



WINDOW ON WESLEY'S



DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024

STAFF

Ministers: The Revd Canon Dr Jennifer H Smith BA PhD
M.Phil (Superintendent)
The Revd Steven Cooper BTh MA(Cantab)
MA(Winton)

Associate Ministers: The Revd John Cooke MA (Supernumerary)
The Revd Paul Hulme BA (Supernumerary)
The Revd Dr John Lampard BA M.Th
(Supernumerary)
The Revd Stephen Penrose (Supernumerary)
The Revd Ian Yates (Supernumerary)

Lay workers: Mr Thomas Smith (Leysian Missioner)

Museum: Mr Christian Dettlaff MA (Curator)

Administration: Mrs Ling Arzeian (Finance Officer)
Miss Beatrice Omane (Administration Assistant)
Mrs Tracey Smith (Administration Manager)

Choir: Mrs Mikyung Kim

Church Office: 49 City Road
London EC1Y 1AU
020 7253 2262
administration@wesleyschapel.org.uk

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the December/January edition of Window on Wesley's, and a happy Advent to all!

This is the season of preparation: more than January first, now is the time to step back and ask where we are and where we are going. In the readings in church there will be some big themes that help. First and foremost is the promise of justice and restoration: God says through the prophets 'there is a new day coming.' Second is the call for repentance: we are to clean house as a way of making sure we are ready to be part of things. Third is an overturning of power: God uses the forgotten or inauspicious to bring the change. This fits well with our theme 'Hidden treasures,' of course. First and foremost, we are preparing to receive the news of incarnation, God with us in Jesus' birth. But all of these themes bring a kind of heightened expectancy, a restless energy. Let us not try to step too quickly into Christmas, but sit in this tension and let it flow through us to see what God may be showing us.

At church, there will be care and outreach, new events and new faces. Please come in person, and please bathe in the scripture and the music, prepare your hearts and be well.

With every good wish,

Jen

Thanksgiving to the Church after the death of Keith Riglin

As a minister I have been alongside many people who have lost a spouse, and it has been so helpful to me to receive wisdom and care from those who are now alongside me as I lost my husband Keith in September. Thank you for all the letters and cards, and thank you for the material help with his funeral and welcoming all the visitors we have had for that. My family from the USA was



overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome and care they received, as were our many ecumenical guests. I will be closing and packing Keith's manse in Scotland over the coming months and will be back and forth a bit and I am taking it gently as we move forward, but trying as much as possible to be back to work.

The history of Christmas

The Bible does not give a date for the birth of Jesus. In the third century it was suggested that Jesus was conceived at the Spring equinox, 25th March, popularising the belief that he was born nine months later on 25th December. John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, encouraged Christians worldwide to make Christmas a holy day in about 400.

In the early Middle Ages, Christians celebrated a series of midwinter holy days. Epiphany (which recalls the visit to the infant Jesus of the wise men bearing gifts) was the climax of 12 days of Christmas, beginning on 25th December. The Emperor Charlemagne chose 25th December for his coronation in 800, and the prominence of Christmas Day rose. In England, William the Conqueror also chose 25th December for his coronation in 1066, and the date became a fixture both for religious observance and feasting.

Cooking a boar was a common feature of mediaeval Christmas feasts, and singing carols accompanied it. Writers of the time lament the fact that the true significance of Christmas was being lost because of partying. They condemn the rise of 'misrule' – drunken dancing and promiscuity. The day was a public holiday, and traditions of bringing evergreen foliage into the house and the exchange of gifts (usually on Epiphany) date from this time.

In the 17th century the rise of new Protestant denominations led to a rejection of many celebrations that were associated with Catholic Christianity. Christmas was one of them. After the execution of Charles I, England's Puritan rulers made the celebration of Christmas illegal for 14 years. The restoration of

Charles II ended the ban, but religious leaders continued to discourage excess, especially in Scotland. In Western Europe (but not worldwide) the day for exchanging gifts changed from Epiphany (6th January) to Christmas Day.

