With this instalment we come to the conclusion of this re-telling of the story of Susanna Wesley. As noted, in the previous episode of this article, the mother of John and Charles Wesley spent the last few years of her life at the Foundery being taken care of by the members of the Society. It was there that she died aged 73, on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 1742.



With her in her last moments were all her

surviving daughters, Emelia, Susanna, Anne, Mehetabel and Martha as well as one of her sons, John. Charles being away at the time and Samuel Wesley Junior having died in 1739.

John Wesley recorded in his Journal, *"We stood around the bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech; Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God"*.

Then on Sunday August 1<sup>st</sup>, the body of Susanna was carried the few hundred yards to Bunhill Fields, where her burial service was conducted by John. The entry in John Wesley's Journal for that day: *"Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother to sleep with her fathers"*.

It might be considered rather perverse for John to inter his mother in a graveyard of the Dissenters, the very people on whom Susanna had deliberately turned her back as that child of thirteen. This might be so, but certainly one of Susanna's sisters was already buried there, so perhaps this may be why John chose to place her body in Bunhill Fields, and, with the passage and vicissitudes of time, this has turned out to be for the best. John could instead have had his mother buried in the graveyard of the local parish church where Susanna and many of the members of the Foundery Society attended services and took the Eucharist. That is St Luke's, which is just a short distance away on Old Street. But, this church was bombed during the Second World War and after having been deconsecrated, the restored building is now used as an orchestral rehearsal hall. The old grave yard was turned into public gardens after the contents were disinterred and transferred elsewhere. This could have happened to Susanna's remains but, instead we have her grave still in place; just across the road from Wesley's Chapel, where it is available for visiting and pilgrimage.

A headstone was placed over the grave by her sons but because of the effects of weathering it had to be renewed in 1828. The marker that is there today, is a further replacement which was

installed in 1936 and carries a different engraving. The original included a rather trite piece of poetry which was not one of Charles Wesley's best efforts. Although the headstone now has a more apt epitaph for Susanna, even so, it still repeats an incorrect date for her death which is the result of copying the error in John Wesley's Journal. This is bad enough, but you might wonder why the name of Susanna's husband is carved on one of the pillars on the City Road frontage of Bunhill Fields, for of course, he is buried in the churchyard of St Andrew's in Epworth. This would appear to have been due to what Nehemiah Curnock, the editor of the standard edition of Wesley's Journal, describes as a "singular inadvertence", in that, for some reason, Susanna's grave plot was purchased and entered into the burial register in the name of Samuel Wesley. Poor Susanna, even in death she was overshadowed by her husband.

The marker over Susanna's grave is not her only tangible memorial on the City Road, for as noted, at the beginning of this article there is also the Grade II monument in the front courtyard of Wesley's Chapel. This came about as the result of an appeal made in a letter to the Methodist Recorder, "*for a fitting monument to be set up to the memory of Susanna Wesley*". The £100 raised was sufficient, in the nineteenth Century, to pay for the 4-metre-high Sicilian marble obelisk and its engraved inscription.

It was originally intended that it be placed over Susanna's grave, but the lack of space, the instability of the ground and the possibility of vandalism in the then ungated burial ground, precluded this. It was therefore erected on the forecourt of Wesley's Chapel and dedicated with a special service in the Chapel on Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> 1870.

A report of the occasion states that after the service, "*The company then adjourned to the site of the memorial which occupies a commanding position in the enclosure adjoining the house in which John Wesley died – No 47 City Road; Mr. McArthur M.P., for Lambeth, in a few appropriate words, made*

*pfewer by the severe cold weather which prevailed, desired the unveiling of the monument, which elicited general approval”.*

The obelisk was at that time placed where it is, because the inscription could be read by passers-by on the City Road and the monument itself seen from Susanna’s grave. As indicated earlier, neither of these intentions are now satisfied, due to the growth of the vegetation at both Wesley’s and in Bunhill Fields. In some respects, this may be a good thing, for the inscription repeats the erroneous date of Susanna’s death, while a recent cleaning of the obelisk resulted in her age at death being altered from the true 73, to 78. Nevertheless, because the obelisk is so placed, visitors to Wesley’s Chapel often miss realising who it memorialises as all that a casual glance in its direction sees, is its plain rear and flank, as the inscription is on the West side. Again, poor Susanna, although it is hoped that this edition of Serendipity can do a little to add to the efforts being made to remind everyone of her importance in the Methodist story.

