

CONTACT

CHRIST CHURCH HALTON
COLTON METHODIST CHURCH

December 24/January 25



Nicola's Letter

Longing for Light

I'm writing this letter just before 4 o'clock and it's getting dark already! At this time of the year in the UK, we often only have 7 or 8 hours of daylight every day. Oh, how it makes me crave the long, light nights of summer.

However, this darkness pales in comparison when we acknowledge the darkness of the news: where we see and hear the ongoing war in Israel/Palestine, Ukraine and beyond; the destructiveness of climate change, the suffering of refugees on unsafe boats and camps. There is also the darkness in our lives: in the midst of illness and grief; the cost-of-living crisis.

And yet in our darkness, God will meet us there. In our darkness, God is present. A God of faith, hope and love. A God revealed in Jesus.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus was born into a world characterised by the occupation and oppression of the Roman Empire. An Empire which impacted on so many parts of a person's life and must have felt like it could last forever,

We talk about Jesus' coming into the world, as light shining in darkness. The light of Jesus reveals how darkness in our lives and world can be overcome. To quote one of the Gospel writers, John: "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it".

Christmas is about Jesus Christ entering the pain and darkness of every time and place, including ours, to bring light. A light of faith, hope and love that each and every one of us, can share with our families, our communities, our world.

So, my hope and prayer is that Jesus' light can provide each and every one of us with peace and hope this Christmas.

Two “Musings” for a Double Issue of Contact

Jesus the Man

Why has the life of Jesus, a simple carpenter, so shaped the course of human history for the past two millenniums? Perhaps it has something to do with Jesus pulling the rug out from under the easy notion that all human existence is about winning or losing. Jesus's short tenure on this earth has emphasized time and time again that keeping score has nothing to do with the true triumphant prize for which all human hearts yearn, a simple and yet elusive prize which cannot be bought or sold, weighed or measured, invested to bear dividends or hoarded and locked away. Jesus taught, healed and died his gruesome death so we can all have the chance of a full and abundant life, a chance to live the prosperous sunrise and the satisfying full moon of contentment.

Loving against the Grain

I have come to believe that we need, we have to, love in spite of the inevitable likelihood that such loving will break our hearts. It may be that we are called upon to love because our hearts will be broken. The deaths of those we cherish, the surrender of our most buoyant aspirations, the demise of life-giving moments, all test the stamina of our hearts. Everything and everyone we love we will lose. But, perhaps, it is this inexorable loss of all we love which insists that such loving is precious, transcendent and ultimately triumphant. For is it not love which hallows and imbues our days with purpose and joy. In the face of such unavoidable loss, it may be that the bravest and holiest act available to each of us is to love without qualm.

(From “Musings Of A Wayward Pilgrim” by Mark Zenick, reproduced with the author’s kind permission)

“The oldest computer was owned by Adam and Eve.

It was an Apple with very limited memory.

Just one byte and everything crashed!”



Advent and Christmas at Colton Methodist Church



“Hush the Noise” is the Methodist Church’s Christmas campaign for 2024. It’s based around the Christmas Carol “It came upon the midnight clear”. Christmas is loud isn’t it? So much expectation. So many voices. Telling us how to celebrate. What to wear. What to eat and drink. What to watch and what to buy.

Instead, this Christmas we’re inviting everyone to hush the noise. To listen for the love song that the angels bring, this and every year. They sang it for the first time more than 2,000 years ago, on the midnight clear. They’re just waiting for us to join in.

The theme each week is a phrase from the carol, with an Opening liturgy to accompany the lighting of candles throughout Advent, continuing into Christmas. Each week has a symbol which will be added to our light tree as a visual reminder.

Some of the changes to services during Advent and Christmas at Colton are:

Christingle Service Tuesday 17th December 6pm

Organised by Colton Rainbows and Brownies, this is an open invitation to anyone who would like to come along and share in this special annual event, followed by refreshments.

Carol Service Sunday 22nd December 3pm

This will be all age worship, held at Colton, led by our minister Revd Becki Stennett - followed, of course, by refreshments! Please note this will be our only service that day – there won’t be worship at Colton in the morning.

