

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

Minister's letter

64 Brantingham Road
Whalley Range
Manchester M16 8QH

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 ...

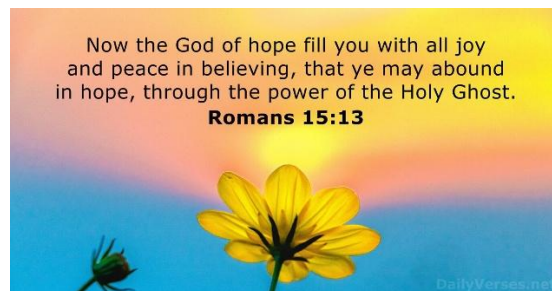
At home most of us will festoon a tree with a string of lights and cover it with shiny baubles. They bring sparkle and light to our homes. There is a saying that to spread light we can either be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it. On our Christmas trees we have the fairy lights themselves, or 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



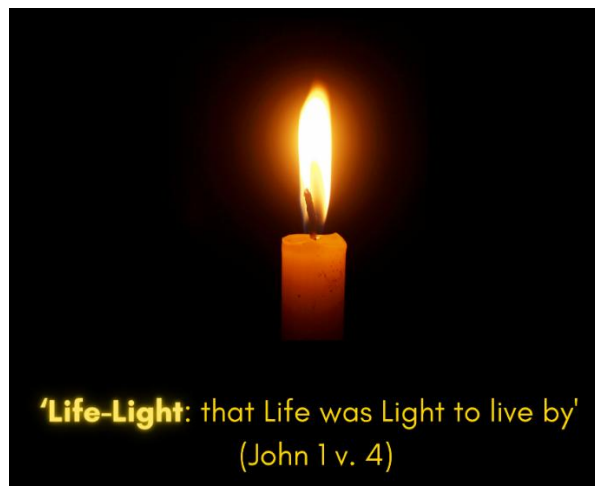
Preachers for December

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



Readings for December

2 nd Sunday of Advent	7 th Dec	Isaiah 11: 1-10; Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19; Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12
3 rd Sunday of Advent	14 th Dec	Isaiah 35: 1-10; Psalm 146: 5-10; James 5: 7-10; Matthew 11: 2-11
4 th Sunday of Advent	21 st Dec	Isaiah 7: 10-16; Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19; Romans 1: 1-7; Matthew 1: 18-25
Christmas Day	25 th Dec	Isaiah 9: 2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2: 11-4; Luke 2: 1-14
28 th Dec		Isaiah 63: 7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2: 10-18; Matthew 2: 13-23



Readings for January

4th Jan Jeremiah 31: 7-14; Psalm 147: 12-20; Ephesians 1: 3-14; John 1: (1-9) 10-18

11th Jan Isaiah 42: 1-9; Psalm 29: Acts 10: 34-43; Matthew 3: 13-17

18th Jan Isaiah 49: 1-7; Psalm 40: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 1: 1-19; John 1: 29-42

25th Jan Isaiah 9: 1-4; Psalm 27: 1, 4-9; 21 Corinthians 1: 10-18; Matthew 4: 12-23

Preachers for January

4th Jan Rev. Catharine Hughes – *Covenant Service*

11th Jan Phil Davis

18th Jan Miriam Moules

25th Jan Promilla Jabeen



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



Monday 1st 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 6th December at 6.00pm
HAVE YOU HEARD?
(See page 10)



BROAD OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL



On Wednesday 10th 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

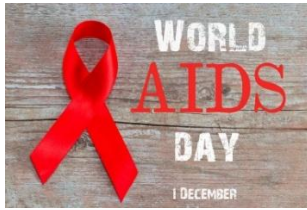
CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION
THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER, 10.45AM



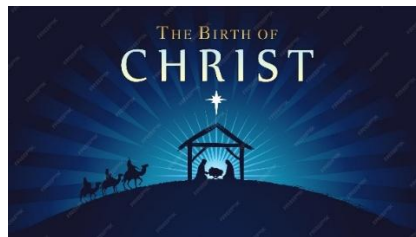
Manchester Methodists

Seeking, serving, sharing Christ

DECEMBER



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



25th 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*

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

THE WONDOROUS CHRISTMAS STORY



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



The Angel Gabriel visiting Mary to announce Jesus.

that she would conceive



manger

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



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 6TH at 6pm**

Donations for the Church Charities.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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



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

Join in with the **Church Family Weekend, 7th and 8th 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 th Dec	Carols and Christmas Fair
11 th Dec	Christmas Meal out
8 th Jan	Light-hearted Quiz with Rosie
22 nd Jan	Who is that baby? competition

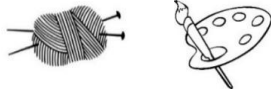
*Have a wonderful and blessed Christmas
from all at Ladies Circle xxx*



Circuit Film Club will meet on **Thursday 8th 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



A drink, fellowship & closing prayer with friends at Caramello, Didsbury, 10.00am for an hour. Open to all. Meeting for an hour on **Wednesday 3rd December** and then **7th and 21st 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 10th December and will resume on 14th January 2026.*

Fellowship Group – We will meet in Room 3 from 2pm until 3.30pm on Monday 8th and 15th December, and then in the new year on Monday 12th and 26th 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 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 16th 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
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 Josph 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 16th 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 shoed 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 23rd 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*



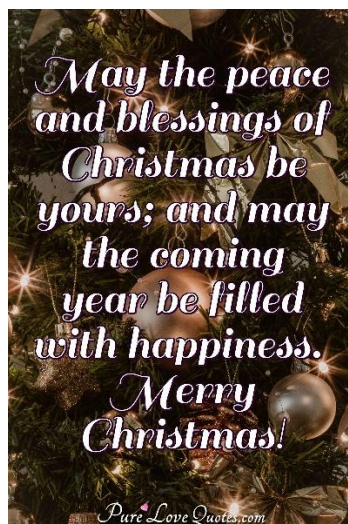
Have a very Blessed Christmas and a Peace-Filled New Year with love from the Blayds family and Stephen and Suzanne in the Netherlands x



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

Articles for the February edition to be with me no later than **Tuesday 27th January** please. Please pass to me at church or email 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



catharine.hughes@methodist.org.uk



[@abrewandaprayer](https://twitter.com/abrewandaprayer)



facebook.com/revcatharine



0161 226 6019