

# KEYSTONE

United Didsbury Methodist Church  
Minister: Rev. Catharine Hughes



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2025

Dear friends,

It is a ritual every year, and every year filled with the same tension. We all hold our breath, waiting to see whether - when they are plugged in, after a year boxed away in the loft - the lights for the Christmas tree still work ...

At home most of us will festoon a tree with a string of lights and cover it with shiny baubles. They bring sparkle and light to our homes. There is a saying that to spread light we can either be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it. On our Christmas trees we have the fairy lights themselves, or the baubles that reflect the light. Together the light bounces around and fills the space. Christmas reminds us of the greatest Light of all: Jesus Christ, the Life-Light. Into a world, shadowed by uncertainty, weariness and longing, Jesus comes.

*What came into existence was Life,  
and the Life was Light to live by.  
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;  
the darkness couldn't put it out.'*

(John 1.4-5, The Message Bible)

The darkness couldn't put it out 2000 years ago; and it can't put it out today. Jesus brings hope, peace, joy and love that banishes darkness, and instead shines light into all corners. We are called to be candles and mirrors: to spread the Life-Light of Jesus out into the world. As a church community we have been making and collating green bobble hats to create a Christmas tree. The green hats form the branches and leaves; the brightly coloured pom-poms make the baubles that decorate it. A few bits of sparkly wool add to the effect. On 21 December we will bring it into the church as part of our Christmas Carol Service, then disperse the hats to local food banks, who in turn can distribute them to people in need over the winter months. In a small way we are spreading light.

Perhaps this year, as you hang each bauble on your tree, take a moment to think of the ways Christ's light has touched your life. Each colour, each sparkle, can be a small reminder that we are called to reflect his light into the world. Every act of kindness or moment of tender patience or generous gift shows the love of Jesus, that shines brightly long after the seasonal decorations have been taken down for another year.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!  
Rev Catharine



## Preachers for December

7 <sup>th</sup> December	Rev. Mandy Boon – <i>Holy Communion</i>
14 <sup>th</sup> December	Rev. Adu
21 <sup>st</sup> December	Rev. Catharine Hughes - <i>Carol Service</i>
25 <sup>th</sup> December	Local Preachers
28 <sup>th</sup> December	No Service



## Readings for December

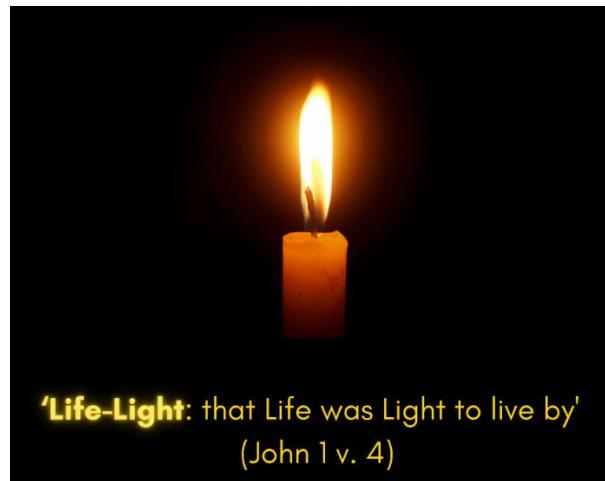
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent 7<sup>th</sup> Dec Isaiah 11: 1-10; Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19; Romans 15: 4-13  
Matthew 3: 1-12

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent 14<sup>th</sup> Dec Isaiah 35: 1-10; Psalm 146: 5-10; James 5: 7-10;  
Matthew 11: 2-11

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent 21<sup>st</sup> Dec Isaiah 7: 10-16; Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19; Romans 1: 1-7;  
Matthew 1: 18-25

Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup> Dec Isaiah 9: 2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2: 11-4; Luke 2: 1-14

28<sup>th</sup> Dec Isaiah 63: 7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2: 10-18; Matthew 2: 13-23



