



# Welcome to Stoneleigh Methodist

SORRY – We are closed again due to Covid

*But we are always open on-line*

## Sunday 3 January 2021

### 10:30am: Morning Worship led by Viv Newitt

Watch live on YouTube: [youtu.be/3An9R-m6-Bw](https://youtu.be/3An9R-m6-Bw) or join on Zoom: [bit.ly/2J5jvY8](https://bit.ly/2J5jvY8)

### Prayers

Please pray for Viv leading our Service today, for our Stewards, for others within the Church and beyond who continue to work tirelessly for the benefit of all, and for the continued health of our key workers and all the National Health Service, on whom we depend so much now, and at all times.

Please pray also for those of our Church family who are unwell or finding their mobility limited and consider whether they might welcome a call from friends.

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” 1 Corinthians 13:4*

### Notices

In 2020 there were many Sundays when our Church doors were closed – and then, slowly, we discovered how to broadcast from preacher’s homes, then from within the Church, and finally we were able to have a limited congregation in the pews.

In Tier 4 Church Council have decided to hold Services online only, and so we will continue to broadcast (stream) a Service every Sunday morning on [bit.ly/SMCTube](https://bit.ly/SMCTube), and the Service will form part of the weekly NewsSheet. We will do our absolute best to keep you up to date with changes as and when they become known to us.

**Confirmation that Tier 4** is where we are at the moment, otherwise known as ‘Stay at Home’. To minimise the risk of cross-infection within the Church Centre, our own Risk Assessment limits use of the whole building to just one group at a time, with cleaning between groups. To ‘manage’ this we must ask anyone who needs access to the building to let Denise or I know their intentions in advance. Just to let you all know there will be a group from Surrey County Council in the Link Room, kitchen etc, next Wednesday and Friday, all day – other than that I do not know of any usage apart from Sundays, which will be **only** those essential to ‘presenting’ the Service, ie Leader, readers and tech team. *Robin*

**Group Reports for Church Council.** A Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had a pleasant Christmas. The Church Council are to meet, via Zoom, on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and I would like reports from Church Groups, for inclusion in the meeting, to be sent to me by Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Thank you. **Church Council Members.** Just a reminder that the next Church Council meeting on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 4:00pm will be by Zoom. Details about this meeting will be circulated to all members in due course. *Marion: Church Council Secretary.*

**Church Council** have unanimously decided to continue with online services **only**, until restrictions change. They have also agreed that we postpone the Covenant Service until the situation is better. God bless you, *Emma*

## Invitation to all Members of SMC

The Churchwardens, Parochial and Ecumenical Church Council of Ruxley Church (Ewell St Francis) request the pleasure of your company at

### The Licensing of The Reverend Fiona Ellingham

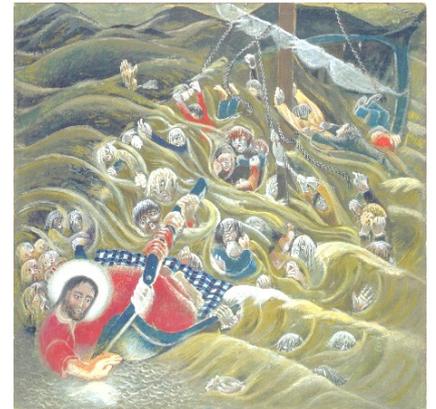
by The Right Reverend Andrew Watson Bishop of Guildford

at Ruxley Church, Ruxley Lane, Ewell KT19 OJG on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7:30pm

*Please note:* - Due to the uncertainty with regard to prevailing Covid restrictions, it may be necessary to restrict numbers and broadcast the service via Zoom. Arrangements will be reviewed early in January and advice given to all with the best possible notice. *Ruxley Church*



**Still Waters** The next session will be this Sunday evening, 3<sup>rd</sup> January at 6:00pm, hosted by Deacon Dawn on Zoom. The meeting ID is 846 8190 5640 and passcode, 761642. The painting we will be looking at is 'Storm over the lake' by Eularia Clarke. *Dawn*



**The Link** – next Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>) ius the deadline for contributions for the next issue of the Link – [link@stoneleighmethodist.church](mailto:link@stoneleighmethodist.church) or direct to Vivienne please.