Christmas Day Service at Colton 9.30am

A short all age worship service, to share in this special day together. Led by Revd Joyce Nicholson.

Sunday 29th December 10.30am

Joint worship at Cross Gates Methodist Church – no service at Colton. See article elsewhere in this month’s Contact.

Revd Becki's Sabbatical

Becki will be on sabbatical leave from 26th December 2024 to 25th March 2025, for a time of rest, feast and worship in a variety of ways. Revd Mark Stennett will cover anything at Colton that requires a minister during this time. For any other support, please contact the senior stewards at Colton (Kathryn Glasby or Elaine Preston) in the first instance, or let them know if there's something that you feel needs to be dealt with during Becki's absence or noted for her return.



During the period of Becki's sabbatical, please don't send or copy her into any emails, such as minutes of meetings or information you want to pass on to her, as she won't be able to deal with an email backlog on her return. The senior stewards will be collating a diary of things that have happened, that she needs to be aware of on her return and a file of minutes of any meetings that take place will also be prepared for her.

Becki: we wish you a time of restful activities, food for thought and worship without all the usual planning! Love and prayers from all at Colton.

A New Year Party at Colton Church

Saturday 18th January 2025 3pm to 5pm

Continue the New Year revels with a time of celebration and fellowship at Colton Church! There will be games and entertainment for all ages, along with a faith supper (just bring along a contribution of food to share). Please speak to one of the church stewards if you'd like to help with the entertainment or just come along and join in the fun!



Blue Christmas Service

Tuesday 17 December

7.30pm via Zoom

Meeting ID 7019277749



A gentle, reflective service for anyone who finds this time of year difficult, who misses someone, or who wants to spend some time remembering.

Meeting Point

Thank you for the gifts of food and money donated at Christ Church, given via both the Harvest and October collection. These gifts go towards supporting those in need in the Harehills community. Hot meals and drinks are always especially appreciated.

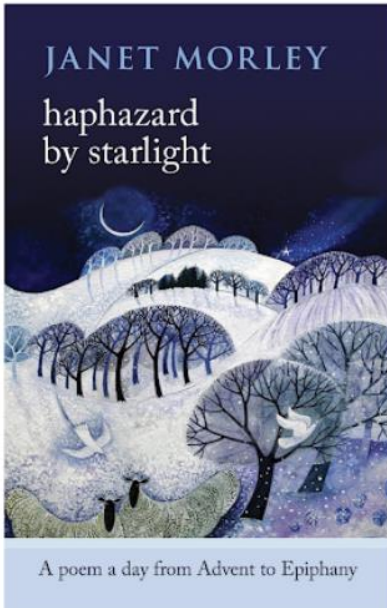
Action for Children

Christmas greetings can be shared with your friends at Christ Church by adding your card to a notice board in the hall. Donations from this and the Christmas Day collection will go to this great cause.

Christmas Shoe Boxes at Christ Church

Thanks to everyone who has returned their filled shoe box or donated money, and to Julie Digings who has given out 70 boxes via Facebook. The filled boxes will be distributed at Meeting Point on 4 December by Deacon Adhelha, when Concordia will be singing carols, and coffee and mince pies will be served.

Haphazard by Starlight: Advent Gatherings



**A
time for
reflection and
discussion
over four
weeks, led by the
Leeds URC
Partnership
Ministry Team**

Tuesdays 2.15pm, West Park URC, Spen Lane LS16 5BB

Wednesdays 10.45am, Beeston Hill Church, Malvern Road
LS11 8PD

Thursdays 7.30pm via Zoom

For more information, contact Rev Nicola Robinson:
revnicola.robinson@gmail.com



Sunday Worship, 29 December

You'll notice in the centre pages of Contact that worship on 29 December will be a little different. The congregations of Christ Church, Colton and Garforth will all be coming together with the members of Cross Gates Methodist in their building (Austhorpe Road, LS15 8QR) for morning worship at 10.30pm. This means there is **no** service at Christ Church, Colton or Garforth on this date.

