

# Emmanuel Life

Emmanuel  
God With Us



# December 2023



**EMMANUEL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**  
**THE GROVE, WEST WICKHAM, KENT, BR4 9JS**

[www.emmanuelww.org.uk](http://www.emmanuelww.org.uk)  
0208 777 1007

# SUNDAY WORSHIP

Gathered family worship (in-person) and also broadcast on Zoom.  
See next page for details.



## MINISTER

**Revd David Pickering**

**Church: 0208 777 0626 (Manse)**

**e-mail: [minister@emmanuelww.org.uk](mailto:minister@emmanuelww.org.uk)**

Vestry phone with answer machine 020 8777 1150 is checked at least weekly – the best number to call David is the manse phone.

Monday is the Minister's day off, please only contact in an emergency on a Monday.

***The shared ministry of Emmanuel United Reformed Church, West Wickham and Elmers End Free Church, Elmers End.***

<b>Communications Secretary</b>	Rosemary Daniels		<a href="mailto:welcome@emmanuelww.org.uk">welcome@emmanuelww.org.uk</a>

\*\*\*More contact details can be found on page 41\*\*\*



# December 2023 Services

3 <sup>rd</sup> (see below)	10.00am	Messy Church
	11.00am	Combined Christmas Festival and Parade Service led by Revd David Pickering and Pat Best
10 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Gathered/broadcast worship including Holy Communion led by Revd David Pickering
14 <sup>th</sup> (see below)	7.00pm	<b>Candlelit Service of Remembrance</b> led by Revd David Pickering
16 <sup>th</sup>	4.00pm	<b>Carols on the Green</b> led by Revd David Pickering
17 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Gathered/broadcast worship
	6.30pm	<b>Carols by Candlelight</b> led by Revd David Pickering
24 <sup>th</sup> <b>Christmas Eve</b>	10.30am	Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering
	4.00pm	<b>Crib Service</b>
	11.30pm	<b>Watchnight Service with Midnight Communion</b> led by Revd David Pickering
25 <sup>th</sup> <b>Christmas Day</b>	10.30am	<b>All-Age Christmas Celebration Service</b> Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering
31 <sup>st</sup>	10.30am	Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering

# January 2023

7 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am	Messy Church
	11.00am	Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering

**3<sup>rd</sup> December:** *Messy Church begins at 10am with breakfast, to which everyone is welcome. The Christmas Festival service will follow on from this at 11am.*

**14<sup>th</sup> December:** *A special service where the bereaved may remember their loved ones.*

# *Minister's Letter*

## **'just like the ones I used to know'**

Dear Friends

Bing Crosby's melancholic rendition of White Christmas with the lyrics: *'just like the ones I used to know'* evokes a sense of looking back. First released in 1942, it particularly appealed to troops and their families separated by war, reminding them of 'Christmases past' together.

Looking back at 'Christmases past' isn't just a wartime phenomenon. Many people keep Christmas in a traditional way, singing the same carols year after year, sending cards with greetings especially to friends of old, and eating the same food! In our home, doubtless like many, we put up the same decorations year after year, and always in the same place. The most precious ones are those made by our children, their glitter and glue endeavours reminding us of their childhood Christmases past.

And with that sense of 'just like the ones we used to know' Christmas is an occasion when we may find ourselves engaging with the past. An engagement which may help us embrace the season with joy and also approach it with poignancy, not least as we remember loved ones no longer with us.

We're not the first generation to look back to Christmas past. Think of Mary. I don't suppose that she'll ever forget **the** first Christmas (though she didn't know it was the first Christmas at the time!). But I can't believe either that she'd remember the circumstances, far from home, no proper shelter, no family or village matriarchs to support her when her time came. And I imagine that she'd remember the joy and wonder of new life, as the worry and pain dissipated with time.

Matthew introduces his Christmas story by looking back, beginning his gospel with a genealogy of Jesus: 'Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham'. Having recounted significant figures from the past family of Israel,

*Continued on next page*

Matthew links through to Joseph's own family. In doing so Matthew is honouring the past, telling us that Christianity is grounded in Judaism, the New Testament in the Old Testament, and the good news of the gospel, in the promises of the past.

Matthew's looking back isn't so much nostalgic as thankful, reflecting how God's presence, grace and truth has shaped and led to the first Christmas. And having looked back he looks forward, introducing the wise men, so symbolising how the story will widen far beyond the boundaries of Israel.

As we prepare for Christmas through Advent, may we, like Matthew, remember how God's presence, grace and truth has shaped our lives in the past and brought us to this time.

As we celebrate Christmas, may we, like Mary, have an experience of wonder and joy, of God's promise being delivered, the birth of a baby.

Christmas can evoke a sense of nostalgia and even poignancy. This Christmas our family isn't the only family who'll be shedding a quiet tear of sadness. Christmas can also bring a sense of wonder, including through new life, and our family isn't the only family shedding a joyful tear of delight as the generations naturally turn.

If you happen to hear Bing's melancholic 'just like the ones I used to know', drifting from your radio or down a supermarket aisle, may you be helped to recall not just on our own Christmases past, but the sense of God with us – God with you - Immanuel in the here and now.

Through the joys and delights, poignancy and any sorrows of the season, may you have a sense of God's presence, peace and joy this Christmas, and smile.

Yours in Christ,

*David*



## **Autumn Synod Together Meeting Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October at The Temple URC, in St Mary Cray**

It's always good to meet with other URC churches and to hear news, hopes, visions, changes and challenges.