By the 1820s, there was a sense that the significance of Christmas was declining. Charles Dickens was one of several writers who sought to restore it. His novel *A Christmas Carol* was significant in reviving merriment during the festival. He emphasised charity and family reunions, alongside religious observance. Christmas trees, paper chains, cards and many well-known carols date from this time. So did the tradition of Boxing Day, on 26th December, when tradesmen who had given reliable service during the year would collect 'boxes' of money or gifts from their customers.

In Europe Santa Claus is the figure associated with the bringing of gifts. Santa Claus is a shortening of the name of Saint Nicholas, who was a Christian bishop in the fourth century in present-day Turkey. He was particularly noted for his care for children and for his generosity to the poor. By the Middle Ages his appearance, in red bishop's robes and a mitre, was adored in the Netherlands and familiar across Europe.

Father Christmas dates from 17th century England, where he was a secular figure of good cheer (more associated with drunkenness than gifts). The transformation of Santa Claus into today's Father Christmas started in New York in the 1880s, where his red robes and white beard became potent advertising symbols. In some countries (such as Latin America and Eastern Europe) the tradition attempts to combine the secular and religious elements by holding that Santa Claus makes children's presents and then gives them to the baby Jesus to distribute.





CHRISTMAS AT CITY ROAD



December 14th - January 7th



14th City Carol Service - 12.30pm

17th All Age Worship for Christmas - 11.00am

20th Georgian Re-enactment - 11.00am
(with carolling at 12.00pm)

21st 'Lighting the Longest Night' - 5.30pm

24th Christingle Service - 3.00pm

25th Christmas Day Service - 10.30am

31st Watchnight Service - 11.30pm

7th Covenant Service - 11.00am



John Wesley
Wesley's Chapel
& Leysian Mission

Our Minister, the Revd Steven Cooper, writes...

Advent Hopes

As we enter Advent this year, rarely has it felt more apt for us to pray for the coming of the Prince of Peace. As I write, there is a ceasefire in Gaza—but supposedly a temporary one. I hope we may all continue to pray for a lasting peace in the whole of Israel and Palestine, in which communities so long divided may discover new pathways of trust in one another, rise above tendencies to seek solutions in violence, and embrace one another as brothers and sisters made alike in God's image. That trust is something that we can model in our own lives, as well as by our prayers. We are called to be partners in the change God longs to realise in the world.

And in our worship, join us on Sunday mornings this Advent, as we light our Advent candles as a sign of our longing for the spirit of Christ, the Prince of Peace, to be discovered afresh in our world today. As a symbol of solidarity with our Christian siblings in Bethlehem, for whom—so blighted by the violence affecting their community—Christmas celebrations will be much more muted this year than they would usually be, some churches here will be leaving their second Advent candle unlit this year.

We continue to pray likewise for Ukraine, and for all parts of our world afflicted by violence. As we celebrate Christmas this year, may our hope be renewed in the God who comes to be alongside us as the human family; and may that hope be reflected in our lives—that we may, each in our own small way, be witnesses to the promise of a future in which all shall live in peace as children of God.

Sabbatical

As well as looking to the coming of Christ this Advent season, I am also looking forward shortly after Christmas, after nearly 10 years in ministry, to my first sabbatical: it is very much an occasion of mixed feelings, as shall miss you and the joy of sharing with you week by week for the three months that I am away; but I'm also very much looking forward to the opportunities it will bring, that will be of great benefit to my ministry in the years ahead. Especially, from toward the end of January I shall be spending a month in Ghana. It will be an opportunity for me to embrace Ghanaian culture like never before, which I'm really excited about. I'll also be exploring in some depth the relationship between Methodism and other traditions in the Christian Church: I believe that leaning into that unity which belongs to the Church as the whole people of Christ is an essential part of the witness God calls us as the Church to bear. And, if possible, I will also endeavour to do some Christian song writing – so watch this space for what I can come up with...