Messy Church @ Christ Church

Join us on Saturday 14 December at 2pm for our special Christmas Messy Church. Just one spoiler for you – we'll be making Christingles. It would be great to see everyone for our final Messy Church of the year – all ages are welcome for our crafts, our food and drink, finishing with a short Christingle service at around 3.10pm.

Wednesday Jesus And Me Sessions @ Colton Church

Our recently introduced Wednesday JAM sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

So, what is Jesus And Me? It's all about the sharing: we share each other's company, we share lunch together (free), and we share the good news about Jesus. ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US. We meet immediately after the Coffee Morning finishes, but if you're coming for JAM only, aim to arrive between 11.30 and 11.45.

If you're intending to come for the first time, it would be helpful if you'd let us know beforehand (for catering purposes) - but if you forget, don't let that stop you from turning up - it's all about the sharing! If you have any questions about JAM, please email: info.coltonchurch@gmx.co.uk.

Christ Church's LEP Review Workshop

The life of an LEP is reviewed from time to time by the participating denominations, in our case the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. Our review is currently underway, and the following event is an opportunity for as many people as possible to come and share their views.

On Saturday 25 January, we invite you to an afternoon with Rev Jamie Kissack (URC) and Rev David Goodall (Methodist). We will begin at 12 o'clock with a FREE soup and sweet lunch. This will be followed by a time reflecting on and discussing with each other where we see God at work in our church and community, particularly the joys and challenges of being part of two denominations. We will finish by 2:30.

Do come along and share food and fellowship and help determine the way forward for Christ Church.

Christ Church Christmas Eve Nativity

Our ever-popular "DIY Nativity" service returns on **Christmas Eve at 3pm**. It's a short service for all ages, where there is a part for everyone, no rehearsal required!

Dressing up is optional – but encouraged! And if you don't have a costume, we've got plenty you can use. We'll tell the famous story together and sing some Christmas favourites around the crib, a great way to really set the Christmas atmosphere. Come and join us to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. The church is usually very full, but we always squeeze everyone in, so spread the word and bring your friends.



community

Reverse Advent Calendar

(With a twist)

2024



Colton Church continues to collect for St Cyprrian's Foodbank & Meeting Point throughout the year. Leading up to Christmas, we will once again be running a 'Reverse' Advent Calendar. Where, instead of receiving something (chocolate!) you give something (donation or prayer).

Suggested donations of small items are made for each day leading up to Christmas & include a mix of treats, items in short supply at the Foodbank & basic toiletries because these are often overlooked as donations. You might like to give an item on the day that you visit the church building, give one item each week or give one item for Advent. Alternatively, or additionally, you might wish to give your prayers for those who will receive the donations.

We have run this as a community event for the last two years & it has been a MASSIVE success.

(With a twist)



We want to spread the Christmas cheer as far & wide as we can, so we're starting our Reverse Advent Calendar early (November 29th) to make sure that all the items can be shared out to the people who need them before Meeting Point's & the Foodbank's Christmas break.

This is a community project & all donations, big or small, however they are given, will be gratefully received & will make a difference this Christmas.

29th Nov – small microwave pudding

30th Nov – plain biscuits

1st Dec – small selection box

2nd Dec – toothpaste

3rd Dec – toothbrush

4th Dec – chocolate biscuits

5th Dec – wet wipes/face wipes

6th Dec – cake bars (individually wrapped)

7th Dec – toilet rolls

8th Dec – boxed mince pies

9th Dec – box of tissues

10th Dec – sanitary products



11th Dec – jam or marmalade

12th Dec – shower gel

13th Dec – tinned ready meal

14th Dec – dried fruit or nuts

15th Dec – small Christmas pudding

16th Dec – soap

17th Dec – children's chocolate

18th Dec – small chocolate bar

19th Dec – deodorant

20th Dec – shaving gel

21st Dec – hot chocolate

22nd Dec – tinned soup or vegetables



@ the heart of the Colton Community

A Service of Thanksgiving – Keep the Date

Revd Marlene Wilkinson, previously Minister of Christ Church Halton, and Colton, will, along with others, be leading a Thanksgiving service, to celebrate her 80th birthday. Friends from both the churches are very welcome to attend. Marlene would be delighted to see many friends come along and share in this special event.