Opening worship was led by members of Copleston Church and Community Centre, including Jo Patterson. We sang a rousing Take my Life and pondered Jesus' words in Matthew 28, 16-20 'Go then, to all peoples everywhere...'.

Go... Go where? What does this mean for us? It means going out, going to where people are, to love them and share the Good News of God's love with them. Something for us to consider. We sang Colours of Day which reminds us to 'Go on through the park, on into the town ... the people of darkness are needing a friend'.

Next Russell Furley-Smith as previous Synod Clerk, present Synod Convenor and standing in for the Moderator Bridget Banks ( recovering from surgery), wore several hats (literally) to begin the meeting and led the induction of the new Synod Clerk Martin Hayward.

Then came pastoral news. Jacob Bali who has preached at Emmanuel is now at Trinity Wimbledon. A number of ministers have reached milestones, of 40, 50 and 70 years.

We heard about Church Related Community Ministry from Simon Lovett of Brockley and New Cross, and Jo Patterson. It was worth learning about working with people and not *doing* ministry *to* them, building relationships with folk who will continue the work, not just in churches but for everyone. It is important that we are relevant to our community and not asking the community to fit the church. Some examples are responding to the cost of living crisis, partnerships with foodbanks, debt advice, homelessness, mental health, cafes, choirs and building sites.

We split into groups to answer questions:

- What relationships do you have outside the church? Does your community know you are there? Would they care if you were not there?
  - How can you improve relationships? What could you do 'not on a Sunday?'
- Many ideas flowed with the big question Where and what is God asking of you?

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Tom Hackett's Youth Report began with thanks expressed for the ministry of Heather Moore as Synod Youth Rep and how she is continuing as Mod Elect, to begin her ministry as Youth Moderator in 2024.

Her successor is Zeerak Shahbaz, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year psychology student and who gained a lay preaching certificate at age 19. He spoke with great enthusiasm and confidence telling us about his gathering with young Christians from the URC, France and Germany at the International Youth Exchange. He also attended the Synod Residential as a member of the leadership team.

We looked at various resolutions from General Assembly that would have implications for local churches, making us move with the times and thinking outwardly.

The increase in Ministry and Mission is necessary and we were reminded this includes salaries, stipends, pensions, training and all other outgoings.

Closing worship included Russell telling how a church in Worthing at the end of WW2 sent shoe boxes to needy people in Germany and how this kindness grew so that churches in the UK, USA, E and W Germany and Czechoslovakia came together. 'Never underestimate a small act of kindness as it can change the world.'

It was a good day and I was inspired by the many people in Southern Synod working together for the Kingdom.

The Temple is near the River Cray where I hoped I might see a kingfisher but did spot a little egret waiting for a tasty fish. Then over the bridge to Hobbycraft to stock up for Messy Church. A day well spent.

*Pat Best*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God*

(Matthew Chapter 5 verse 9)



# Secretary's Notes

## CHRISTMAS ALL-AGE FESTIVAL SERVICE

**SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 10am**

A joint service for **all ages** with Messy Church, breakfast, activities and Parade.

**Entrance of flags 11am. Theme – Are You Ready?**

*Please bring your gifts (unwrapped) for children, teenagers & adults to be distributed by the Salvation Army from The Vine Food Bank.*



## THE BIG CHRISTMAS SING



We are part of:  
**churches  
together**  
in West Wickham

Join the combined voices from West Wickham churches singing at **St Francis** on

**Saturday, 2nd December at 4pm**



## CHURCH MEETING

A brief Church meeting to elect new Elders

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December** after the **10.30am** service



## CANDLE-LIT REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

A time of reflection – remembering loved ones.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December - 7pm**



## CAROLS ON THE GREEN

Outside Emmanuel on the green

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December – 4pm**

*With campfire, mince pies & hot drinks*



*Continued on next page*



## VISITING WORSHIP LEADER

We welcome our own Accredited Lay Preacher **Alan Kienlen** on  
**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30am**



## CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Carols, Candles & readings galore!

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 6.30pm**

*followed by refreshments*



## CRIB SERVICE



A service for young people and those young at heart -  
**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December – 4pm**

## MIDNIGHT COMMUNION

Welcome the New Born Baby in our Watchnight service and  
be among the first to wish friends a '*Happy Christmas*'

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 11.30pm**



## CHRISTMAS DAY – All-age Celebration



The culmination of all the preparations – relax as we celebrate Jesus'  
birth.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am**

## WARM WELCOME FRIDAYS

**Warm Welcome** is continuing throughout December, so **every  
Friday** you will find a very warm welcome in the **Hewitt Room**,  
**10am – 4pm**, with hot soup, drinks & plenty of friendly chat!



*Rosemary*



# *News of the Church Family, URC and wider Church Community*

December is an Advent month of promise, which culminates through the birth of Jesus in joy, wonder and hope, but ends, thinking of Herod, with the long shadow of the cross. As I write, the news continues to be dominated by the contemporary Herodian horror, the slaughter of innocents from both sides of the Israel/Gaza border, that is emanating from the land we call holy. A Haiku- style prayer for peace:

*Hatred, anger, swirl,  
unholy war, hope prays for  
peace on holy ground.*

Closer to home, please remember in your prayers:

## **Bereavements**

We are sad to report the death of two people who belonged to Emmanuel's family:

Christine Haggart died peacefully in St George's, Tooting in early November after a period of ill health. Christine came to Emmanuel from time to time, attending both services and Emmanuel Fellowship. Our sympathy extends to her husband Ian.

