

DECEMBER 2021

Contact



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday

Family Worship
10.30am

Wednesday

Congregational Café
11am – 1pm

Scoffs

12 noon
(2nd Wednesday only)

Thursday

Rainbows Baby & Toddler
Group
9.30am

Friday

Badminton
7.30pm

MINISTER

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SECRETARY

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TREASURER

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Dear Friends,

In church, we traditionally mark the weeks of Advent by lighting four candles on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The candles collectively represent the growing light of Christ in the world but individually, these candles are often said to represent hope, peace, joy and love, which are four basic Christian values that summarise our relationship with Christ. Then on Christmas Day, a fifth candle is lit in the centre to represent Jesus and his central role in the Christmas story.

Hope, peace, joy and love are all expectant words and gifts which are offered by God each day. But they are also perfect biblical themes to emphasise the true meaning of Christmas and the actual reason for the season.

We begin Advent with hope - hope for us, for the world, and for the future. The first candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah. It is sometimes known as the prophet's candle as the prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, waited in hope for the Messiah's arrival.

Throughout the Bible there are many references to hope, and we all probably have our favourite verses that help to sustain us when things are difficult and give us encouragement no matter how hopeless the situation.

Every other hope often disappoints, but hope in the Lord does not. God gave us hope in the coming of Jesus. He gave us hope for a very different future, better than we could possibly envisage in the life to come.

The second candle represents peace and if we look closely, this word 'peace' can be found throughout the Christmas story.

Peace was prophesied, and it was promised, and peace was provided with the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. The angels who made their appearance first to Zechariah, then to Mary, and finally to the shepherds implied peace each time they proclaimed, 'Fear not! I bring you good tidings of great joy!'

We usually think of peace as being freedom from conflict, war or fear but Jesus gives a different kind of peace, one that Paul describes in Philippians 4:7 as being 'far beyond human understanding.'

The peace that God gives in Jesus Christ is often described by the Hebrew word 'shalom'. This is more than just no fighting, but includes peace, prosperity, wellness, wholeness and completeness. Jesus himself is our peace and Jesus alone brings true peace. The peace he promised to leave us is sufficient to meet any need and to take us through any storm in our lives.

The third candle represents joy. In Scripture, joy is our response to good news and the Bible speaks of joy at least 165 times. God wants us to have joy in our lives but apart from during advent and Christmas, there is not much focus on joy in Christian life.

'Joy to the World' is a popular carol we sing at Christmas time but the true meaning of joy often gets lost in the rush of the season: the presents we still have to buy, the cards we have to write, the food we have to make and the general busyness of the Christmas preparations. But Christmas can be a time of joy for all if we only stop and remember that Jesus is the reason for the season and rediscover the joy of the angels and the shepherds that first Christmas. But the Angel said to them, 'Don't be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people'.

The gift of Jesus brings great joy to everyone who receives him. The purpose of Christmas is to share this gift so the whole world will know the love of our Saviour, not only at Christmas but always.

So as we celebrate hope, peace and joy at Christmas, we also celebrate love. We don't find the word 'love' directly in any of the scripture narratives describing the birth of Jesus. However, without love we would not have Christmas at all. God showed his love amongst us by sending his only son into the world that we might live through him. This candle reminds us that love has no bounds and as Christina Rossetti writes in the carol, Love came down at Christmas, 'Love be yours and love be mine'. And love certainly did come down at Christmas in a special birth, in a specific location and for a particular purpose.

Cont'd

Baptisms, weddings and funerals by arrangement with the Minister

OFFERTORIES

7th November - £106.35
 14th November - £62.30
 21st November - £76.00
 Standing orders - £592.00
Total £836.65

Other Income

Faith Lunch (Nov) - £36.19

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

**Saturday 4th
December
11AM – 2PM**

SCOFFS

*Just a reminder that
Scoffs Christmas
lunch is on
Wednesday 8th
December at 12 noon.
Please see Sue asap
to reserve your place.*

Thank you to everyone
who supported us on
Remembrance Sunday.
We raised £50.00 for
the Royal British
Legion.

Christingle Service

**Sunday 2nd
January at 10.30am
followed by a
themed lunch**



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Facebook

Christmas is the time when we celebrate God's love coming into the world through the ordinary setting of a human birth, bringing eternal and abundant life to everyone who believes in him. Jesus is love and so Christmas is love.

Perhaps you'll use an Advent calendar, wreath or set of candles this year as you anticipate the arrival of Christmas. Let it serve as a reminder of our relationship with God and the true meaning of Christmas. God demonstrates the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love through the simple story of the birth of a small child and through the celebration of life.

And so, as we come to the end of 2021, we all recognise what a challenging a year it has been and continues to be. We are grateful for the contributions of time, talent and financial support from the congregation to sustain our ministry. God is at work bringing hope, peace, joy and love into our lives and many others in our community and around the world.

May you find his love, joy, hope and peace this Christmas. With very best wishes - Liz

**DR KERSHAW'S CALENDARS ARE
STILL AVAILABLE FROM JEAN
VOSS PRICED £3.99 EACH**

*Tickets for the Christmas Eve Social
are still available from Sue or Simon
Adults £4.00 Children £1.00
including light refreshments*

Just a reminder that there will be **NO** house group this month and **NO** service on Boxing Day, Sunday 26th December. The café will also be taking a break between Christmas and New Year and will reopen on Wednesday 5th January at the usual time of 11am to 1pm.

NATIVITY 2021

The nativity makes a welcome return on Sunday 19th December at 10.30am and promises to be as eventful as ever! Many thanks to Joan for all her hard work. The service will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine so please stay and join with us.

Upcoming Events – December 2021

Wednesday 1st December	11am – 1pm	Congregational Café
Saturday 4th December	11am – 2pm	Christmas Fayre
Sunday 5th December	10.30am	Family Service Themed Faith Lunch
Monday 6th December	7pm	Deacons
Wednesday 8th December	12 noon	Scoffs Christmas Lunch
Sunday 12th December	10.30am	Carol Service
Wednesday 15th December	11am – 1pm	Congregational Café
Sunday 19th December	10.30am	Nativity Service Mulled wine and mince pies
Wednesday 22nd December	11am – 1pm	Congregational Café
Friday 24th December	7.30pm	Christmas Eve Social
Saturday 25th December	10.30am	Christmas Day Service
Sunday 2nd January	10.30am	Christingle Service Themed Faith Lunch
Monday 3rd January	7pm	Deacons Meeting
Wednesday 5th January	11am – 1pm	Congregational Cafe
Friday 7th January	7.30pm	Pantomime at Oldham Coliseum Theatre

Springhead Congregational Church
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