



NEWS SHEET NOV - DEC 2020

As we begin to look forward to the advent season, I am sure many of you like me are also feeling a little apprehensive of what the festive period might have in store for us. After having been gifted a period of respite throughout the months of August, September, and October, we now find ourselves in another national lockdown looking upon a horizon of uncertainty. It wasn't easy the first time round being apart from those we care about, missing out on sharing special moments, and creating lifelong memories – I'm confident I'm not alone in saying it feels much harder the second time around. The title of the theme for the first service in advent is "waiting in the dark", and the introduction is "Jesus speaks of coming dark days when people will be close to losing hope. He urges them therefore to stay awake to signs that offer hope of the coming deliverance, which will certainly come, though at an unexpected time". How appropriate these words are at this time, and how comforting to know there is hope and that God's love will carry us through the darkness and into the light that will surely come.

I thank God on a daily basis for the technology in our lives that enables us to keep in touch with each other so easily. The success of our weekly Zoom services continues to amaze and delight me, and how despite us not having been together physically since the beginning of the year, we can still come together in fellowship, and keep up to date with each other's news. We also have a lot to look forward to within our church over the coming weeks; including one of Stuart's brilliant quizzes, an advent season packed with activities and events, and the possibility of enjoying some of Elmwood's famous homemade goodies in the comfort of our own homes (details below).

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, we'd like to share any Christmas messages or wishes within the church this year in the absence of handing out Christmas cards. If you have any messages or even photographs you would like to share, please send them over to myself, or one of the Elders, for us to add to one big Christmas card that will be circulated in the lead up to Christmas.

Finally, in the lead up to the Christmas period, I'd like to share with you an excerpt from a Christmas poem written by a very dear and sorely missed friend of Elmwood, Jack Taylor, whose words speak volumes and cause me to pause and reflect on the coming festive season and its true meaning.

Sitting Here Waiting Lord

*The competition's fierce, they know not why;
They scrimp and save, many presents to buy.
Choirs sing, "What can I give Him, poor as I am,
If I were a Shepherd, I would bring my lamb"
But if I were a wise man, I could do my part,
But Lord as I thee, will I give my heart?*

*The peace you offer in this place passes understanding.
The casting of our cares on you, affords us peace of mind.
The peace you offer is tranquillity, a peace that's not demanding;
Not of this world but of a Lord who is full of understanding.*

Katie Holt

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ELMWOOD

CHRISTMAS CHARITY APPEALS

Thank you to those who have already donated to our chosen charities we're supporting this Christmas – we hope everyone has gained a little more insight into the fantastic work these charities do throughout the year, and at Christmas time.

There is still time to donate if you wish, please see below details, and don't hesitate to contact one of the Elders if you have any queries. There is also some information below on who the charities are and the work they do if you would like to know more. Following the closure of the church back in March, we had £40 worth of flower money that hadn't been used that we will be donating to our chosen charities. The charities have asked that any donations are sent by **4th December** to ensure they have enough time to fulfil their Christmas missions in the community. If you do choose to donate, we kindly ask you to let Julie Holt know of the amount and to which charity so we can share with the church and the charities how much we have raised.



St Joseph's Family Centre

<https://www.saintjosephsfamilycentre.co.uk/>

"We are a 103-year old organisation based in Warrington. We were established in 1917 under the name of Warrington and District Catholic Aid and Rescue Society, which brought together many charitable church support groups under one umbrella. Since our inception, we have catered to the needs of the community and have committed ourselves to the welfare of our society, especially families and children. We provide essential support to Warrington families undergoing difficult times."

St Joseph's Family Centre Christmas Hamper Campaign 2020

"St Joseph's Family Centre with the amazing support and generosity of the local community, donate hundreds food and gift parcels to families in need of help each Christmas, across Warrington.

Last year 284 food parcels were delivered, and 563 children received gifts which included toys, books, games and toiletries.