Roger Pickering died peacefully at home on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November after a period of declining health. Roger is David's father, who together with his wife Jean, transferred their membership to Emmanuel last year, following the closure of Christ Church URC/Methodist Church in Ross-on-Wye. For a while they valued Zooming into our services.

David writes...I am very grateful for the understanding, space and encouragement given to me to undertake a series of visits to Ross-on-Wye during November in what were precious moments alongside offering my parents a supportive presence. Whilst belonging to Emmanuel, Dad's funeral is to be arranged in Ross-on-Wye. Thank you, too, for prayerful support of myself and Jan, and our family, Rachel, Jamie and Anna and their loved ones.

## **A Prayer**

*Shepherding, welcoming God,  
for treasured memories of loved ones, thank you.  
May your peace, touch grieving hearts,  
May your light, dispel death's darkness,  
May your new life, bring hope. Amen.*

*Continued on next page*

## Remembering people receiving health care and caring for their loved ones

Please remember those who are poorly or have had or are having or recovering from some medical investigations, procedures, breaks, support or treatment, including:

- Anne Anderson
- Marjorie George
- Christine Jackson
- Marty Jones, together with her daughter, Alison Lessiter
- Lynda Stock

And as we travel through Advent to Christmas, please remember our faithful friends who live in care homes or are housebound and are no longer able to attend regularly.

### ***A Prayer for Healing***

*Healing Lord, as four friends carried a sick person to Jesus,  
so, I carry to Jesus in my prayer...  
(please add a name, or hold a picture, of someone in your thoughts).  
May your healing hand surround and support them,  
in Jesus' name, Amen.*

## **Children and Family Worker**

As Emmanuel seeks a half-time Children and Family Worker, please pray for the selection process, that you may help each candidate invited to interview, to give of their best, and that you may equip our selection panel with wisdom, insight and discernment.

## **Prayers for our Community and Charities**

Please remember the work of our two 2023/24 charities nominated for our support:

Local: **Bromley Starter Packs**, Overseas: **The Ideas Partnership**

see separate articles on pages 20 and 21 in this edition of Emmanuel Life.

We also extend a big Emmanuel welcome to Tania, who is our newly recruited sessional chef, who from the beginning of November has been preparing a delicious home-made soup at our **Warm Welcome Fridays @ Emmanuel** venture. Warm Welcome is open from 10am – 4pm every Friday right through December and into the New Year. It offers what is says on the tin, a warm welcome, and an opportunity to meet and chat, all-day refreshments including a light-bite lunch, all free of charge. Donations given are passed to The Vine New Addington Food Bank.

Please let David or an Elder know of anyone known to you who has a special anniversary, birthday or news, or who would value the prayerful support of the church.

*Bryn & David*

# Personal Thanks & Announcements

## Palatinate Partnership Advent Service

The URC has a long-standing partnership with the Evangelical Church of the Palatinate (EKP) in Germany, which is lived out in a number of ways, including through official denominational links, local church partnerships and personal friendships. We gained an insight into the partnership when back in April we welcomed Pfarrer Martin Henninger from the EKP to Emmanuel. Martin is a friend of myself and Jan, and preached the sermon on that occasion.

One recent expression of the partnership has been periodic online services, the next of which is an Advent Service between yoURChurch (an online URC Church) and the EKP on Sunday 17 December at 6.00 pm. To join please use the following links. The service is open to everyone.

### Zoom link:

Meeting ID: [965 1457 5443](https://96514575443)

Passcode: YourChurch

Link: <https://bit.ly/2Tf1EUk>

*David*

## A Christmas Jumper for Christmas Day

The schedule of special services for Advent into Christmas is listed elsewhere in Emmanuel Life, to which I add an invitational thought about the All-Age Celebration Service at 10:30am on Christmas Day.



It has long been the tradition that some people, certainly children, bring a present that they've received from Santa, that is like me, they've been very good 😊

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Mindful that Mary and Joseph are often depicted as wearing colourful clothing in nativity scenes, I offer an invitation/issue a challenge, building on the colourful showing at last year's Christmas Day Celebration Service, to wear a Christmas jumper on Christmas morning, that is, if you happen to have one. You are of course very welcome to wear a Christmas jumper at any other seasonal service too!

*David*

## **Christmas card collection and distribution**

**S**

ending and receiving Christmas cards is one of the joys of the season. We are offering a way to share cards among our Fellowship in the same way as last year.

Drop-off – please bring your cards to church anytime up to and including Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December. There will be a box in the vestibule from Friday 1<sup>st</sup> to receive cards. If you are not able to get to church in this period, please call your Elder who will make alternative arrangements with you.

Delivery – cards will be distributed from Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December onwards. Those in church that morning will receive their own bundles, and any others will be delivered by Elders across their own pastoral lists in the following days.

Please write the name of the person or family clearly on the envelope. Your cards should be sorted alphabetically by surname please, and if possible held together in a bundle with a couple of elastic bands. All cards will be delivered by hand so only include those for people in the local area.

Best wishes,

*Marion Moore*  
020 8289 7760  
07712 856071

# *Emmanuel Fellowship*

Dear Friends,

It's been a great year at the Fellowship, thanks to the committee, the planning, the hard work of many, and the support of you, our dear friends, who come to our meetings and offer your grateful thanks for all we provide.

We've arrived at the last two meetings of our Fellowship for 2023 and it's time to celebrate.

December 5th – **Andy Thomas** will give a talk entitled '**Christmas – A Festive History**'.