## Around the Trolley

**Christine W** was taken into hospital earlier this week and, sadly, passed early Thursday morning. Please hold her and her family in your prayers.

**Ruth** would like to thank everyone for the lovely flowers and cards she received for her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. The family are planning to celebrate her birthday when it is safe to do so.

**Christmas by Zoom.** I hope you had a pleasant Christmas in spite of all the restrictions. Ernie and I had a very quiet time with just the two of us but nevertheless we enjoyed ourselves. We had a very long Zoom meeting with family in Scotland on Sunday evening, but it felt good to see everyone on screen and it almost felt like the norm - *Marion*

**Good News** - I just wanted to share with you all that we have had the All Clear from NHS testing this afternoon. Praise God but we are going to be even extra careful now

God bless, *Emma*



## Contact Details

**Contact:** Jeananne (07729 028850) - [contact@stoneleighmethodist.church](mailto:contact@stoneleighmethodist.church)

**All items for future NewsSheets** – to [news@stoneleighmethodist.church](mailto:news@stoneleighmethodist.church) or phone 020 8393 2155

### Online Services etc

**Our weekly News/Service sheet** is delivered to every member, and also a YouTube or Zoom Sunday Service is available to those able to receive it. A DVD copy is also available – contact Jeananne.

**The Ruxley/Stoneleigh Thursday Morning prayer** (10:00am) by Zoom is open to all. It is followed by Chat Time and virtual tea/coffee from 10:45-11:15. Email to [publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk](mailto:publicity@ruxley-church.org.uk) by Tuesday for details and a copy of the liturgy too.

# Morning Worship – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 10:30am

led by Viv Newitt

Watch live on YouTube: [youtu.be/3An9R-m6-Bw](https://youtu.be/3An9R-m6-Bw) or join on Zoom: [bit.ly/2J5jvY8](https://bit.ly/2J5jvY8)

To join the Morning Service through Zoom go to [bit.ly/2J5jvY8](https://bit.ly/2J5jvY8)  
and if prompted, use Meeting ID: **874 6773 6490**, and Passcode **702336**.

On your home phone, dial **020 3481 5240**, listen to the announcement and enter the meeting ID **874 6773 6490** followed by # (hash) when prompted; just # on its own when asked for your Participant ID; and when prompted, the passcode **702336** followed by #.

And that's it: you should be connected and are able to listen into the service.  
Simply hang up when the service finishes, or whenever you want to leave.

To unmute yourself during the post-service chat time, press **\*6**

## Welcome and Notices

### Call to worship

A new year has begun.

Let us leave behind all that is past  
and walk together into the future.

Let us trust in the God of new beginnings,  
and worship the God of fresh hopes.

And so, Lord of our journeys,  
help us this day to have  
eyes to see your leading,  
ears to hear your guidance,  
and hearts full of courage,  
that we may journey faithfully and find your way,  
even when the path ahead may seem difficult and dark  
**Amen**

### Hymn: StF 224 As with gladness men of old

1. As with gladness men of old  
did the guiding star behold,  
as with joy they hailed its light,  
leading onward, beaming bright,  
so, most gracious Lord, may we  
evermore be led to thee.

2. As with joyful steps they sped,  
Saviour, to thy lowly bed,  
there to bend the knee before  
thee, whom heaven and earth adore,  
so may we with willing feet  
ever seek thy mercy seat.
  
3. As they offered gifts most rare  
at thy cradle rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy,  
pure, and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.
  
4. Holy Jesus, every day  
keep us in the narrow way;  
and, when earthly things are past,  
bring our ransomed souls at last  
where they need no star to guide,  
where no clouds thy glory hide.
  
5. In the heavenly country bright  
need they no created light;  
thou its light, its joy, its crown,  
thou its sun which goes not down;  
there for ever may we sing  
alleluias to our king.