It will be held at Christ Church Halton, on Saturday 29th March 2025, beginning at 3.00pm, and will be followed by refreshments, and time to chat. More details to follow, but please save the date!

Christmas Giveaways at Colton

A big thank you to all those “crafty” people who have made some lovely felt bells complete with a chime! We’ve gathered them together to give away with a postcard from the Hush the Noise Methodist Advent & Christmas theme, advertising our Carol and Christmas Day services. Special thanks go to Wendy for the idea and encouragement to undertake this project.

Colton Christmas Card

As in previous years, there will be a large Christmas card on display at Colton Church from early December. You are invited to write your greetings to everyone at Colton Church, then make a donation to the charity Save the Children. Thank you to the Junior Church leaders and children for organising this for us.

CONTACT: FEBRUARY 2025

The next edition of Contact will be published on Sunday 2 February.

Please let Andy have any articles, submissions or suggestions by 7.00pm on Tuesday 28 January.

07952 861316 or andybirkett76@gmail.com

Christmas by Amanda Stocks

1. Christmas decorations are now in every store,
Santas, snowmen, fairies, gonks and so much more.
I look among the snow globes, robins, cheeky elves
For Jesus in the manger somewhere on the shelves.
But sadly he is hidden, if he's there at all
Incarnation irrelevant? Insignificant and small?



2. Look for Jesus every day as you journey along
In the Bible, nature, people you see, music, dance and song.
Jesus cannot be contained because he's everywhere,
"God with us" in the world, especially close in prayer.
Let's put Christ at the centre of Advent and Christmas time,
To share his loving presence and may his glory shine.



The Message by Pauline Hardman

Love came down at Christmas,
the greatest love of all.
Wrapping round the world,
it began in a Bethlehem stall.
Let's keep the light of love,
burning in our hearts.
As we light our Christmas candles,
we can make our own small part.
Every flicker of hope and light,
starts with a tiny spark.
With love and healing thoughts,
coming from the heart.
Spread the Christmas message,
let the joy shine out.
Wear a Christmas jumper,
get the message about.
It's Christmas!
Love, peace and joy.

Colton Christmas Fair

A very big THANK YOU to all who helped with this year's Christmas Fair. Thank you to Kathryn and her trusty clip board and all volunteers who gave their time and energy to make the event, despite the weather, very successful. It was a magnificent 'Team Colton' effort. The exact amount raised is yet to be confirmed, but we do know it is over £1,000. Monies are going into the Repair and Renew Fund for the replacement door and window leading from the car park. Thank you again to everyone involved.



at Colton Methodist Church

Our next **Family JAM** session will be held on Sunday 26th January 2025 from 4pm to 6pm. (No session in December, but please come along to our Carol Service at Colton on Sunday 22nd December at 3pm). Family JAM is an informal time of gathering, hearing a Bible story, responding using craft, creativity & conversation, a short time of prayer & song, then eating a meal together. This is especially suitable for families with children aged 4-12, but everyone is most welcome, whether you have children in your family or not.

To help with catering please let us know how many people would like to come and if you have any allergies/dietary requirements. You can let Elaine or Kathryn at Colton Church know or email: info.coltonchurch@gmx.co.uk. You can also message our Facebook page "Colton Methodist Church, Leeds" or pop a note through our church letterbox!

Coffee and Carols

Saturday 21 December 10.00am-11.30am, led by Concordia. All proceeds go to Macmillan Cancer Care.



Colton Church Eco Tips – December and January

According to the Met Office which uses the meteorological calendar, the first day of winter is always on the 1st December, ending on the 28th (or 29th in a Leap year) February. The astronomical calendar sets the start of winter this year as being the 21st December, ending on the 20th March 2025. Whichever date is your preference, winter is a-coming and it's time to think about things we can do to look after ourselves, our planet and our neighbours – this month, we offer some tips for you to consider:

Greening your home

Check what more can be done to make your house more sustainable and cosy, all whilst reducing your bills.

