



GODALMING UNITED CHURCH
(Methodist & United Reformed)

SERVICE FOR SUNDAY DECEMBER 23rd 2018 and notices for the coming week

The best Christmas tale I've heard so far this year is of the little boy, who posted his letter to Father Christmas, with the request: 'Dear Father Christmas, if you are real, will you please sign here?' That might amuse world weary adults like ourselves, but his question is spot on. And it's a salutary reminder, amidst all the jingles and paraphernalia of what is only for many people, a Winter Solstice; a chance to cheer ourselves up in the depths of winter.

The reason we are in church this morning is to celebrate a fact of history, which is also the basis of Christian Faith: **THE WORD BECAME FLESH, AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY!** This is no fairy story. It is the greatest reality to dawn upon humankind. God became one of us in the baby in Bethlehem's manger. Therefore he is not distant and remote, but very near, because he shares our humanity. He knows. He feels. He understands, because he's been there.

A truth put so simply in the hauntingly beautiful words of the first carol that will be sung in King's College Cambridge on Christmas Eve:

'Tears and smiles like us he knew,
and he feeleth for our sadness,
and he shareth in our gladness'.

That's no sentimental idea. It's a living, working, reality, for those who dare to take the risk of faith!

Paul Hulme

Rev Paul Hulme is preaching at Merrow Methodist Church this morning.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

God our Father, by your Holy Spirit you called the Virgin Mary to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We rejoice in her humbleness of heart and readiness to obey your will. We give thanks that you are with us in our homes whenever we welcome you. In our family life make us sensitive in our dealings with each other and attentive to the needs of our neighbour. We pray for all who are in homes where there is fear and abuse.

Today's stewards are

Vestry Steward Keith Rowling

Duty Steward Alan Steele

(stewards are the people to ask, if you need help before, during or after a service)

Our CLOSED LOOP SYSTEM requires hearing aids to be switched to the telephone or T programme. Recordings of our services are available through the church website, or a CD copy can be provided on request – please ask a Steward.

The Church operates a system of covenanted, planned giving (details of which may be obtained from Nicola Garriock).

There is a children's area available at the rear of the Church which parents and their young children may use during the service.

10.30am MORNING WORSHIP

Led by Kath Benny

Organist: Keith Nye

Hosts: Maggie Maile

Sound System: Denis Leigh

Projection steward: Julie Rowling

Introduction by the Steward

Call to Worship "B.C. – A.D." from "Haphazard by Starlight" p.90

HYMN (StF) 464 God it was who said to Abraham

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer (*sung*)

Story – "Jesus's Christmas Party"

HYMN (H&P) 97 Come and join the celebration

Comment – "What is the *theme* of the service?"

Bible reading - Micah Ch.5 vv.2-5a (p.933) read by Kath Benny

Brief comment

Bible reading - Luke Ch. 1 vv.26-38 – (p.1025) Mary and Joseph -
read by Maurice Illman

Sermon part 1a-

Setting the scene: The start of the Christmas story

Reading by the congregation (StF) 793 The Magnificat

Bible reading Luke Ch.2 vv.1-7 (p.1027) read by Margaret Wilson

Sermon part 1b - The baby is born

HYMN (StF) 178 Long ago, prophets knew

Bible reading Luke Ch.2 vv. 8-20 – the Shepherds (p.1027)
read by Kath Benny

Sermon part 2 - The shepherds' part

HYMN (StF) 215 See amid the winter's snow

Sermon part 3 - Where do we stand?

HYMN (StF) 489 All I once held dear

Collection and dedication of the offertory (*congregation please stand*)

Prayers of Confession and of Intercession – led by Gwen Wheatman

HYMN (StF) 210 Love came down at Christmas

Benediction

Everyone is welcome to join us for coffee or tea or a drink
of squash in the River Room after the service.

Jenny McAteer has copies of the booklet "**Why read the Bible**" by Tom Wright. If you ordered a copy, please see Jenny after the service today. The cost is £4.20 which includes the postage.

"The United Reformed Church has asked that churches be made aware of an online petition requesting the government to consider removing VAT for works on existing church buildings. If 100,000 people sign then the government has to consider the issue and make a decision. If you wish to sign such a petition it can be found at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/225494>."

Church meetings Due to a clash of dates the next two church meetings will now be on Sundays 24th February and 7th April.

DIARY FOR THE WEEK AND ADVANCE NOTICES

- Mon 24th 4.00pm **Christmas Eve** – service of Holy Communion
- Tues 25th 10.00am **Christmas Day** – Family Worship
Led by Rev Norman Edsall
Collection in aid of Action for Children
- Thurs 27th 3.00pm Funeral of Richardene Kirk at Guildford
Crematorium
- Sun 30th 10.30am Circuit Service at Merrow Methodist Church –
led by Rev Keith Beckingham (Superintendent)
(no service at GUC)
- Sun 30th 6.30pm Service at Busbridge Church led by the
Trinity Trust Team

January 2019

- Fri 4th 12 noon – 1.30pm Friday Lunches
- Sun 6th January** 10.30am **Covenant Service** – led by Rev Paul Hulme
- Wed 9th 12.15 for 12.30pm Lunch Fellowship at the Jack Phillips

Prayers for Christmas Day and 30th December

Almighty God, we bless you for the wonder and joy of Christmas; for your preparing of humankind through all the experience of your covenant-mercies, until the time came for you to send your Son to us and so reveal yourself. May the church of Jesus have the character of Jesus so that we are indeed the Body of Christ. May this be borne out by our actions day by day. We pray for families united today, and for families divided by illness or injury or estrangement. Grant that we may love mercy and ever walk humbly with you and with one another. Amen

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHURCH PLEASE CONTACT:

Minister	Rev Paul Hulme	01483 414 709
Church Secretary	Sylvia	01483 423 261
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Senior Steward	Alan	01483 860 683
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