December 12th – **Fellowship Christmas Celebration** – come along and enjoy some Christmas treats: cakes, great company and some festive fun, Fellowship style.

We hope you can join us for one, or both meetings in December.

May your Christmas be a blessed one, and a time of peace and happy reflection. Don't forget to look for the little bits of magic: there's some lurking in unlikely places if you keep your childlike eyes and ears open!

We look forward to seeing you all again in the New Year. Our first meeting of 2024 is on January the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Every blessing,

*Sue Thomas and the Fellowship Committee*

*Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

(Philippians Chapter 4 verses 6-7)

## Nature ramblings - Christmas robins



My first Christmas card of the season (received in mid-November!) features a robin, and it is a fair bet that robin-themed cards will be winging their way to households across our nation as Christmas approaches. In recent years the robin has been joined on Christmas cards by other avian friends, notably penguins and more recently puffins!

But, I wonder, might a robin have greeted the newborn king in the Bethlehem stable?

There is an ancient tradition that as Mary was giving birth in the cool of night, the warming fire started to die. Then, a brown bird flew down from the rafters and started flapping its wings, fanning the flames back into a blaze. However, in the bird's zeal it went a little too close allowing an ember to scorch its breast red. Mary is said to have smiled and declared that the red breast was a sign of the bird's kind heart which would pass down the generations, for robins to proudly wear.

This legend was built on during Victorian times when the tradition of sending Christmas cards developed, for the Royal Mail posties wore a bright red livery, gaining the nickname, 'robin' or 'robin red-breast'. Before long, robins were depicted on Christmas cards delivering letters and parcels!



So might a robin have attended the birth of Jesus?



Britain has a resident population of robins which is swelled in the winter by robins migrating from colder continental climes for the season. Curiously, robins from Finland tend to head for the Mediterranean in winter, so if Jesus was born in a Bethlehem winter, it is conceivable that a curious robin may have flitted into the stable to greet him.

But for sure there were neither puffins or penguins to greet the new born king!

*David*

PS I snapped these delightful friends on Mull in October using my phone, they really did come as close as they appear!

# Big Movie Night Extravaganza

Imagine the scene; the Hewitt room set up with a big screen, huge speakers the projector and Disney+

Now add 50 Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Young Leaders and their Leaders and you have a Girlguiding Big Movie Night Extravaganza.

Yes on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November Girlguiding took over Emmanuel and turned it into a big screen experience. A few weeks previously we had run a session linked to Parliament Week where we had a whole range of activities set up around voting, democracy, role of the MP etc. As part of this the Rainbows and Brownies voted for their favourite Disney Movie which was 'The Little Mermaid' so, with the agreement of the Elders and lots of support from Tony, David and Ian we transformed the Hewitt room into the big screen.



The girls came in their pyjamas, onesies and slumber gear and brought beanbags, sleeping bags and pillows and settled down to enjoy the film. Despite a few initial setbacks with the sound system we overcame the problem using a mobile phone and syncing it with the bluetooth speakers so we could have the film playing through the laptop and projector and the sound playing through the phone and speakers. A neat bit of sycronisation in

pressing play on both the laptop and the phone at the same time meant that the sound came through at the same time as the picture on the screen - all sorted.



We had popcorn on hand for a short interval and mermaid activities in the vestibule for the younger girls who needed a short break from the excitement of the movie. The film was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. After it finished, 20 Guides and

Brownies along with the Young Leaders and Leaders slept over in the Richmond Hall in the pop-up tents. This was enormous fun, finished off by croissants and pancakes in the morning.



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A huge thank you to Katy for sorting out the rooms for us, to David and Ian for allowing us to have the space to hold the event and providing us with the equipment from the office, and to Tony for setting up the screen, speakers and projector for us in advance which was greatly appreciated.

Despite feeling a little jaded in the morning, the evening was a huge success and a lovely way to bring all parts of the Emmanuel Girlguiding family together.

*Carole Douglas*

*Leader - 4th West Wickham Brownies*

*District Commissioner - West Wickham Girlguiding*

### ***Photo credits:***

- Photo on the front cover courtesy of Umesh Soni on unsplash
- Photos on pages 8 & 9 courtesy of unsplash
- Photos on pages 12 & 15 courtesy of DAP
- Photos on page 16 courtesy of Carole Douglas



# FOOD BANK DONATIONS...PLEASE

## When I was hungry, you gave me food...

With the festive season upon us, please note the following items would be appreciated:

- Milk
- Sugar
- Coffee
- Tea
- Puddings
- Tinned Veg
- Pasta Sauce (ideally tomato)
- Soup
- Toilet Roll

Items can be left just outside the church vestry or at Sainsbury's on the high street (not on Station Road), even if they are not bought in-store. Also note that there are two donation boxes but only one is for the Salvation Army. You are also welcome to donate to our JustGiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/newaddingtonsalvationarmy>

This year, the **Foodbank will be closed** on the following days:

- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> December
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December
- Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December
- Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January

The Vine is located in Salcot Crescent New Addington CR0 0JJ. We are down a narrow driveway between houses 11 and 13, next to Tharreo House school.