- Identify and seal drafts around your home. Think keyholes, letterboxes, cracks around the bottom or edges of windows, loft hatches, floorboards etc. There are online tutorials to help you to fix these using the correct materials.
- Close curtains and blinds at night to keep the heat in.
- Wrap any exposed pipes with old towels or blankets to prevent heat loss.

Using grit and salt safely

At some point this season, many of us will be using salt to clear our paths of snow and ice. Few people think of salt as a polluting substance, but it is toxic and changes the natural levels in water courses and soil. To minimise its negative environmental impact whilst keeping our pathways safe, the following tips might be helpful.

- Use rock salt, mixed with grit.
- Store it carefully to prevent uncontrolled release – keep it covered and contained so it can't get washed away.
- Try to spread before snow and ice and if possible, on dry ground – keep an eye on the forecast. Spreading salt on top of ice means it's more likely to wash away.
- Spread as small an amount as you can get away with. You actually need a lot less than you think. About a tablespoon per metre is enough.
- Take particular care in areas around drains, gulleys, watercourses and vulnerable plants – try not to pollute these areas with too much salt.

Why Church Wardens Love January

Hail to the Lord's anointed,
Both clergymen and lay!
But they're seldom disappointed
To get past Christmas Day!
The hectic Christmas season is
Of service constantly –
There can't be better reason
To welcome January!

The Curate and the Vicar
A Busy schedule keep,
As they rush ever quicker –
They don't get that much sleep.
And overworked churchwardens
And their sidespersons team –
Sure don't get time for boredom,
And only seldom scream!

So, when the seasons over,
The crib has been out by,
The drapes to green changed over,
They breathe a heartfelt sigh!
They laugh and smile with pleasure,
And sing a merry rhyme,
But short-lived is their leisure –
For soon comes Easter time!

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Landmark

Christ Church Halton Guild

As I write this on the 11th day of the 11th month, I remember all those who have given their lives, in the many conflicts that we have known in our lifetime and earlier. I also remember family and friends who have been influential in my life, including Guild members, who have gone before us.

The Guild is very special and has been a large feature in my life. The Halton Guild will be in its 65th year in 2025 and is unique in the area; attracting people from Christ Church, neighbouring Churches and those who have no Church connection. Before Covid, we attracted fifty or sixty people enjoying Tuesday evenings, now we have around thirty. It's not ready for retirement or closing so I would urge those who have been to the Guild before to join us again, we have missed you.

If you haven't been for a while, do come and meet with your friends on a Tuesday evening, the welcome will be warm, even when weather isn't. If you have never been to the Guild - be brave. It will be a decision you will be glad you made. Encourage others to join; it's only by **us** telling others what it means to us, that we can welcome new members.

Our Carol Service is on 17 December and we're celebrating two of our member's significant birthdays. Peter Grubb will have reached the big 90 and Frank Ireland will have reached the grand age of 105 years young! You are cordially invited to join us at 6 pm for a celebration, a buffet (finger food) and perhaps a birthday cake! We need to know how many to cater for, so please give your names to Sheila Staveley. Then at 7.30 pm, we'll enjoy our Carol Service led by Rev'd Tim Nicholls.

We are in the process of putting the next programme together; there will be some promising evenings in the New Year. I am indebted to my colleagues on the planning committee and to Guild members who have made suggestions for speakers. We have had so many enjoyable evenings, where we have been informed, entertained or just enjoyed the fellowship that the Guild offers.

Christ Church Halton has a treasure, it is called the Guild, let us not bury that treasure but share it with others. *(by Tony Pickles, Joint President with Peter Grubb)*

More from Colton's Eco-Church Team

What to do with those generously given but unwanted Christmas pressies?!

Although we don't like to think or say it, sometimes we may be gifted a present which just doesn't hit the spot, or we may already have. Please keep hold of the item and perhaps you could recycle it by offering it to Church or another charity as a raffle prize or donation?

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 2025

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has set the date of the annual Big Garden Birdwatch 2025 for the weekend of the 24th – 26th January.