Due to the ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic** and the difficulties this brings to arrange such a large-scale activity, we are unable to deliver our Christmas Campaign in the normal way.

We don't want anyone to miss out this Christmas, so we're reaching out to ask for your help.

This year, we want to be able to provide each family referred to us with a voucher that they can use to buy food and gifts for their family.

If you were planning to donate toys, gifts or food items to the Family Centre for this Christmas, please could you consider donating the value of these items instead. **No matter the size of your donation, it will all be of great help.**

£15 of donations will enable a family to purchase gifts for 1 child

£25 of donations will contribute towards essential food and supplies to help a small family for a few days."

To make a donation to St Joseph's directly, please follow the below link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14597>

Alternatively, you can send the money to the church by cheque or via bank transfer and we will ensure the money reaches St Joseph's



Homestart Warrington

<https://homestart-warrington.org.uk/>

“Home-Start Warrington works with children and young families in Warrington to be healthy, stay safe, be happy, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being. Recent studies have shown that up to 80% of children are likely to replicate the family and social situation they are brought up in. By supporting Home-Start you can help vulnerable families to break that cycle and educate children to avoid a path that could lead to

unemployment, teenage pregnancy, crime, drug/alcohol abuse, depression or homelessness”

Home-Start are currently supporting 125 children ranging between the age of newborn to 18. Each year Home-Start deliver **Christmas Eve boxes** to less fortunate children in the community to provide them with some joy the night before the big day. The boxes include items such as a mug and hot chocolate, Christmas pyjamas, a small Christmas craft set and a book. Due to the current pandemic, Home-Start have asked for **monetary donations** to help them to build the boxes themselves ready for distribution around Warrington.

If you would like to make a donation towards this heart warming cause, please send your donation directly to church via cheque or bank transfer (details have been added above) and we will send on to Home-Start. **Whatever the size of your donation, it will make a difference to a child’s life within our community.** Home-Start have asked that any donations are sent by **4th December** to allow them enough time to build the boxes ready for distribution.



St Rocco’s Hospice

<https://www.stroccos.org.uk/>

“We focus on the positives. Supporting patients physically, psychologically, and emotionally to enable them to carry on living the lives they want to live for as long as possible.”

“Each December, St Rocco’s Hospice invites everyone to join them in remembering a loved one as part of Light up a Life, by dedicating a light in their honour on our Hospice Tree.

You may want to remember someone who has died and is forever in your thoughts. Or you can remember someone living away from home who you may be missing.

As 2020 draws to a close, and as a nation we reflect on a year like no other, here at St Rocco’s we recognise that so many people have been unable to say goodbye to their loved ones or celebrate their lives in a way that they once would have.

Light up a Life 2020 aims to provide everyone with that chance to remember, whether they were cared for here at St Rocco’s or elsewhere, Light up a life is for everyone who wishes to remember someone in this way.

Due to the current restrictions we are unable to offer physical ceremonies this year and so instead will broadcasting a Light up a Life ceremony on our website on Sunday 6th December at 4pm.

Light up a Life is for everyone, regardless of faith or culture. It is for people who do not have a direct connection to St. Rocco’s as well as for those who do. It provides us all with a unique opportunity to come together as a community to remember those we love.

By taking part, your support also ensures that essential funds are raised so that we can continue looking after patients and their families when they really need our help.”

This is not an appeal for donations, it is merely information that we wanted to share with our church family as we felt it could offer a great deal of comfort to a lot of people this year. St Rocco’s are a charity and you can donate via their website, or you can send money to the church and we can pass on to them if you wish, as they do a lot of fantastic work within the community. Please help us in spreading the news of the wonderful work of all these charities that help so many people in our community on a daily basis.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ELMWOOD

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

We will be hosting a quiz on **Friday 4th December** via Zoom – Zoom details will be sent out nearer the time, please let us know if you are interested in joining. Stuart and Dorothy never fail in delivering a great quiz, which previously worked quite well over Zoom during the first lockdown. It will be a great chance to spend some time together, have a bit of fun, and get into the Christmas spirit from the comfort of our own homes.