I shall be heading on sabbatical following the Sunday of our Covenant Service on 7th January. My last activity before I go will be our Taizé-style prayer service here that Sunday evening. And my sabbatical will then run until the second week of Easter. Please keep me in your prayers as I go – and Ruth and Seraphina, who will join me in Ghana for the week of half term – and I shall keep you in mine!

New Global Mission Fellow

Finally, in the coming days we eagerly anticipate welcoming our new young Global Mission Fellow, Miss Jessy Mhone who is joining us from Malawi, for the best part of the next two years. Her

exact arrival date is to be determined, but it is imminent. Please make her welcome!

May God bless you this Advent season, may you have a merry Christmas, a blessed Epiphany, and a happy start to 2024.

Steven

The story of mince pies

Did you know that mince pies have been traditional English Christmas fare since the Middle Ages, when meat was a key ingredient? The addition of spices, suet and alcohol to meat came about because it was an alternative to salting and smoking in order to preserve the food. Mince pies used to be a different shape - cradle-shaped with a pastry baby Jesus on top.



As the nights draw in, it's time to tuck up with good books.

This winter so far I've been reading "Britain After Rome" By Robin Fleming.

It's about the era we used to call "The Dark Ages" because we knew so little about them. Over the last couple of centuries archaeology has cast a light into the dark ages.

In terms of "historical eras you wouldn't want to live through" the late 300s-early 700s in Britain are definitely up there. Society collapsed. People didn't live in towns any more, there was no government, trade or peace. The economy so utterly fell apart we lost pottery and ironwork across much of the country, as no one knew how to make things. It's one of the few instances in history where however you measure it, life got worse. For everyone. All

the gold in the Roman Empire couldn't make a good life in Britain in the late 400s AD.

The traditional narrative has been that the church left with the Romans and Britain was a godless miserable backwater. More recent research suggests that yes, it was definitely miserable. Godless though is a much less credible theory.

It does seem that through the nightmare of social collapse, the church found its way to endure. Holy Places were built in the new villages and hill forts that replaced Roman Towns with their squares, plumbing and traders. In some cases it may have been the churches which provided what civil order there was. Certainly it seems there was not a total abandonment of Christianity when the Roman Empire fell apart.

We may not know the names of the saints who lived then, but we can see the places they were buried and sometimes venerated. As London turned into a wasteland with ruined buildings and people moved out into what's now Middlesex to get a little farm where they could subsist if not thrive, they continued to keep the faith as best they could.

Indeed, we know Christianity spread out of the ex-Roman parts of Britain into the whole of these isles with Ireland and Scotland, those places too hard for Rome at her height to conquer, taken for the Christian Faith. As settlers arrived, it is likely that the Britons told their neighbours the stories of Christ and how to pray.

As we read about the past, these saints of long ago are hard for us to know in any detail. Many we do not know even the names of. Yet, the church survived even if we're not clear on who was running it.

By the 800s there was a flowering of the church, helped by some Missionaries and itinerant preachers, churches were flourishing and people dedicated their lives to Christ, with many entering monasteries and nunneries. There was more order, there were traders again and even a little wine for Communion was available

(this was not an age when vineyards grew in England). By the time the Normans came in 1066 there was a well organised flourishing church in a country with as good a standard of living as anywhere in Western Europe had at the time.

There is a very comforting reminder that our picture of the “Dark Ages” gives us. The Enduring Church may have been poor, badly equipped and having to remember the scriptures because in many communities there wasn’t a bible to be had even if you could read (and probably nobody you knew could).

It was though a faithful church. I certainly will be keen to ask those saints their stories, for I am sure there will be a good number of people from those days in heaven. Until then, we can take heart, that even when the darkness consumes history itself, the Church endures, always until the end of days themselves.

General Notices:

Sunday School will end for 2023 on Sunday 10th December with a party, and resume Sunday 14th January.