**MANY THANKS** once again for all your help - we really couldn't manage without our public donations!

*Flora*



## An Exciting Opportunity:

to develop a new role as a

## Youth Worker



**Hours: 18 hours per week: Flexible working**

**Salary: £15,000-£17,500 depending on experience  
(£30,000-£35,000 36 hours Full Time equivalent)**

**Location: West Wickham, Bromley, Kent**

- Emmanuel is seeking a warm hearted, fun, self-motivated person who is passionate about working with young people, as a key part of our plans to develop our church's ministry.
- Emmanuel strives to be an open, inclusive and welcoming community.
- Emmanuel has a strong tradition of children and youth work, now comprising:
  - ⇒ Messy Church which attracts a growing number of families, all the Scouting and
  - ⇒ Guiding groups and a weekly parent/carer Toddler Group.
- We aim to develop a vibrant presence, integrated in the heart of the community, offering a range of activities for all ages Monday – Sunday

**To find out more and for an application form, please contact:**

**Sara Stocker:** [messychurch@emmanuelww.org.uk](mailto:messychurch@emmanuelww.org.uk)

**or please send a stamped addressed envelope to:**

**Sara Stocker, Emmanuel Church, The Grove, West Wickham BR4 9JS**

**Closing Date: 12 noon on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

# **Overseas charity of the year:**

## **The Ideas Partnership**

In 2018, the Women's Fellowship, now known as the Fellowship, had a visit from Elizabeth Gowing, a British woman living and working in Kosovo. She told us of a chance encounter with a family living in extreme poverty and insanitary conditions. Their only income was the money the husband made by rifling through discarded rubbish, to find items that could be sold for recycling.

The family of seven lived in a one room shack, where they slept, cooked and ate. Their furniture was one mattress on the floor. One of their sons, a wee toddler, had scars on his legs from pulling a pot of boiling water over himself, and they could not afford the ointment needed for his wounds. Their latrine was outside, and often sewage leaked across their front yard, turning the earth to mud and filth.

These were Ashkali people, marginalised, forgotten, disenfranchised. Their children did not have shoes or decent clothing, so were not able to attend school: they often scoured the rubbish heaps with their fathers, or went out begging but they were malnourished and always hungry. This scene was replicated all over Fushë Kosovë, where minority populations were living.

Elizabeth lobbied the government and the schools to allow these lost children to be educated, and set up a Saturday school to start their education. Along the way, Elizabeth learned more about life in Fushë Kosovë, and the struggles of the Ashkali people. Beginning with individuals, listening to their stories, their hopes and dreams of a better future, she found ways to fund their small enterprises: purchasing stock, renting premises, teaching sales and investment skills, providing bicycles and adult literacy classes for securing jobs.

Fourteen years on, the Ideas Partnership now have four learning centres in Kosovo, more children are in school and some are university graduates. Health outcomes and work opportunities for the population have greatly improved, and environmental projects are underway. Just imagine what more can be achieved when the dreams and aspirations of the citizens of Kosovo are given flight!

*Sue Thomas*

# **Local Charity for Christmas 2023:**

## **Bromley Parish Church Homeless Starter Pack Scheme**

This is a project set up to collect good quality, household goods and re-distribute them to households moving from homelessness to new tenancies.

Our Local Authority works hard to find homes for homeless people but when someone who has been on the streets or in a hostel gets the keys to their first flat, that's all they get; a bunch of keys, a floor, walls and a roof. That's where the Starter Packs come into it. These people may have been living on the streets; in a hostel; sofa-surfing; escaped domestic violence, or just been released from prison.

Starter Packs provide the basic items needed for making a house or flat into a home. It's a comprehensive package, with bedding, kitchen equipment, toiletries, and cleaning materials. Anne Horner-Tree who runs the scheme, ensures everything included is of good quality, so that the people receiving these packs, feel loved, respected, and dignified.

There is even an eco-aim, to save tonnes of items from going into landfill. All goods donated must be good quality, clean, freshly laundered and free from chips and stains: Anne's team is too small to take on the task of laundering as well.

The benchmark is: Does the item have enough life in it for reuse? How would you feel if given it?

That's not the whole story: some items must be purchased new, such as duvets, pillows, toiletries and cleaning products. Twenty or more packs are required each month, so Anne often tops up the stock from her own pocket when there are insufficient items to complete a pack. Our support will be a massive gift to Anne, and to the people receiving the starter packs.

*Sue Thomas*

## Eco Hints Round 11: December 2023

### A few ideas on how to have a greener Christmas

**Make a wreath** – perhaps from woodland leaves and berries (source: Natalie Fee, “How to Save the World for Free”) or a rag rug version (Greener & Cleaner Bromley have a workshop for this on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec at 6.30pm)

**Rent a Christmas tree** ... one that goes back to the nursery after Christmas, gets replanted, and then grows about one foot taller ready for next year

**Use biodegradable glitter** – one website ([peacewiththewild.co.uk](http://peacewiththewild.co.uk)) advertises a wide range which is all made from 100% biodegradable, recyclable ingredients and vegan plant products. Just as colourful, just as sparkly, and just as fun.

**Learn Furoshiki** wrapping techniques – a traditional Japanese way of using large cloths time and again to wrap presents without using sticky tape

**Buy seasonal foods** – sprouts, carrots, cabbages, leeks, pears and cranberries are all in season from UK farms at this time of year (while those admittedly yummy asparagus tips will have been imported for example). And freeze that extra turkey meat and other leftovers ready for another day.