It couldn't be easier to get involved – just register on the RSPB website ([rspb.org.uk](https://www.rspb.org.uk)) from mid-December and take part in the world's largest garden wildlife survey in January.

Choose on which date you'd like to do your survey between the 24th – 26th January, then sit back and spend an hour watching the birds in your garden, from a balcony, in your local park, or in the Church grounds for example. Then tell the RSPB what you've seen. Even if you see very few birds or none at all, that's still important information to share. But you never know what species you might see!

The top five species spotted in January 2024 were:

1. House Sparrow
2. Blue Tit
3. Starling
4. Woodpigeon
5. Blackbird

NB. You can help birds and other animal too, by putting fresh clean water out regularly for them. You might need to break the ice when it gets very cold and stay safe yourself too - don't slip! A wide, safe and shallow puddle or dish with a rock or two to perch on would be a kindness to a bird. (Search for 'Make the perfect bird bath' on the RSPB website.)

Have a safe and warm winter and Happy Bird Watching!

Forthcoming Services at Christ Church

1 December Miss Mary Patchett

8 December Rev Edward Sakwe
Holy Communion

15 December Mr Michael Prince

22 December Rev Nicola Robinson

Christmas Eve DIY Nativity (3.00pm)

Christmas Day Rev Edward Sakwe

29 December Rev Steven Jones & Christ Church
Worship Team – **at Cross Gates
Methodist Church**

5 January Mrs Catherine Frieze

12 January Rev Timothy Nicholls

19 January Rev Nicola Robison
Covenant Service/Holy Communion

26 January Rev Edward Sakwe

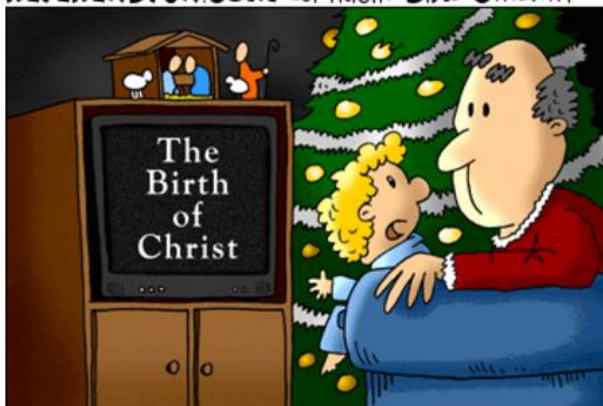
2 February Mrs Janice Green



Forthcoming Services at Colton

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1 December | Mr Grenville Jensen
All-Age Parade and Toy Service |
| 8 December | Mr John Clay |
| 15 December | Rev Becki Stennett
Holy Communion |
| 22 December | Rev Becki Stennett (3.00pm)
Carol Service |
| Christmas Day | Rev Joyce Nicholson (9.30am)
All-Age Worship |
| 29 December | Rev Steven Jones & Christ Church
Worship Team – at Cross Gates
Methodist Church |
| 5 January | Mrs Fran Bailey
All-Age Worship |
| 12 January | Mr Andy Birkett |
| 19 January | Rev Mark Stennett
Covenant Service/Holy Communion |
| 26 January | Mr Peter Howdle (10.30am)
Family JAM: Jesus and Me (4.00pm) |
| 2 February | Mrs Ann Johnson
All-Age Worship |





Thanks to Brent Smith (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-25-2003

I DIDN'T THINK THEY MADE MOVIES BACK THEN

- Senior Steward** Helen Lappage (CC) 07415 058187
helenlappage@sky.com
- Kathryn Glasby (Colton) 07503 740500
kathryn.glasby@talktalk.net
- Elaine Preston (Co-Senior Steward, Colton)
ea.preston@ntlworld.com
- Room Bookings** Pauline Wood (CC) 0113 2647510
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- Shirley Dann (Colton) 0113 2820828
colton.mcbookings@outlook.com
- Ministers** Rev Edward Sakwe (CC) 0113 4147602
revsakwe@yahoo.co.uk
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