*William Chatterton Dix (1837 – 1898)*

### **Prayer of praise**

We praise you, Lord Jesus, that even though you are a king,  
you inspire humility, and not power.  
You were content with a stable, and did not demand a palace.  
You were born for all people, and not just a few.  
We praise and adore you,  
and we bring you our love.

**Amen**

### **Prayer of confession**

*Please join in the words in bold type*

Lord Jesus,  
when our thoughts are too much about wealth and fame,  
**forgive us, and help us to follow a different route.**

When we try to control others,  
and are possessive of our role and our status,  
**forgive us, and help us follow a different route.**

When we have lost our way, and chased after too many false stars,  
**forgive us, and help us to choose a different route -  
the one that leads to your kingdom.**  
**Amen**

The true light that gives light to everyone, Jesus Christ, has come into the world. These are his words to us: Our sins are forgiven  
**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### **Readings, taken from NIV**

#### **Isaiah ch 60 vv 1 – 6**

##### *The glory of Zion*

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.  
See, darkness covers the earth,  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the Lord rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.  
Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look about you:  
All assemble and come to you;  
your sons come from afar,  
and your daughters are carried on the arm.  
Then you will look and be radiant,  
your heart will throb and swell with joy;  
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,  
to you the riches of the nations will come.  
Herds of camels will cover your land,  
young camels of Midian and Ephah.  
And all from Sheba will come,  
bearing gold and incense  
and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.”

## **Matthew ch 2 vv 1 – 12**

### *The visit of the Magi*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked.

“Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.

“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.’ “

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said,

“Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

### **Hymn: StF 225 Bethlehem, of noblest cities**

1. Bethlehem, of noblest cities  
none can once with thee compare;  
thou alone the Lord from heaven  
didst for us incarnate bear.
2. Fairer than the sun at morning  
was the star that told his birth,  
to the world its God announcing,  
seen in fleshly form on earth.

3. By its lambent beauty guided,  
see, the Eastern kings appear:  
see them bend, their gifts to offer —  
gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh.
4. Solemn things of mystic meaning:  
incense doth their God disclose,  
gold the royal child proclaimeth,  
myrrh a future tomb foreshows.
5. Holy Jesus, in thy brightness  
to the Gentile world displayed,  
with the Father and the Spirit  
endless praise to thee be paid.

*Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348 – c.413)*  
*translated by Edward Caswall (1814 – 1878)*

## Poem

### Three kings and a baby

Three kings and a baby  
Caught in a stable:  
A moment, frozen for all time,  
On a small square  
Of crinkle-cut card.  
The rich blue  
Of the Bethlehem sky  
Bleeds out at the edge,  
Where a few tenacious grains  
Of glitter  
Cling to one  
Outsized star.

They weren't, of course,  
Kings.  
More likely astrologers,  
Scholars anyhow.  
And he wasn't a baby:  
Well past 18 months  
When they came.

Makes you wonder  
What happened to the gifts?

The gold would have been useful:  
Plenty to save for  
In a young family, setting out  
But what of frankincense  
And myrrh,  
The perfume of royalty,  
The spice of burials.  
Hardly the most suitable of gifts  
For a toddler  
Just out of nappies.

Chances are  
They would have stayed around the house:  
Conversation pieces  
In their finely carved boxes.  
Their symbols  
Of a strange and distant land,  
Like photographs  
Of long-dead relatives,  
Must have fed the curiosity  
Of an exploring, inquisitive child.  
He must have looked at them,  
Held them, sometimes,  
Wondered at their mystery.

And did he leave them  
At his mother's house,  
On the day that he walked away?  
And did she  
Bring them with her,  
Under the falling darkness  
Of that Friday sky,  
To a tomb in the garden

Of another Joseph,  
To break open the seals  
Of thirty years,  
To set free the fragrances  
Of burial and kingship:  
And the memory  
Of the men who once came  
To share their proof  
That what she knew  
Was true.