*And if you can, try really hard to avoid plastic ribbon, and also foil-backed or glitter wrapping paper – none of it is recyclable.*

*Ian Moore*

**Foster for Bromley**

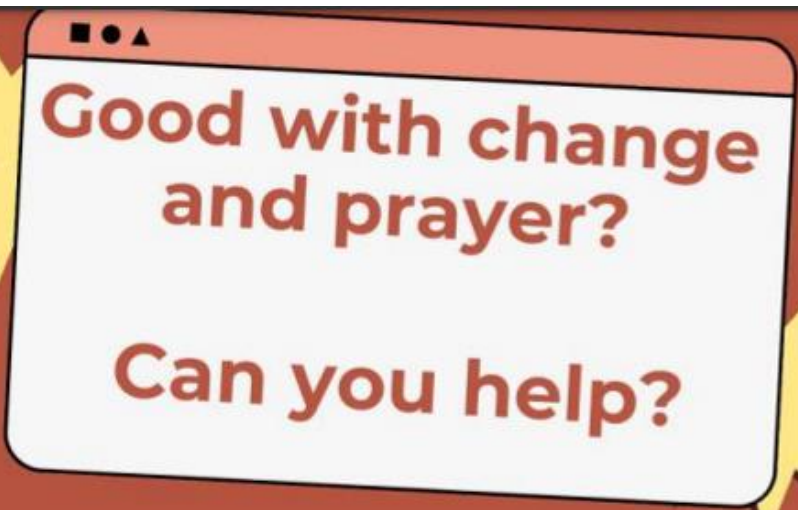

# Can you help change a child's life?



We offer  
competitive  
rates

Visit [www.bromley.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/fostering)  
or call our team on 020 8461 7701





**Good with change  
and prayer?**

**Can you help?**



***South London Churches  
need Visionary  
Companions***



**The role**

- Support churches plan their future
- Encourage, advise, unlock ideas
- Short-term (up to 1 year)
- Ideal for those in management
- Full training and support given



**MORE DETAILS [HTTPS://BIT.LY/VCS](https://bit.ly/vcs)**



**OR EMAIL [RJONES@URCSOUTHERN.ORG.UK](mailto:rjones@urcsouthern.org.uk)**



# WHAT IS A VISIONARY COMPANION?

A VISIONARY COMPANION HELPS A LOCAL URC OR PARTNERSHIP DISCERN ITS FUTURE THROUGH CONSIDERATION OF CORE QUESTIONS.

THEY HELP THE CHURCH TO PRAY, THINK CREATIVELY AND BE OPEN TO NEW POSSIBILITIES TO MAKE IT RELEVANT FOR TODAY - FOR EXAMPLE.

·WHAT VISION IS GOD GIVING US?

·WHAT RESOURCES AND ROLES WILL ENABLE THIS TO HAPPEN?

·HOW COULD WE CONNECT WITH OTHER CHURCHES, AND DERIVE BENEFIT FROM THE GIFTS OF THOSE ACROSS THE WIDER CHURCH.

A VC CAN HELP ELDERS AND OTHER LEADERS FIND INNOVATIVE WAYS FORWARD USUALLY A VC IS A MINISTER OR ELDER BUT ANYONE WITH CHANGE AND PEOPLE SKILLS IN A CHURCH WOULD BE WELCOME.

VC'S ·HELP CHURCHES UNDERSTAND NEW WAYS OF THINKING, EXCITE CHURCHES ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILITATE THE JOURNEY AS A CHURCH PRAYERFULLY SEEKS THEIR WAY FORWARD ENSURING CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE THINKING, AND LOTS OF PRAYER.

PLEASE CONSIDER WHETHER GOD IS CALLING YOU TO THIS ROLE

## Invitation

to all who enjoy singing,  
from the Joint Benefice of St. Francis and St. Mary, West Wickham.

## The Big Christmas Sing 2023

In aid of Christian Aid  
Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 4pm

Singers from choirs, music groups and congregations of “Churches Together in West Wickham” are invited to sign up to join us in a West Wickham Choir for this event.

Music will be Christmas themed, from traditional carols to secular songs. We also plan to have a primary school choir taking part.

We need to know who would like to join us, so we can plan the singing space. Please don't hesitate to contact me as soon as possible to add your name[s] even though rehearsals are not until late November.

All music copies will be provided, and please note that music reading ability is not essential – neither is previous experience – all who enjoy singing are welcome.

Venue: St. Francis of Assisi Church,  
Ravenswood Avenue, West Wickham, BR4 0NW

Rehearsals: ~~Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 7.30pm~~  
~~Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm~~  
Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 2pm – 3pm followed by a refreshment break for singers while school group rehearses.

Event: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 4pm.

Please respond to Geoff Mussard - [geoff@mussard.org.uk](mailto:geoff@mussard.org.uk) or (020) 8650 8389  
*Please leave a message or contact number if you do not get a reply.*

*The Big Christmas Sing: Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 4pm  
at St. Francis' Church, West Wickham BR4 0NW*

# SUPPORT YOUR OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS



Across the globe, **The Salvation Army** supports people in times of crisis throughout the year, and especially at Christmastime.

This is made possible by the generosity of people in communities around the world.

This year, we anticipate that there will be many people who will need our help,

**With your help**, The Salvation Army in **New Addington** will ensure that gifts are provided to those who need them most.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP... WE

FOR CHILDREN  
& ADULTS!

NEED;

BRAND NEW  
& UNOPENED  
PLEASE!

HATS/SCARVES/  
GLOVES  
(NO CLOTHING  
PLEASE)

Gifts  
Books  
Toys  
Toiletries  
Games

PLEASE DON'T  
WRAP THEM!

Please bring gifts on any Friday till Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December, or on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December as part of the Parade service.



# West Wickham Singers

present a programme of  
Christmas Music and Carols

Coffee and cake served afterwards.