### Readings for January

- 4<sup>th</sup> Jan      Jeremiah 31: 7-14; Psalm 147: 12-20; Ephesians 1: 3-14; John 1: (1-9) 10-18
- 11<sup>th</sup> Jan      Isaiah 42: 1-9; Psalm 29: Acts 10: 34-43; Matthew 3: 13-17
- 18<sup>th</sup> Jan      Isaiah 49: 1-7; Psalm 40: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 1: 1-19; John 1: 29-42
- 25<sup>th</sup> Jan      Isaiah 9: 1-4; Psalm 27: 1, 4-9; 21 Corinthians 1: 10-18; Matthew 4: 12-23

### Preachers for January

- 4<sup>th</sup> Jan      Rev. Catharine Hughes – *Covenant Service*
- 11<sup>th</sup> Jan      Phil Davis
- 18<sup>th</sup> Jan      Miriam Moules
- 25<sup>th</sup> Jan      Promilla Jabeen



Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Nov at 3.00pm - Ecumenical Advent Carol Service.  
(Organised by Didsbury & Burnage Churches  
Working Together) at Christ Church,  
35 Darley Avenue. M20 2DZ



Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 2.00pm in Room 3 to sort out the Christmas Hats and make bobbles (the Brownies have made loads of lovely bobbles that need stitching on. Tea/coffee/cake. Do come and help if you can and bring your hats along if you done any.



**Concert by United Christian Singers**  
**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00pm**  
**HAVE YOU HEARD?**  
*(See page 10)*



BROAD OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL



On Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 11.30am the pre-school who meet in the hall will be performing the Nativity in church if you would like to pop in and support them.



# Christmas

WORSHIP 2025



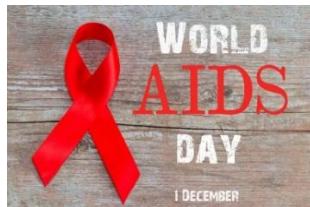
CAROL SERVICE  
SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER, 10.45AM

QUIET CAROL SERVICE  
MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER, 7.00PM

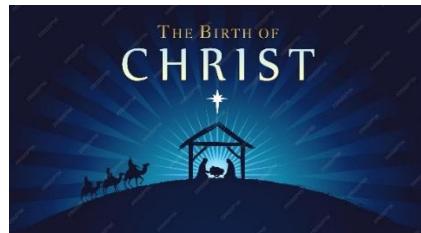
CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION  
THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER, 10.45AM



## DECEMBER



1<sup>st</sup> Dec      *WORLD AIDS DAY* is observed every year on 1<sup>st</sup> December to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, support those living with the virus, and remember those who lost their lives to AIDS-related illnesses.



25<sup>th</sup> December      Christmas Day when we celebrate this wonderful event - And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.

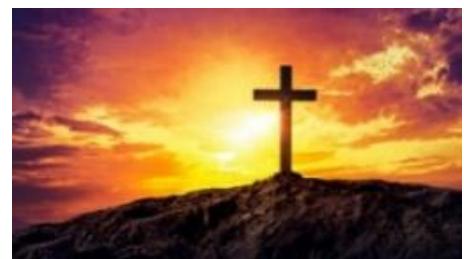
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.





Rev. Catharine     Tony & Sandra     Tom     Paul     Dave & Mary     Joan H  
Phil     Barbara     the family of Christine     the family of Kathleen     Margaret J  
Betty     Cynthia     Beryl & family     Olive & family     Tracy     Sue F  
Ben & Pat     Margaret W     Heather T     Paul & Paula     Beryl G     Sheila  
Joyce     Eugenia & Oscar.     Our church family     the NHS     Our Community  
Those in hospital     Those in our prayer book & on the prayer tree.  
Worn torn countries     Foodbanks     Moston Baby Basket  
Those without a bed     the lonely, anxious and depressed and on the  
poverty line

We thank you God for answered prayer and continue to pray for all  
those who need His love and hold them in our hearts.   Amen



*If you'd like anyone on our prayer wall in Keystone,  
please speak to me or email [rosieblayds@gmail.com](mailto:rosieblayds@gmail.com)*

**Please place a name for someone you wish continual prayer  
for on the prayer tree at the back of church**

## THE WONDEROUS CHRISTMAS STORY



The miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.



The Angel Gabriel visiting Mary to announce that she would conceive Jesus.



The Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem, where he was born in a manger



Angels announcing the birth to the shepherds, who then visited Jesus.



The arrival of the three wise men bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We would love you to join us for  
Have You

# Heard?

*By Joel Raney*  
Sung by **United Christian Singers**  
Led by Anne Wilde.  
Including favourite carols for everyone.  
A **FREE** event at  
**Heaton Moor United Church,**  
On **Saturday, DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> at 6pm**  
Donations for the Church Charities.

### WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Jan Cornerstone URC, Parrswood Road, 2.30pm - 4.30pm  
Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> Jan United Didsbury Methodist Church, 10am - 12 noon  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan St Nicholas Church 10.30am - 11.30am (Usual Communion service).  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan Didsbury Baptist Church, 2.00pm - 4.00pm  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan St Catherine's RC Church, after 12 noon Mass (date tbc)  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan St Bernard's. Prayer Breakfast (tbc)



Exhausted? Worn out? In need of a pick-me-up?

Join in with the **Church Family Weekend, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026**, when we will receive 'food for the soul' in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Everyone is welcome. Saturday, roughly 10-3.30 (exact timing tbc), will be led by **Rev Katie Smith**, District Mission Area Lead for Greater Manchester Plus. Anticipate space to learn about prayer and bible study, and just to rest in the presence of God. The Sunday service on 8th February will be led by Rev Catharine Hughes and will include communion. Please mark the date in your diary. *(Further details to follow)*



**The Circuit Service** continues; you're warmly welcomed to join on Sunday evenings 6.30pm on Zoom - the room opens from 6.00pm for a chat and fellowship with friends.

### LADIES CIRCLE

All are welcome to join us in Room 3 every other Thursday to meet in love and friendship. **Start 2.00pm** (finish 3.15pm after tea/coffee and biscuits/cakes). The door is open from 1.40pm, so do pop along if you can, you'll be made very welcome. *Rosie x*

4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Carols and Christmas Fair
11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Meal out
8 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Light-hearted Quiz with Rosie
22 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	Who is that baby? competition

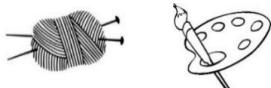
*Have a wonderful and blessed Christmas  
from all at Ladies Circle xxx*



Circuit Film Club will meet on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm**, and in preparation for discussion the film will be ' My neighbour Totoro' (Available pre-owned reasonably priced on eBay) Please contact Liz Stuart for the zoom code at [lizstuartlp@aol.com](mailto:lizstuartlp@aol.com)



A drink, fellowship & closing prayer with friends at Caramello, Didsbury, 10.00am for an hour. Open to all. Meeting for an hour on **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December** and then **7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January**.



**ART SPACE** – Meets on Wednesdays between 10.00am and noon. This is a chance to do something creative in the company of others. Whether it's painting, embroidery, knitting, card making or anything else that you do, just bring your kit with you and enjoy the peace and quiet. This is not tutor led, just an opportunity to work on those unfinished projects and develop skills with friends. Why not give it a go? Patsy x - *The last Art Space for 2025 will be Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December and will resume on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026.*

**Fellowship Group** – We will meet in Room 3 from 2pm until 3.30pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December, and then in the new year on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> January and we'll share tea and coffee. For further details speak to Nick or Patsy. All welcome, even if you can't attend regularly.

**Badminton Club** in the hall on Tuesdays from 8.00pm and all are welcome to pop along. For further details and to check through August that Badminton is on each week, please email: [nicholaspalfreyman@yours.com](mailto:nicholaspalfreyman@yours.com) for confirmation, thank you.



**Chelwood Foodbank** As always, thanks for your donations of food and money - always something in the box, so thanks again – and many thanks for the gifts given at the Gift Service on 16<sup>th</sup> November, everything helps. Please continue to give; we know we will have a lovely Christmas meal, but that doesn't apply to a lot of people. Rosie x

**Moston Baby Basket** THANK YOU from Moston Baby Baskets - The ladies were blown away by the generosity shown by United Didsbury at the Gift Day and would like to say a very big thank you for all the donations. This is one of the pictures on their Facebook page of what we'd given. All donations are gratefully received, but the delivery I made on them from the service was exceptional. Thank you from me and the Baby Basket. I know Angela would be equally grateful. *Paul*



The Circuit website is [manchestermethodists.org.uk](http://manchestermethodists.org.uk)  
Why not take a look and see what's going on in our District. See what we do in the Circuit, the different resources, get a prayer for comfort and strength and lots, lots more.



