

# UNITED CHURCH OF EGHAM

A local union of the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church

## DECEMBER, 2017

Dear Friends,

Well, Advent is almost upon us and for some that signals the start of the usual rush that sets in as we journey towards Christmas. Each year you hear people, myself included, say things like "*I will start my preparations earlier next year to avoid the last minute panic*". But, of course, next year comes and the frenetic rush begins again.

Our Church life can sometimes be like that. We think we have plenty of time available to us and then reality brings us up with a jolt. Maybe our Victorian forebears had the right idea with their tradition which subsequently became known as 'stir-up Sunday'. This was observed on the last Sunday in the Christian calendar (also called the Feast of Christ the King), five weeks before Christmas. Families would gather to 'stir up' the Christmas pudding in readiness for cooking. The thought behind this practice stems from a Collect for this Sunday as set out in *the Book of Common Prayer*. It began with the words '*Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord...*'. What a wonderful expression, giving the image of God stirring up his people, ready for action!

In this generation in which we seem to be increasingly busy, spending many hours on our secular Christmas preparations, it is also important to stir up the Christmas pudding - if only because it makes us pause for a short while!

From the Christian perspective, Advent is a time to prepare ourselves spiritually in readiness to celebrate once more the birth of our Saviour. Hence, in our lectionary readings in the weeks immediately before Advent, we are reminded of the need to 'be ready' lest we miss this important event. We have parables that speak of the Day of the Lord coming like a thief in the night. We need to be on our guard and ready to welcome Jesus into our lives. We must be awake to appreciate the amazing miracle that is Immanuel - God with us.

One of my acts of preparation is to set aside some time to read one of the many Advent books that are available. This year I have chosen to read '*Because of Bethlehem*' with the sub-title '*Love is born, Hope is here*' written by one of my favourite writers, Max Lucado. And, you know, when you think about it, those words seem to put everything into perspective. Forget all the rush and stress of the season. Instead, consider that lowly stable at Bethlehem. Think of the small child who continues to bring love, hope, peace and joy into our world. That is the real meaning of Christmas. That is all that really matters. I hope you will be able to join us for some of our services during this festive season as we prepare for the coming of our Lord.

Anthea and I both send you our love and fondest best wishes for a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Your friend and Minister, **Alan**.

**MINISTER: Revd Alan Wickens**

telephone: 01753 862007; email: [revawickens@gmail.com](mailto:revawickens@gmail.com)

**CHURCH SECRETARY: Mrs Patricia Harper-Bill**

telephone: 01784 435204; email: [pchb@btopenworld.com](mailto:pchb@btopenworld.com)

United Church of Egham, High Street, Egham, Surrey TW20 9EX (telephone: 01784 433645)

## UNITED CHURCH OF EGHAM - DECEMBER, 2017

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship and Holy Communion - Revd Alan Wickens
	6.30 pm	Circuit Advent Service at Christ Church, Feltham
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	8.00 pm	Tuesday at Eight - Christmas Social
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Advent Course at Christ Church URC., Windsor entitled "Little Town, Big Story" based on "O Little Town of Bethlehem".
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> , Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> and Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> :		Christmas Tree Festival in the Church
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am to 4.00 pm:	Chamber of Commerce Christmas Fair in the High St.
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Mr Graham Pearcey
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Revd Alan Wickens
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup>	12.30 pm	Craft Club
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	2.30 pm	Advent Course at Christ Church URC., Windsor
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup>	4.00 pm	Open Air Nativity in front of the United Church
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Service of Lessons and Carols - Revd Alan Wickens
	6.30 pm	Evening Worship - Mr Peter Marks
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	2.30 pm	Advent Course at Christ Church URC., Windsor
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Mr Sydney Shore CBE
	4.00 pm	Christingle Service - Revd Alan Wickens
	9.00 pm	Christmas Eve Holy Communion Service - Revd Alan Wickens
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Christmas Day Morning Worship (jointly with Christ Church URC., Windsor) at the United Church of Egham
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup>	11.00 am	Morning Worship - Revd Andrew Reed
	6.30 pm	Watchnight Service and Holy Communion - Revd Alan Wickens

Regular meetings: we have - *BROWNIE GUIDES* (Mondays at 6.30 pm); *BEAVER SCOUTS* (Tuesdays at 6.00 pm); *CUB SCOUTS* (Thursdays at 7.00 pm); *SCOUTS* (Fridays at 7.30 pm);

**COFFEE AND TEA will be served in the Vestibule of the Church each Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10.00 am to noon. On each Thursday there is a LUNCHTIME SERVICE from 12.30 pm followed by a TIME OF FELLOWSHIP (bring your own salad or sandwich or whatever!) when coffee and tea will be available, and then a SOCIAL AFTERNOON of board games.**

## DUTY ROTA FOR DECEMBER, 2017

		<i>Sunday Deacons</i>	<i>Sidesmen</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	am	Jane Leckie	Nyree Long and Di James
10 <sup>th</sup>	am	Harry Cumming	Jill Reynolds and Janet Figgins
	pm	Lindsay Mair	Lindsay Mair
17 <sup>th</sup>	am	Anthony Long	Gordon McCallum and Derek Weston
	pm	Paul Murphy	Paul Murphy
24 <sup>th</sup>	am	Patricia Harper-Bill	Christine Maynard and Frank Clark
31 <sup>st</sup>	am	Harry Cumming	Janet Figgins and Jill Reynolds
	pm	Lindsay Mair	Lindsay Mair

## FLOWER ROTA FOR DECEMBER, 2017

3<sup>rd</sup>: Alan and Anthea Wickens; 10<sup>th</sup>: Sally Watmore and Diane Humphries;  
17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>: Flowers to celebrate Christmas.