Saturday December 9<sup>th</sup> at 11.00am

Emmanuel Church

The Grove

West Wickham, BR4 9JS

Entrance fee £5



Soprano  
Eleanor Pennell-Briggs

Baritone  
Giles Davies

# Allegr Singers

Conductor  
Stephen Anthony Brown

Organist  
Andrew MacMillan

Benjamin Britten

# A Boy was Born

Vaughan Williams  
Fantasia on Christmas Carols

Finzi  
In Terra Pax

7.45pm Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2023

St Francis of Assisi, Ravenswood Ave, West Wickham BR4 0PW

Book at [allegrisingers.org.uk](http://allegrisingers.org.uk) Adults £15, u18s £5



Registered Charity 287271

**Community Christmas Tree Festival**  
**St. Francis Church, Ravenswood Avenue,**  
**West Wickham BR4 0PW**

**Free**



**Entry**

Come along to St Francis Church to view the trees, enjoy some refreshments, listen to festive music and get ready for Christmas.

We will be raising money for Welcare in Bromley, a charity that provides practical and emotional support and advice to families in need.

The Christmas Tree Festival will be held between 9-16 December 2023 and the church will open at the following times:

- Saturday 9 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm
- Sunday 10 December – 12.00noon – 3.00pm
- Wednesday 13 December – 10.30am – 1.00pm
- Friday 15 December – 10.00am – 1.00pm
- Saturday 16 December (with Treasure Hunt) – 10.00am – 1.00pm





# *When Christmas Hurts.....*

*A Service of Remembrance  
and Hope*

*Tuesday 19th December  
2.30pm  
at  
Hayes Free Church  
111 Pickhurst Lane  
BR2 7HU*

# Story STORY STORY

## URC = YOUTH ASSEMBLY = = 2024 =

26 to 28 January 2024  
Whitemoor Lakes, Alrewas, Staffs

What will  
you discover?



### A WEEKEND TO HAVE YOUR SAY, MAKE FRIENDS AND FIND FELLOWSHIP:

- **Youth Decides** – discussions on issues that matter to us – leading to action and engaging the wider church
- **Workshops** – craft, drama, Bible studies, opportunities to grow your skills and thinking
- **Worship** – led by Youth Assembly band plus prayer room, late night communion
- **Entertainment** – campfire, karaoke, games and more

Book your place at

[linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024](https://linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024)

before 2 January 2024



or contact [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk)  
for a booking form

Cost on or before 13 Nov: ~~£120~~ Cost from 14 Nov: ~~£150~~

Please talk to your church and synod about help with funding. Paid for by Synod!

Year 10 students in England & Wales and S3 students in Scotland up to 25 years (inclusive)  
Creche available for children 0-5 years old.

Find out more about Youth Assembly at [bit.ly/Youth-Assembly](https://bit.ly/Youth-Assembly)

#URCYA24    [urcyouth](https://urcyouth.org)

For all young people with a connection to the United Reformed Church including:





# GROWING TOGETHER

COMMUNITY GARDEN



COME AND JOIN US

THURSDAYS 10AM | 1 PM  
ST FRANCIS CHURCH  
86 RAVENSWOOD AVENUE  
BR4 0PW

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS  
AVAILABLE

FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT - 0333 335 5209

Sports classes for walkers to 7 years



## Fri & Sat weekly classes

9.30am - Midday

Teeny Athletes - Walkers to 2 years

Didee Athletes - 2 - 3.5 years

Little Athletes - 3.5 to 5 years

Mini Athletes - 5 to 7 years

To book go to [www.miniathletics.com](http://www.miniathletics.com)

**Location:** Richmond Sports Hall, Emmanuel Church  
**Contact details:** Lara Doherty on [ldoherty@miniathletics.com](mailto:ldoherty@miniathletics.com)

*Kaleidoscope Domestic Abuse  
Support Group West Wickham*

*Free confidential support and  
advice on all types of Domestic  
Abuse*



*Last Saturday of the month  
1-3pm*

*The Emmanuel Church, The Grove,  
West Wickham, br49js*

*Contact Maxine on 07399718153  
for further details*

## *Coffee and Get-together*

### *Warm Welcome Fridays at Emmanuel Church*

*will continue into winter  
with a 'lite bite' lunch*

*10am till 4pm  
All welcome*

### *Sunday Coffee*

No coffee service on the first Sunday of the month, however, Messy Church would be pleased to welcome you at 10am for a cuppa.

On the other three Sundays in the month we will be looking forward to welcoming you in the Hewitt Room, after the service for coffee, biscuits and fellowship. We can remain at tables or spill into the vestibule, the sanctuary or outside, so there will be plenty of space.

*Janet Pickering and Pat Best*

## EMMANUEL ART GROUP

The Emmanuel Art Group usually meets on Thursday afternoons, 1pm to 4pm at Emmanuel URC Church, The Grove, West Wickham, BR4 9JS.

A friendly group, new members always welcome.

Please contact us before coming so that we can discuss what you would like to do and how we can help you.

- Sheila 02086882707 or
- John 07708194093 [john.band3@gmail.com](mailto:john.band3@gmail.com)

## Community Baby & Toddler Group



**Where:** Emmanuel Church, The Grove, West Wickham

**When:** Wednesdays 9.30am - 11.30am, term time

**Fee:** £3.00 per family

**Contact:** Zoe Favata

**Email:** [zoe\\_04@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:zoe_04@hotmail.co.uk)

**Mobile:** 07852 153115

We meet each week in the Richmond Hall, which is a large safe place. Mums, dads, grandparents and carers have a chance to catch up while watching their children play, build friendships and develop alongside their peers. There are many toys and resources allowing the children to play freely, as well as structured activities, story time and songs with actions.