Thomas Smith – Leysian Missioner

On the Feast of Stephen

Everyone knows that it was on the feast of Stephen that ‘good king Wenceslas looked on’. After all, it’s in a Christmas carol - but why? There’s nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow (‘deep and crisp and even’) and a kindly monarch. But *Christmas?*

The clue is in ‘the feast of Stephen’, which falls on 26th December, or ‘Boxing Day’, as we know it. That, too, has nothing to do with Christmas, beyond the fact that in the past people put a contribution in tradesmen’s boxes as a kind of Christmas present for their services during the year.

The Stephen whose feast day falls on the day after Christmas was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and found himself involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need. The apostles, who were the leaders of the church, felt that it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', so they selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist. They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank and file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That is most probably the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder, as we celebrate, that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.



CITY CAROL SERVICE

Thursday 14th December 2023
12.30pm - 1.30pm

Come and enjoy some Christmas cheer with local organisations, charities, schools and neighbours. Great for making new friends! Everyone is welcome.

Refreshments will be served after the service.



Universal Human Rights turns 75

This month marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This ground-breaking global pledge was first proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10th December 1948. It set out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

The UDHR enshrines ‘the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.’

Available in more than 500 languages, it is the most translated document in the world.

Throughout this year, a year-long initiative focusing on universality, progress and engagement, has culminated in a high-level event this month, which will announce global pledges and ideas for a vision for the future of human rights.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

Beatrix Potter

It was 80 years ago this month, on 22nd December 1943, that



Beatrix Potter, the children’s writer and illustrator, died. Her animal characters such as Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, and Jemima Puddle-Duck brought her worldwide fame – and made her loved by children right round the world.

Helen Beatrix Potter (28 July 1866 – 22 December 1943) had enjoyed an upper-middle-class childhood, but it was also

solitary. Instead of access to childhood friends, she was given numerous pets and spent holidays in Scotland and the Lake District, where she learned to love landscape, flora and fauna.

Beatrix Potter was in her thirties when she first self-published *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in 1902. Its immense success meant that she began writing and illustrating children's books full-time. In all, Potter wrote more than 60 books. Her best-known ones were her 23 children's books. Her books went on to sell more than 250 million copies. When in 1903 Peter Rabbit was made into a patented stuffed toy, he became the first fictional character to have this honour.

Potter used the sales of her books and a legacy from an aunt in 1905 to buy Hill Top Farm in Near Sawrey, a village in the Lake District. Over the following decades, she bought many additional farms, in order to preserve the unique hill country landscape from developers.

In 1913, when she was 47, Beatrix married William Heelis, a local solicitor in Hawkshead. By now she was also a prize-winning breeder of Herdwick sheep and a farmer.

In 1943, when she was 77, Potter died of pneumonia and heart disease at her home in Near Sawrey. She left most of her property to the National Trust, which means that she deserves the credit for so much of the land that now makes up the Lake District National Park.



The story behind the hymn: O Come, All ye Faithful

Nobody knows who wrote this well-loved Christmas carol. It was originally a Latin Christmas hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It seems to have first 'surfaced' in English due to a John Francis Wade, who lived in the 18th century, and who made his living copying manuscripts and, sometimes, music by hand. Wade was a Roman Catholic, and all services in the church at that time were conducted in Latin, and so he knew the language well.

The story goes that in about 1750 he slipped this hymn into a manuscript he was copying for the English Roman Catholic College in Lisbon, Portugal. 35 years later, in 1785, it turned up in the Portuguese Chapel in London, where it became known as the 'Portuguese Hymn'.

From there, the hymn appears to have 'travelled' across to the Margaret Chapel in London's West End. Young William Ewart Gladstone, who later became British Prime Minister, greatly appreciated the services at this church. He said that the congregation were "the most devout and happy that I have ever seen."