*From 'Rebel without Applause' by Gerard Kelly - copyright consent applied for*

## Reflection

Some years ago, Kevin Scott, now retired, but at the time Vicar of St John's, Old Malden, came to our Tuesday Fellowship meeting (at Worcester Park) and gave a talk on Christian festivals. He began by asking which we thought was the one the church first celebrated. Any suggestions? Most people said Christmas, but I thought it might be either Easter, the day of resurrection, or maybe Pentecost, which celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and is sometimes called the birthday of the church. It turns out we were all wrong! The fact that I'm asking today is, I suppose, a bit of a giveaway, because the answer is Epiphany, which we are celebrating this morning, although the actual date is 6<sup>th</sup> January - this coming Wednesday.

The word Epiphany comes from the Greek and means 'manifestation.' In the eastern churches, that is to say most of the orthodox churches, it's been celebrated since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and is linked to the baptism of Jesus and to a renewal of our own baptism promises. In the west, Epiphany has been celebrated since the 4<sup>th</sup> century and it marks the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, as we see in the visit of the Magi, although some churches do include the renewal of baptism vows at the same time, and since 1955 the Roman Catholic church keeps the Sunday following Epiphany as the feast of the baptism.

There are all sorts of stories or legends connected with the Magi, or wise men. When my children were at primary school, a very popular Christmas show told the story of Artaban, the fourth wise man, who, owing to various distractions along the way, took so long over the journey that he arrived just in time to witness the crucifixion; and there are other stories which you may have come across. So, what do we actually know? For a start, we know that they were not kings in spite of some of our most popular carols, 'We three kings of Orient are', for instance, or 'Three kings from Persian lands afar', and there were probably not three of them either. There may be, but the fact is we don't know - there were three gifts, which has given rise to the idea that there were three of them. They must have been quite wealthy, or they wouldn't have been able to undertake such a journey, and I don't suppose gold, frankincense and myrrh came cheap, even in those days. But as to who they were, or where they came from, we don't really know. Were they from the same family? Were they from the same town? They arrived together, but does that mean they set out together? Did they meet at some point on the journey? Tradition has it that one of them was black, one elderly and one quite a young man, not much more than a boy; and of course we know their names - don't we? Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar? Though I don't know which one was which. We know they came from the east, but that's all. I read recently that in Cologne cathedral in Germany there is a shrine containing the relics of the three wise men - how do they know? Did they have passports or some other form of ID? DNA testing wouldn't be much use unless you had someone else's to compare it with! And I wonder how many other places would make the same claim . . . And actually, does it really matter?

They must, it's safe to say, have been well-educated men, who had made a study of the stars. In the ancient world, there was no distinction made between astronomy and

astrology, unlike today where astrology is not generally considered to have any scientific basis and is mainly used for horoscopes, if you happen to believe in such things. So, if you saw something strange or unusual in the sky, you would look for an earthly explanation or meaning. Over the years, there have been various attempts to define what star it was that the Magi saw and followed. Apparently, there was an appearance of Halley's comet in 12 – 11 BC but that's almost certainly too early; and in 7 BC, the planets Jupiter and Saturn were known to be in conjunction which happens every 19 to twenty years or so, though it is not always visible to the naked eye. You will probably know that the most recent occurrence was on 21<sup>st</sup> December. I wasn't lucky enough to see them, but a friend did, and said that there was no mistaking it. It was, she said, incredibly moving, but remains unconvinced that it was what the wise men saw all those years ago. Jupiter is sometimes called the royal or kingly planet, and Saturn is sometimes used to represent the Jews, so if you're into astrology - king of the Jews, shown by the stars? Why not?

Well, if that were the case, wouldn't you expect it to have been noted, and perhaps acted on, by other people besides the Magi? So maybe we have to accept that actually we don't know what the star was. Suffice it to say, it made an enormous impact on them which led them to follow it wherever it took them.