There will be board at the back of church for you to place your Christmas card on to your church family and a box to put your donation in for charity, if you wish.



Happy Birthday to all born in the months of DECEMBER and JANUARY xxx

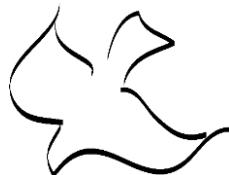


You are encouraged to 'like' our page. It always good to increase our social media presence! United Didsbury Methodist Church

Thanks for sharing, Patsy

The way to arrive and remain within “ the force field of the Holy Spirit”, which is one way of describing consciousness .... is both very simple and very hard; you've got to remain in love with a foundational yes to every moment. You can't risk walking around with a negative, resentful, gossipy, critical mind because then you won't be in the force field. You will not be a usable instrument. That's why Jesus commanded us to love. It's that urgent. It's that crucial.

R. Rohr



### Enduring truths

The Christmas season is also a time to reflect on recurring themes in the narrative of human history. Among those is the recurring theme of the refugee's quest for safety in a foreign country. So, it was when Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with the baby Jesus. In modern times this has its counterpart in Uganda (population 51 million, 84% of whom are Christian) welcoming 1.7 million refugees (i.e. 3.5% of the total population of Uganda) from neighbouring countries because those refugees are perceived to be “our brothers and sisters”. Where that perception does not exist even substantial lower numbers of refugees, relative to the total population of that country (for example 3 million refugees) are perceived to be a threat to the majority population of 340.1 million people. In the latter example 3 million refugees amount to 0.88% of the total population of that country even though “millions” of refugees are perceived to be overwhelming the country.

That conflict between perception and reality can only be resolved by recognising the flight to Egypt as an enduring metaphor for the human condition.

### When does a quantum leap become a leap of faith

Never, in the entire history of the human quest for knowledge (as in *scio*, I know) have the fundamentals of religious wisdom and the scientific discoveries about the existence of life on this planet come so close together.

Using mathematics and information theory, Robert Endres (Imperial College, London) found that the spontaneous emergence of life from non-living matter was a near impossibility. To explore this issue Endres applied principles of information theory and algorithmic complexity to estimate what it would take for the first simple cell to assemble itself from basic chemical

ingredients. The answer was that the chances of such a process happening(spontaneously) were astonishingly low. Furthermore, although a Nobel laureate had the distinction of identifying the subatomic particle that confers mass to material objects, the scientific community has yet to come up with the discovery of a particle that confers life to basic chemical ingredients.

And then there is the issue of the afterlife and its inhabitants. In a groundbreaking experiment three decades in the making, scientists teleported a particle over 18 miles to an entangled particle somewhere else . The particle immediately took on the characteristics of the original particle. And here is the twist:-

The original particle ceased to exist the instant the information was transferred (A quantum breakthrough just proved teleportation is real-and the most powerful internet yet) ( report of the article published by Drew Turney, May 2025). All of this sounds familiar to students of the New Testament.

Finally, in the contemporary era of quantum physics, the theory that is steadily gaining ground is that there is strong evidence that we live in a multiverse (i.e. a parallel universe) (see article entitled “Quantum echo: Nobel prize in physics goes to quantum computer trio who broke through walls forty years ago: article by Ralph Losey October 22, 2025). In other words, we and the inhabitants of the after-world live in parallel universes.

In conclusion, if scientists can take a quantum leap of faith into the unknown, why can't we.

After all the basis of all scientific inquiry is the assumption the cloak of ignorance . Even the root word for scientist is “nescio” meaning “I do not know.”

Thank you to Oscar.

#### Cynthia's Chit-Chat

I can't believe Christmas is getting closer and closer, how quickly this year has gone!