Come along to our friendly inclusive group and try us out.



# Notices

BREAKFAST & CELEBRATION  
STORIES, GAMES, CRAFTS,  
ACTIVITIES

**3rd December**  
**@ 10 am in the Richmond Hall**

[www.emmanuelww.org.uk](http://www.emmanuelww.org.uk)  
[www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk)

For more details, please contact:  
Pat on 07714 808 498 or  
[patbest@btinternet.com](mailto:patbest@btinternet.com)

## **Parade Service**

**Sunday 3rd December**

Please remember to bring your gift  
for the Food bank

Details on page 27

## **Allegri Singers** ***A Boy Was Born***

At St. Francis Church, WW

**Saturday 9th December**  
**7:45pm**

Details on page 29

## **Big Christmas Sing**

**Saturday 2nd December at 4:00pm**

At St. Francis Church, WW

Details on page 26

## **West Wickham Singers** **Christmas Music & Carols**

**Saturday 9th December at**  
**11:00am**

At Emmanuel Church, WW

Details on page 28

## **Community Christmas Tree** **Festival**

**Friday 9th to 16th December**  
**(not daily)**

At St. Francis' Church, WW

Details on page 30

*Continued on next page*

# *Notices continued*

## **Candlelit service of remembrance**

Thursday 14th December at  
7:00pm

At Emmanuel Church, WW

## **Carols on the Green**

Saturday 16th December

At 4:00pm

At Emmanuel Church, WW

## **CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT**

**Sunday 17th December**

@ 6:30pm

@ Emmanuel Church

## **When Christmas Hurts...**

A Service of Remembrance and Hope

TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Time: 2.30 pm

At Hayes Free Church, WW

Details on page 31

## **Crib Service**

At 4:00pm on Christmas Eve

At Emmanuel Church, WW

## **All-Age Christmas Celebration Service**

Christmas Day

At 10:30am

At Emmanuel Church, WW

## **Watchnight Service**

Christmas Eve at 11:30pm

At Emmanuel Church, WW

*Continued on next page*

# *Notices continued*

## **Emmanuel Fellowship**

(Most) Tuesdays at 2.15pm  
in the Richmond Hall  
Everyone welcome

Details on page 14

## **Baby & Toddler Group**

Wednesdays at 9:30am

Details on page 37

## **Emmanuel Art Group**

Thursdays  
1:00pm to 4:00pm

Details on page 37

## **Growing Together Community Garden**

Thursdays  
10:00am to 1:00pm

St. Francis of Assisi

Details on page 33

## **Warm Welcome**

Fridays 10:00am to 4:00pm

Details on page 36

## Mini Athletics

Fridays & Saturdays  
9:30am to 12:00pm

In the Richmond Hall

Details on page 34



# *Emmanuel Church Contacts*



# Church Diary for December

Friday	1st	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Messy Church</b>
		<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering</b>
Tuesday	5th	2.15pm	Emmanuel Fellowship; Andy Thomas: 'Christmas – A Festive History' In the Richmond Hall (details on page 14)
Friday	8th	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)
Saturday	9th	11.00am	West Wickham Singers (details on page 28)
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Gathered/broadcast worship including Holy Communion led by Revd David Pickering</b>
			<b>Followed by Church meeting (details on page 8)</b>
Tuesday	12th	2.15pm	Emmanuel Fellowship; Fellowship Christmas Celebration In the Richmond Hall (details on page 14)
Thursday	14th	7.00pm	<b>Candlelit Service of Remembrance</b> led by Revd David Pickering
Friday	15th	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)
Saturday	16th	4.00pm	<b>Carols on the Green</b> (details on page 8) led by Revd David Pickering
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>17th</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Gathered/broadcast worship led by Accredited Lay Preacher Alan Kienlan</b>
		6.30pm	<b>Carols by Candlelight</b> (details on page 9) led by Revd David Pickering
Friday	22nd	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)

*Continued on next page*



# *Church Diary for December* *....continued*

<b>Sunday (Christmas Eve)</b>	<b>24th</b>	10.30am	Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering
		4.00pm	<b>Crib Service</b> (details on page 9)
		11.30pm	<b>Watchnight Service with Midnight Communion</b> led by Revd David Pickering
<b>Monday (Christmas Day)</b>	<b>25th</b>	10.30am	<b>All-Age Christmas Celebration Service</b> Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>28th</i>	<i>Last day for Emmanuel Life items</i>	
Friday	29th	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>31st</b>	<b>10.30am</b>	Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering

## *Church Diary for the start of January 2024*

Friday	5th	10.00am —4.00pm	Warm Welcome (details on page 36)
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Messy Church</b>
		<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Gathered/broadcast worship led by Revd David Pickering</b>
Tuesday	9th	2.15pm	Emmanuel Fellowship In the Richmond Hall (details on page 14)



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Kelsey Park round the corner from our Park Langley branch is perfect for walks with the family, why not come for a coffee and a cake or some light lunch in the newly refurbished store. All our branches would love for you to come in for breakfast, lunch or even a quick snack.

Our staff will always try to make you welcome and answer any questions you may have.

Check out the website for more details on bespoke cakes and all of our other ranges.

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Beckenham                      Downham                      Hayes  
 Kent, BR3 6QH                      Kent, BR1 4PQ                      Kent, BR2 7EJ

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1879

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