ADVENT WINDOW DISPLAYS

During these very difficult and testing times we will be trying to do as much as we can during the advent season to help spread the Christmas message, despite us not being together in person. As part of this effort, we would like to ask everyone who is feeling the absence of a loved one to display a Christmas star in their window, to spread the message of love and hope at Christmas, similar to when we displayed rainbows in our windows in the Spring. Our joint pastorate service on 29th November will feature a theme around this that will be heart-warming to share together at the start of the advent season. Small stars will be distributed to church members ahead of the service on 29th November, however if you'd like to get creative and print or make your own, please be our guest and feel free to share photos with us.

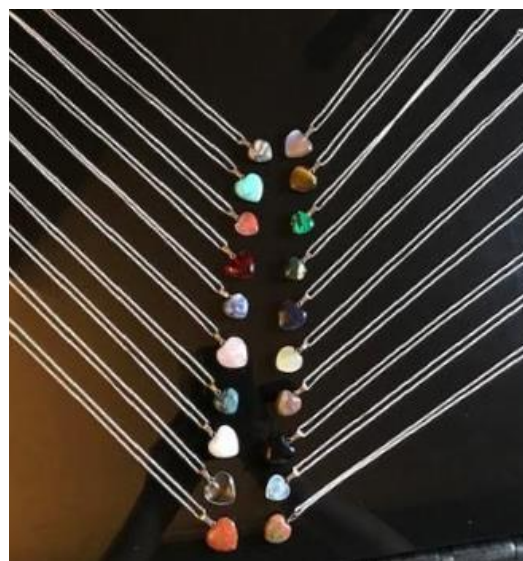
We will also be sending out further activities for everyone to get involved in throughout the four-week advent period – keep your eyes and ears open!

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

In the lead up to Christmas we'll be raffling off some great prizes, including a 1 metre Christmas cracker! More details will follow via our website, Facebook, through church notices, and email once we have a full list of prizes. Prices are £1 for 5 tickets / 20p per ticket.

NECKLACES FOR SALE

As outlined in our previous newsletter, our talented church secretary Lorna Griffiths has been working hard creating beautiful necklaces available for sale – the perfect Christmas gift! Retail price is £5, please get in touch with Lorna or one of the Elders if you wish to make a purchase, or if you have any queries.



WEEKLY ZOOM SERVICE

We will continue to use Zoom to connect and bring worship on a Sunday morning. All services will commence at 11am each Sunday, unless otherwise stated. Please note, going forward the meeting host can mute all participants however the host can no longer unmute meeting attendees. If you are joining Zoom via the computer, you can select to unmute yourself in the bottom left corner of the screen; and if you are joining over the phone you can press *6 to mute and unmute. If you would like details of how to join please let us know by emailing elmwoodavenueurc@gmail.com or Facebook messenger.

Date	Theme for Worship	Provisionally - To Be Led By	Introduction to the Theme
15 th November	"Coming, ready or not"	Felicity Peers	'Peace and security' in this dark world can be hard to find. But those who anticipate the day of the Lord, and already live in the light of the risen Christ, have faith, hope, and love as a strong defence against all that seeks to destroy them.
22 nd November	"King of Compassion" & St Andrew's Day	Rev Jenny Travis	In a dramatic image, a king separates people into two camps on the basis of how they behaved towards vulnerable people: did they act with compassion towards them, or not?
ADVENT & CHRISTMAS SERVICES			
29 th November	Joint Pastorate Service	Rev Jenny Travis	This service will commence at 10.45am – contact us for zoom details. For our first service in advent we will be coming together with the churches across the pastorate to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas period.
6 th December	"What Happens in the Wilderness"	Julie Holt	Mark introduces his story of the life of Jesus as 'good news'. But before getting to the content of that good news, he presents John, a messenger sent to prepare the way, who baptizes people in the wilderness.
13 th December	"Mystery of the Messiah"	Rev Jenny Travis	Religious leaders are dispatched to question John the Baptist as to his identity, wondering if he might be the Messiah. John repeatedly answers in the negative; but leaves them with an intriguing possibility that the Messiah is among them – but they don't realise it yet.
20 th December	Christmas Carol Service	Emily Peers	This will be our Christmas Carol service – thanks in advance to Kim for providing the on-screen carols! If anyone has any carol requests, please let us know in advance so we can arrange to include in the service.
Christmas Eve	Joint Pastorate Christingle Service	Rev Jenny Travis	This service will commence at 6.30pm – contact us for zoom details.
Christmas Day	Joint Pastorate Service	Rev Jenny Travis	This service will commence at 10am – contact us for zoom details.