I wonder how much they knew of where they were going, or what the significance of their journey was? Did they get tired and fed up with travelling for so long, and have to encourage one another when it seemed as though they weren't getting anywhere? And were they concerned about what kind of reception they'd get? They would after all be strangers; they might look different, dress differently, speak a different language maybe or have a different god and a different way of worship. There's so much we don't know - what were their sleeping arrangements, for instance - there wasn't a Premier Inn every so many miles, I'm sure. And did they have to travel only at night, as they were following a star? There wasn't after all any Satnav to help them - or possibly hinder them - on their way! We're not told about any day time arrangements. We do know that they persevered - they kept going till they got there!

It's little wonder that all sorts of stories have grown up around them!

Eventually they reached Jerusalem, the capital city, and as they were convinced that the star they were following meant the birth of a new king, what more natural than to call in at the palace of King Herod? Where else would you expect to find a baby king but in a royal palace? But no; not only was there no baby there, but the king himself knew nothing about the birth of a new king and had to call on others, namely the chief priests and teachers of the law, to get the information they needed. Quoting from the prophet Micah - and Matthew, a Jew writing for Jews, loved to quote from the Old Testament - they were told that the one whom they were seeking would be born in Bethlehem in Judea. By the way, I don't know whether you've noticed, but whenever Bethlehem is referred to, it's always 'Bethlehem in Judea' or 'Bethlehem in the land of Judah' - I don't know of any other place in the Bible that's described in such a way, though there may well be; but on further reading, it turns out that there was another Bethlehem! The Bethlehem with which we are

concerned was - well, still is - about 5 miles south of Jerusalem whereas the other Bethlehem was about 7 miles north-west of Nazareth, and the reason that it matters is because Bethlehem in Judea was David's hometown, so this ties in with Jesus being born into the house of David, through Joseph. It had long been prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem in the land of Judah - hence the importance in distinguishing which Bethlehem this was!

Herod was rattled - not that he let them see it. He had his position to protect, and he wasn't prepared to let anything get in the way of that. So, he sent them on their way, whilst ruthlessly planning how to eliminate this threat to his rule.

By now, Mary and Joseph had left the stable and were living in a house in Bethlehem. I don't think anyone knows the exact time scale, but obviously they couldn't go on living in a stable indefinitely! We know that Joseph was originally from Bethlehem. That, after all, is the reason that he and Mary had to go there for the census, so perhaps he still had relatives living there who helped them out? Though that is, like so much of the story, speculation. The star guided the Magi to the house and there it stood still, just over the house; they entered, bowed down and worshipped, and offered their gifts - gold to denote kingship, incense to show they were in the presence of a god or at the very least a priest, and myrrh which was commonly used in burial rites. Again, it's a question we can't answer, but one that sparks the imagination - did they know the significance of their gifts? Or have we attached that meaning with the benefit of hindsight? Or did they represent the character of the one who gave each gift? However that might be, they offered their gifts, and then, being warned in a dream, they returned home by another route.

When we read about the shepherds, we hear that after visiting the new-born baby in the stable, they returned to their flocks rejoicing and telling everyone they met all that they had seen. What about the wise men? All we know is that they returned home by another route, without going back to Herod. They were, as we know, Gentiles - yet they acted on what they had seen in a dream sent to them presumably by an angel, a messenger from God. They had acknowledged Jesus, the young child, as King of the Jews, - and not as someone who would become king in the future but as one who was born a king - and they had worshipped, even though they would have been of a different religious and cultural background. I wonder what they talked about as they made that long journey home? And I wonder what they told people, their friends and families, when they eventually reached home?

If we look back at the stories that have made the news headlines over the last few weeks, it makes for pretty depressing reading - or viewing - doesn't it? The world seems a very dark place at the moment - with acts of violence, murder, flood, hunger - not to mention Covid and other illnesses, and of course the issues posed by Brexit. Not the best start to a year, is it, though we do at least have the hope now of two vaccines. We may well be greeting this new year of 2021 with somewhat mixed feelings. All the messages of joy and love and peace, more significant than ever this Christmas, seem to disappear like a puff of smoke when we think of families who have not been able to see each other for months, or see our

overworked and overstretched health service, or our schools having to remain closed following the Christmas break. Sometimes it's hard to stay positive.