A pilgrimage to Susanna’s grave, and a visit to her monument, ought to be made by every visitor to Wesley’s Chapel, no matter when, since, it should not just be on her birthday that she is remembered.

Susanna of course never saw the harvest of the work of her sons, but she did see some of the seeds being sown before she died. Later, we know that, John was able to see his mother’s grave from his study window and for all his life, remembered what he had learned from his mother, including perhaps, this piece of sound advice, which we could all do well to heed:

*“Believe me, dear son, old age is the worst time we can choose to mend either our lives, or our fortunes. If the foundations of solid piety are not laid betimes in sound principles and virtuous dispositions; and if we neglect, while strength and vigour lasts, to lay up something ere the infirmities of age overtake us, it is as a hundred to one odds that we shall die both poor and wicked”.*

Finally, here is a prayer of Susanna's to finish this piece of serendipity:

*"Help me Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the Church or closet, nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am, I am in Thy Presence. So may my every word and action have a moral content."*

Amen, say us all.

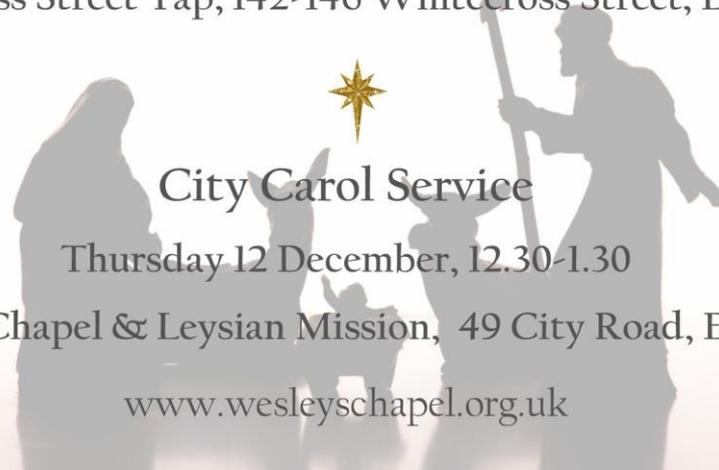
**Keith Dutton - Heritage Steward**



## An Evening of Community Carol Singing

Tuesday 10 December, 6.30-7.30

Whitecross Street Tap, 142-146 Whitecross Street, ECIY 8QJ



### City Carol Service

Thursday 12 December, 12.30-1.30

Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission, 49 City Road, ECIY 1AU

[www.wesleyschapel.org.uk](http://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk)

## How to help someone who is lonely this Christmas

The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they're always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, she probably felt very alone. Her situation would be seen as scandalous, as few believed that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit! Yet, God was with her: *“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel”* (which means, ‘God with us’). (Matthew 1:23).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

- Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who’s lonely.
- Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won’t be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.
- Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card. Start a conversation and make a connection.
- Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!
- If you hear of someone who’s on their own, pray for them. Pray that God would show you how to respond!



And finally.....

## **How Father Christmas got where he is today!**

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. These days he seems to frequent shopping malls and garden centres. If he looks tired, just remember that he has been around a long time and gone through a lot of transformations.

Father Christmas wasn't always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Nicholas was a serious theologian: he was a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. He even, reportedly, slapped another bishop in a squabble over the exact nature of the Trinity.

Nicholas died in Myra about AD343, but the stories of his generosity and kindness were just beginning. One enduring tale tells of the three girls whom he rescued from certain prostitution by giving them gold for their dowries. When the father confronted him to thank him, Nicholas said he should thank God alone.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character. Meanwhile, Dutch and German settlers had taken him to America with them as Sinter Klaas and Sankt Nicklas.