ELMWOOD CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

A PRAYER FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY

God, we remember those who are in need of your comfort and grace. We pray for those in our church community and those who are known to us personally. We ask that they come to know your comfort and reassurance that you are always with them; and those who care for them. And we ask that your presence in whatever troubled circumstance we have prayed for, to find resolution, restoration, and peace.
Amen.

PERSONAL PRAYER & PASTORAL SUPPORT

Although our church remains closed, Rev Jenny Travis and our Elders will continue to provide support if you need it. Please find contact details below:

Rev Jenny Travis Our Minister	Lorna Griffiths Church Secretary & Authorised Elder	Julie Holt Church Treasurer & Authorised Elder
Email: Jennytravis37@gmail.com	Email: elmwoodavenueurc@gmail.com	
Telephone: 01925 211141		

LET'S CELEBRATE!

HAPPY 70th
BIRTHDAY to Harry
Wells



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
to Julie



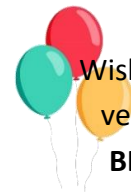
CONGRATULATIONS to Ron and Elsie who
will be celebrating their wedding
anniversary in December



Wishing **Dorothy** a very
HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Wishing **Luke** a
very **HAPPY**
BIRTHDAY



PASTORATE NEWS & UPDATES

There are a number of events and meetings taking place across the pastorate on a weekly basis that friends of all churches are welcome to join if they wish. Please find below details of some current (virtual) events, and how you can keep up to date with upcoming events in the future.

St John's Advent Craft Events

One each week leading up to Christmas

Please head over to the St John's facebook page to find out more details



Virtual Panto provided by the very talented **4Front Theatre Company** that friends at Thomas Risley are facilitating this year. Please get in touch with members of Thomas Risley Church via their facebook page or website (details below) for info



Elmwood Ave URC



Elmwood Avenue UR Church



www.elmwoodavenueurc.co.uk

Thomas Risley URC



Thomas Risley Church



thomasrisley.org

Lymm URC



Lymm United Reformed Church



lymmurc.org.uk

St John's URC



St John's United Reformed Church



stjohnsurc.co.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM URC MERSEY SYNOD

Please see below events brought to us by the URC Mersey Synod (<https://www.urcmerseysynod.org.uk/welcome.htm>)

"We Need to Talk About Christmas" – 15th November 7.30pm-8.30pm – A chance to share ideas with others, to ensure Jesus is the most important present we give anyone this Christmas. Please contact Stuart Radcliffe (mde@urcmerseysynod.org.uk) for Zoom details.

"Can Random Acts of Kindness Grow the Church?" – 25th November 7pm – webinar with Stuart Radcliffe and Andrew Graystone, please contact Stuart (mde@urcmerseysynod.org.uk) for Zoom details.

Christmas Café Jam – 6th December 6.30pm – enjoy an advent sing-a-long as the Café Jam band bring seasonal songs from YouTube clips. Please contact Rita (synodclerk@urcmerseysynod.org.uk / 07838 103310) for Zoom details.

Synod-led Christmas Service – 13th December 6.30pm – details for this have not been finalised yet, but we will surely pass details on once we have them