Yet Jesus himself was born and grew up in an occupied country and fled with Mary and Joseph at a very young age as a refugee. He lived in a world where violence and poverty and sickness were part and parcel of everyday life, where there was political unrest and uncertainty. Even in the midst of all the turmoil in the world today, there are still those who demonstrate love and care for others, and that is where we will find Jesus, right there at the heart of it all - if we just pause for a moment and look for him.

The wise men saw a star, a bright, guiding light, and in faith they followed that light even though they did not know quite where it would take them or what they would find when they got there.

So let us, like them, put our trust in the light that Jesus brought into the world and still brings into our lives today, and let us follow that guiding light wherever it may take us.

One thing we know for sure, the light shines on in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out.

**Amen**

## **Prayers**

Jesus of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,  
we pray for all who are sick at this time, and for all who care for them  
**May they be overwhelmed with the joy of your peace.**

We pray for those struggling to find their place in the world, thinking especially of all who have lost their employment during these difficult times; those who are homeless; and of refugees  
**May they be overwhelmed with the joy of your acceptance.**

We pray for those struggling with loneliness and isolation  
**May they be overwhelmed with the joy of your presence.**

We pray for those trying to begin again after making mistakes, perhaps with life-changing consequences  
**May they be overwhelmed with the joy of your guiding love.**

And we pray for one another as we seek to serve and support our communities  
**May we, and all your people, be comforted and overwhelmed by the joy of your peace, your acceptance, your presence, and your love.**  
**Amen**

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done  
on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen

## Hymn: StF 208 Let earth and heaven combine

1. Let earth and heaven combine,  
angels and all agree,  
to praise in songs divine  
the incarnate Deity,  
our God contracted to a span,  
incomprehensibly made man.
2. He laid his glory by,  
he wrapped him in our clay;  
unmarked by human eye,  
the latent Godhead lay;  
infant of days he here became,  
and bore the mild Immanuel's  
name.
3. Unsearchable the love  
that has the Saviour brought;  
the grace is far above  
both earth's and angels' thought:  
suffice for us the God, we know,  
our God, is manifest below.
4. He deigns in flesh to appear,  
widest extremes to join;  
to bring our vileness near,  
and make us all divine:  
and we the life of God shall know,  
for God is manifest below.
5. Made perfect first in love,  
and sanctified by grace,  
we shall from earth remove,  
and see his glorious face:  
his love shall then be fully showed,  
and we shall all be lost in God.

*Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)*

## **Closing prayers**

May the joy of Christ's birth enrich us,  
the humility of Christ's birth empower us,  
the faithfulness of the wise men guide us,  
the generosity of their gifts inspire us;  
and may the light of Christ shine within us  
and go before us  
today and every day

**Amen**

*A very happy, healthy and blessed new year to you all.*

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## **A Prayer for a New Year**

The District Chairs hope that 2021 will be a year of healing and new opportunities for the communities that we serve. When we make our Covenant promises we are reminded that we continue to have faith in God, in both the good times and the challenging times; and we commit ourselves to remain faithful, as God remains faithful to us. As the writer to the Thessalonians reminds us, we are to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing and to give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us all.

So as we go forward together in love, faith and fellowship, here is a prayer of praise that we might use in this New Year.

*Creator God, we praise you  
for this New Year,  
for opportunities to worship, together or  
'on-line',  
for this moment in our lives.*

*Creator God, we praise you  
for all that you have made,  
for all that you have given,  
for all that you have promised.*

*Redeemer God, we praise you  
for the new life found in Christ,  
for the chance to begin again,  
for the story of salvation.*

*Redeemer God, we praise you  
for your grace that is without limit,  
for your love which knows no end,  
for your living among us.*

*Sustainer God, we praise you  
for the gift of your Spirit,  
for the outpouring of your love,  
for the fruits of our relationship with you.*

*Sustainer God, we praise you  
for your open embrace of all,  
for your infectious joy,  
for your presence in our lives.*

***Amen***

With blessings

*Micky, Nigel and Jongi*

Chairs of the London District of the Methodist Church