It was in America that Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom. The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, turned from his life-work of writing

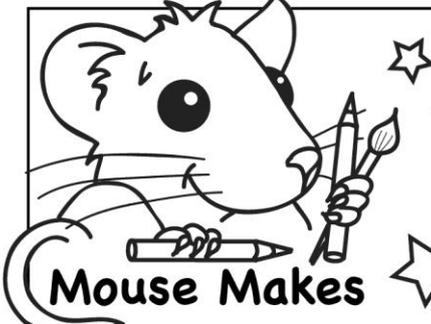
a Hebrew/English lexicon, to write a fun poem for his children one Christmas. His 'The Visit of St Nicholas' is now universally known by its first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'.

From Clement Moore we discovered that St Nicholas is round and pink-cheeked and white-bearded, and that he travels at night with sleigh, reindeer and a sack of toys on his back. It was Clement Moore who also revealed that St Nicholas enters houses down chimneys and fills children's stockings with toys and sweets.

So how did we find out that Father Christmas wears red? That was the US Coca-Cola advertising campaign of 1931, who finally released the latest, up-to-date pictures of Father Christmas: wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt.

These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol. In order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound. For all those of us who are already exhausted rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.





**Mouse Makes**

Where did Mary lay her baby and why?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:7*

Where was Mary's baby born?  
Why were Joseph and Mary there?  
**Read** *Luke 2 :1-6*

What did Mary dress her baby in?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:6*

Why were the shepherds afraid?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:8*

What did the angel tell Joseph to name Mary's baby and why?  
**Read** *Matthew 1:21*

What good news did the angel tell?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:10-11*

Who appeared praising God and what did they say?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:13-14*

What did the shepherds do after they had seen the baby?  
**Read**  
*Luke 2:16*

Colour a star each day until Christmas

**Good news!**

**Glory to God**

**A Saviour is born**



# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASSES

## Nothing is Quite as it Seems!

Professional Curiosity & Disguised Compliance

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020

We are delighted to announce the date for our annual Safeguarding Conference which takes place on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster.

Our theme this year is 'Professional Curiosity and Disguised Compliance' and we're keeping our keynote speaker under wraps until closer to the day!

Further details to follow – Don't forget to put the date in your diaries!

**Chairs:** Revd Nigel Cowgill, Revd Michaela Youngson, Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle  
London District, Methodist Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, Westminster, London SW1H 9NH  
**Telephone:** 020 7654 3850 **Email:** [admin@methodistlondon.org.uk](mailto:admin@methodistlondon.org.uk) **Charity No:** 1134871

## Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission Weekly Programme

Sunday	9.45am	Holy Communion (except first Sunday in month)
	11.00am	Morning Service
	12.30pm	Methodist Women in Britain (MWIB) (first Sunday in the month)
	12.30pm	Wesley's Chapel Methodist Men's Fellowship (first Sunday in month)
	12.30pm	Young Adults lunch & Bible Study (third Sunday in the month)
	12.30pm	Wesley's Chapel Ghana Fellowship (last Sunday in the month)
	7.00pm	Taizé Evening Services: International Service (second Sunday in the month) Reflective Service with Open Prayer (last Sunday in the month)
Monday	2.00pm	Sisterhood Fellowship
Tuesday	10.30am	Teddy Bear Service (last Tuesday in the Month)
	1.05pm	Lunchtime Recital (except July, August & December – free entry)
	6.30pm	Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association
Wednesday	10.00am	Stay and Play (pre-school – term time only)
	12.45pm	Service of Holy Communion (30 minutes)
Thursday	12.45pm	Service of the Word (30 minutes) <i>(followed by lunch &amp; fellowship)</i>
Saturday		Young Adults Social (first Saturday in the month) <i>(times may vary according to activity)</i>

**If you would like to submit an article, poem, prayer or item of interest for this magazine please email it to:**

**[manager@wesleyschapel.org.uk](mailto:manager@wesleyschapel.org.uk)**

JOHN WESLEY'S HOUSE &  
THE MUSEUM OF METHODISM

FREE  
ENTRY

# Christmas Celebrations

**Sat 14 December - A Georgian Christmas**

Explore the House and meet its Georgian residents as they prepare for Christmas.  
Free entry, 11am-3pm.

**Thurs 19 December - Festive Late Opening**

Celebrate the festive season at our first late opening. Free entry, 6pm-8.30pm