The minister at that time was Frederick Oakley, one of the leaders of the 19th century Oxford Movement, who was later to convert to Roman Catholicism. Oakley believed strongly in the power of religious symbols and fine music, and before he bade farewell to the Margaret Chapel, he introduced this hymn to the congregation. Having started as 'Adeste Fidelis', and been for a while 'The Portuguese Hymn', this hymn soon became known – and loved worldwide – as 'O Come, All Ye Faithful'.





John Wesley
Wesley's Chapel
& Leysian Mission



Christingle Service

**24th December
3.00pm - 4.00pm**

All are welcome

WESLEY'S CHAPEL
& LEYSIAN MISSION

WATCHNIGHT SERVICE

31st December, 11.30pm - All are welcome



ARE YOU COLD? TAKE ONE
CAN YOU HELP? LEAVE ONE

Donate a Coat to 'Take One, Leave One'

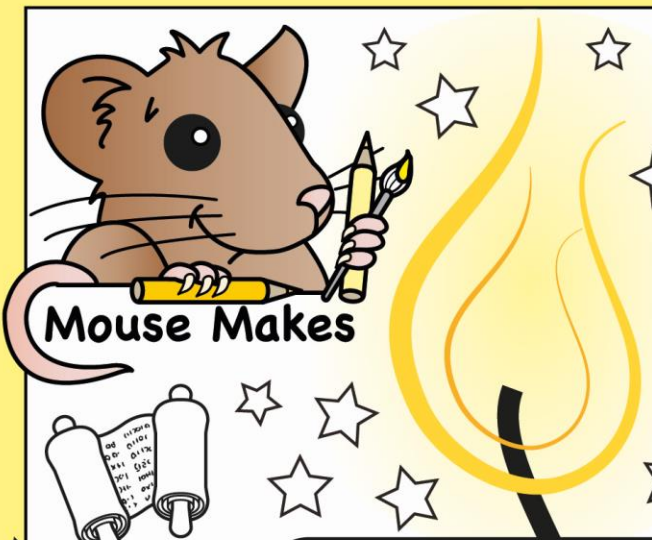
I needed clothes and you clothed me.
Matthew 25:36

We have relaunched our "Take One, Leave One" initiative to help provide warm coats to homeless people and those facing hardship and anyone who needs something to keep them warm when out and about this winter.


We are looking for donations of warm coats & jackets.

Do you have any spare coats or jackets in your wardrobe? Please donate them! Be kind and let's all help to keep everyone in our community stay warm this winter.

CHILDRENS PAGE




Mouse Makes



GOD'S PROMISE
Isaiah 9:6-7

CHILD • BORN • SON
GIVEN • WONDERFUL
COUNCELLOR
MIGHTY • GOD
EVERLASTING
FATHER • PRINCE
PEACE • LORD




AN ANGEL MESSENGER
Luke 1:26-38

ANGEL • GABRIEL
JOSEPH • MARY
FAVOUR • SON
JESUS • GREAT
THRONE • REIGN
FOREVER • HOLY
SERVANT • WORD


ADVENT
comes from
the Latin
'AD VENTO'
which means
ARRIVAL

In Advent we
celebrate Jesus' birth
and look forward to
the time when Jesus
will come again.