My highlight 2025 – I suppose the highlight was 16<sup>th</sup> May when I actually got on the bus on my own (with my rollator). I had waited a year for it to happen!

Steve's University time – After Steve left Manchester Grammar School, he went to Reading University. Recently they wrote to him past student because in 2026 the University is celebrating its centenary. Of course I had to inform them of his passing, but asked The Alumni Team if they would like me to give them details of his career once he had left University. I had a lovely reply and they said yes, they would be most interested. I will also tell them of his involvement in the community here in Didsbury. I am now busily composing the details.

My Befriender – I am enjoying spending time with her; we are hoping to go for a pre-Christmas meal together. I recently heard from my previous Befriender, so I must reply to her lovely postcard of her time in Austria.

## TV Memories

*Weatherman Walking* recently shod Devils Bridge, Teffi Marshes and Cenarth Falls, all places we had visited and enjoyed.

*Escape to the Country* featured a village of Seamer (four miles from Scarborough); my first husband and I holidayed there quite often before we married, so it would be in the 1960's. There were three pubs and an amazing chippy and that was all! We stayed at a farm B&B. Apparently, the programme showed a coffee shop, so perhaps one of the pubs has gone – good holiday memories.

Didsbury Good Neighbours – You will know from previous chit-chats how much I enjoyed taking part in the various activities they organise for us. Well, I have been chosen with another member to give an interview on a radio programme. They want us to speak on what DGN has meant to us. We are going by taxi to the studio in Levenshulme, I feel quite honoured that I have been selected.

The Old Parsonage – I spent a lovely day at the Old Parsonage at the Christmas stalls and Santa's Grotto (with three elves). It brought back memories of when I was an elf (re-Covid). To see the faces of all the children waiting to see Santa was wonderful. A good team effort from all those involved in running the event. Bless them all.

Christmas Blessings to everyone and God bless.

Cynthia x

*Thank you to Cynthia*

Postscript – I took four of my grandchildren to see Santa at the Old Parsonage on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and we then went to the Craft room; they had a lovely time and so did I. *Rosie x*



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

My dictionary defines wonderful as “so unusual or magnificent that it causes wonder and amazement.” What a description of Jesus! First, Jesus was wonderful in His pre-existence. As the perfect man who was God, He existed from all eternity. Only he is equally at home in Heaven and on Earth. *Rosie x*



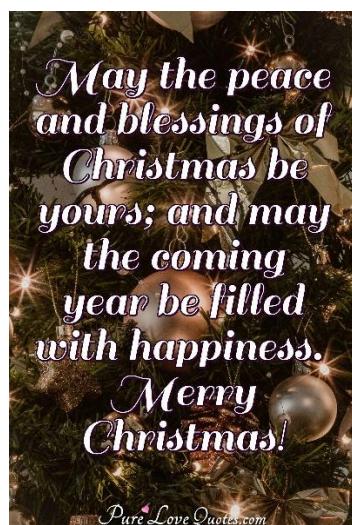
Have a very Blessed Christmas and a Peace-Filled New Year with love from the Blayds family and Stephen and Suzanne in the Netherlands x



Rev. Catharine, Liz, Patsy, Nick, Anne, Oscar, Cynthia and Rosie x

Articles for the February edition to be with me no later than **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January** please. Please pass to me at church or email [rosieblayds@gmail.com](mailto:rosieblayds@gmail.com) or 07758 011362.

- *May I also say a personal thank you to Catharine and to all those who pass me articles for our magazine, very much appreciated. Rosie xxx*



### Last Thought

At Christmas Christ comes to us as a little child, small and helpless, so much in need of all that love can give. Are we ready to receive Him?

Before the birth of Jesus His parents asked for a simple dwelling place, but there was none. If Mary and Joseph were looking for a home for Jesus, would they choose your house and all it holds? Make your house, your family, another Nazareth, where love, peace, joy, and unity reign, for love begins at

home. You must start there and make your home a centre of love.

You must be the hope of eternal happiness to your wife, your husband, your child, to your grandfather, grandmother; grandchildren; friends, neighbours, to whoever is connected to you.

*Mother Teresa*



### **Rev Catharine Hughes**

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