A LONG JOURNEY
Luke 2:1-20

BETHLEHEM
REGISTER • BIRTH
MANGER • INN
SHEPHERDS • FLOCK
ANGELS • JOY
GOOD NEWS • PRAISE
SAVIOUR • CHRIST



THE BEST GIFT OF ALL
John 3:16

GOD • SO • LOVED
WORLD • HE • GAVE
ONLY • SON
WHOEVER • BELIEVES
ETERNAL • LIFE

V	R	P	R	I	N	C	E	L	R	O	D
W	O	R	D	C	F	A	T	H	E	R	E
J	A	G	M	A	N	G	E	R	G	E	B
O	W	H	O	E	V	E	R	W	I	I	J
S	J	O	Y	B	O	R	N	O	S	G	E
E	S	L	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	N	S
P	P	Y	J	C	H	I	L	D	E	P	U
H	R	O	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
F	A	V	O	U	R	E	F	R	W	S	O
B	I	R	T	H	S	W	O	F	O	D	L
I	S	A	V	I	O	U	R	U	R	L	O
F	E	C	O	U	N	C	E	L	L	O	R
A	N	G	E	L	B	J	V	K	D	V	D
B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	G	E	S
L	A	N	G	E	L	S	R	G	O	D	V
I	G	A	B	R	I	E	L	T	D	S	M
F	P	G	I	V	E	N	A	H	U	O	A
E	E	H	G	A	V	E	S	R	W	N	R
S	A	E	G	R	E	A	T	O	N	L	Y
O	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	N	N	J	O
N	E	O	G	O	O	D	N	E	W	S	N
F	L	O	C	K	M	I	G	H	T	Y	B

Colour in one star each day until Christmas

Dec23 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk

LUNCHTIME MUSIC RECITALS in January

2nd	Mihael Majetic	Piano
9th	Russell Thompson	Piano
16th	Togetherness	Cello Duo
23rd	Bernice Clark	Voice
30th	Aleksi Koponen & Maya Soltan	Baritone & Piano



Tuesdays @1.05pm, Free Entry



John Wesley
Wesley's Chapel
& Leysian Mission



**Join us for our FREE Georgian Re-enactment
at John Wesley's House on
Wed 20th December, 11.00 - 15.00.**

Meet the housekeeper, cook and other staff!

*Around lunch-time, there will be Carols in the Courtyard
(weather permitting)*

Chapel and Museum open as usual 10.30 - 16.00

Wesley's Chapel, 49, City Road, EC1 www.wesleysheritage.org.uk



John Wesley
**The Museum of Methodism
& John Wesley's House**

And finally.....

This famous poem also known as “The gate of the year”, was quoted by the King in his 1939 Christmas Day Speech. His wife Elizabeth, grandmother to today’s King, brought to him a poem that had deeply touched her. He quoted the first lines of the poem in his speech to illuminate the spiritual comfort he believed his subjects might seek as the Axis powers confronted the Allies in the early days of World War II.

“God Knows” by Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)

*And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”*

And he replied:

*“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the
night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in
the lone East.*

*So heart be still:
What need our little life
Our human life to know,
If God hath comprehension?
In all the dizzy strife
Of things both high and low,
God hideth His intention.*

*God knows. His will
Is best. The stretch of years
Which wind ahead, so dim
To our imperfect vision,
Are clear to God. Our fears
Are premature; In Him,
All time hath full provision.*

*Then rest: until
God moves to lift the veil
From our impatient eyes,
When, as the sweeter features
Of Life’s stern face we hail,
Fair beyond all surmise
God’s thought around His creatures
Our mind shall fill.*

Worship at Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission

Monday – Saturday

10.00am Morning Prayer from the Methodist Worship Book

Wednesday

12.45pm Service of Holy Communion

Sunday

9.45am Service of Holy Communion (except first Sunday of the month)

11.00am Morning Worship

7.00pm Service in the style of Taize (first Sunday of the month)

All services except the Wednesday Lunchtime Communion Service are also live streamed

(www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming) and remain viewable afterwards at: www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/previous-services

Worship via Phone

You can also share in most of our services by telephone. Call 020 3880 0873 just before they begin and, when instructed, enter the following 'Conference ID' number on your 'phone keypad: 135 491 69 followed by #. You will hear the person leading, and you will be able to share with all others who are on the line in saying the responses together—or simply listening if you prefer. If you are willing and able to mute your end of the call this will increase the quality of audio for those using this function by reducing background noise.

We also have a dedicated email address for prayer requests which will be received directly by our ministers Jen and Steven, and will be prayed during the course of the Daily Morning Prayer service. Please send all prayer requests to:

prayer@wesleyschapel.org.uk

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

