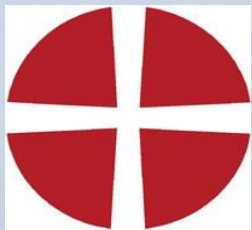


*A Christ Centred
Community Church
Winter 2024*



THE INDICATOR
Beckenham Methodist Church



SALVATION AND OTHER SHINY THINGS

This is a Christmas message, even if it may not look like it at first. I am a big fan of Christmas, for all the usual reasons. It's a season where, typically, people are nicer than normal to one another, a time when there is a focus on family and friends and a sharing of gifts. The decorations are also quite nice, and Laura and I went through central London just before last Christmas to admire all the beautiful lights. Theologically there is also a good reason to like the season – salvation!

I can't quite understand why people who do not follow Jesus are sometimes so against the idea of salvation. Like so many of the things around this time, it is a gift, it is sparkly, and above all, it is freely given to anyone who wants it.

I suppose the primary reason that people who are against the idea of salvation may have, is that it means that we are sinners who are unable to save ourselves. To anyone who claims that salvation (redemption/ the achievement of full humanity) can be achieved without an external agent, I would simply point to the economic, social, and spiritual mess the world is currently in. Before anyone goes harking back to 'when things were better', they weren't better – they were different, but still just as bad. We have had thousands of years as civilised humans to evolve to the point of being at peace with one another, caring for the vulnerable and worshipping (or not) in a respectful way. We're sadly no closer to this goal than we were thousands of years ago.

Why I said that salvation is appropriate for the season is that it is a gift. Our gift-giving at this season supposedly harks back to the acknowledgement that God gifted the world with the promise of salvation through the person and work of Jesus. We then took to gifting one another with presents to echo that self-offering of God. There is a crucial aspect to gift-giving that is seldom mentioned though – for something to be a gift, it needs to be received. The purpose of a gift does not lie in the purchase, or wrapping, or delivery of something ... it lies in it being received by someone. For so many people, Christianity has been something that they grew up with, fell into by chance or otherwise took on. The purpose of the Christian faith lies in the willingness of the individual to accept salvation as a gift from God. We need to acknowledge that neither our own strength, nor the philosophies and wisdom of our age, nor our relative social success are, in themselves, sufficient to make us fully human (i.e. to discover and express the image of God which is inherent in our being). We need an external agent to act on our lives, broaden our horizons (to allow us to include eternity in our vision) and show us how to become fully human.

I know that to describe salvation as ‘sparkly’ will irritate some people, but what I mean is that it is attractive. It has a lustre to it that invites us to turn it over in our minds, to look at our reflection in its brilliant surface. The promise of salvation through Christ is so much more than a ‘How To’ for life on earth. It embraces the unknown vastness of space and time and invites us to become part of their eternal dance. We become part of a bigger story – not just the earthly story, but part of something that both embraces it and extends beyond it.

How dull must people be to turn away from the offer to explore the possibility of being part of such an extensive and positive story? Salvation lifts us from fear of the unknown, however that may manifest itself, to a place where we are part of a never-ending story of inter-galactic love.

Finally, the offer of salvation is for all. We cannot conceive of the generosity of a God who will invite everyone to their feast. Whenever we may try to stop Jesus from talking to the despised, the downtrodden or the socially unacceptable, he simply steps past us and embraces them. Then he turns to us and reminds us that we have received no more, nor any less salvation than any of them. The work of salvation may be greater in one case than another, the cost may be higher in one case than another, but the gift remains the same. It is an invitation to be made whole and to journey through life and death as part of a bigger, more beautiful story than we ever could conceive.

A blessed Christmas to you and yours from me and mine.

Duncan

EDITORS' NOTE



We hope you find this Winter edition of The Indicator of interest. We will always be pleased to have any articles or suggestions for the future, so please let us have them. Thank you.

Valerie and Christine

R N I B

See differently

ROYAL INSTITUTE for the BLIND

This is a gentle reminder to save your postage stamps as hopefully we will all get more mail over Christmas. The collection box is on the table at the entrance to the atrium. Many thanks.

Ena

Happy Birthday Greetings to all those celebrating them in December/January/February.

TOP OF THE PEW 2024

This year's competition had fewer participants than most years but the intention is to try and continue this annual competition in which all churches and places of worship in the Borough of Bromley are invited to join. We are one of the few churches with a continuous record of participation since it all began in the late 1970s. We had previously reached the semi-final on three occasions and were able to repeat that feat this year, although it only meant beating two other teams on the way (Christ Church URC and the Neighbourhood Church). We were pipped at the post (literally on the very last question) in this year's semi final by St. Joseph's who

themselves were well beaten by reigning champions St. Augustine's in the final. Many thanks to my fellow team members Sandra, David M and David B, Mary our scorer and to the loyal band of supporters. Better luck next time as we always say!

DJ

THE WIDMORE CIRCUIT

On 1st September the Bromley, Orpington and Chislehurst circuits came together to form the new Widmore Circuit. The inauguration service was held at Farrington's School, Chislehurst.

A good number of members from our church attended this service, sharing communion together and forming new connections with each other. The Chairman of the London District, Revd Dr Jonathon Dean, conducted the inauguration and also welcomed the Rev Hannah Faal-Heim to the new circuit. The service was very well attended and followed by a picnic.



PRAYER TIME



Not only in the little group which meets
before Service on a Sunday but
LET US ALL PRAY for **PEACE**
everywhere
for **PEOPLES** everywhere
for **PARDON** everywhere
for **COMPASSION** everywhere

Longing for peace, our world is troubled,
Longing for hope, many despair,
Your word alone has power to save us,
Make us your living voice.

Christ be our light!

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1945)

Valerie

VERY PUNNY

What is a dentist's favourite hymn?

Crown Him with Many Crowns

MUSICAL NOTES BY DJ

As I write we are looking forward to a concert to be held in the Church on Saturday 30th November involving John Webber's three choirs, Beckenham Junior Choir, Youth Voices and the Elm Singers. I do hope many will come and support them at 6pm that evening when I understand our own Nehara Fernando will be featuring with an organ solo. We are really appreciating her regular contributions to our services.

Looking ahead, The South London Singers are staging a free Carol Concert in the church on Saturday 14th December at 7.45pm (donations at the door will also be welcome). An evening of traditional carols and Christmas music for choir and audience is guaranteed and this will be Nick Wibberley's final performance with the Choir as he hands over the reins to his successor Chris Braime in January. We hope to pack the church out that evening for the beginning of Christmas celebrations.

On Sunday 22nd we will have our own Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols at 6pm and it's hoped to have a small choir of Church members for that occasion as is traditional. Look out for the announcements about that but I'm pleased to say that Nehara has agreed to play for us that evening.

DJ



THE SOUTH
LONDON
SINGERS
PRESENT

SATURDAY
14 DECEMBER
2024
7.45PM



**A FREE
CHRISTMAS
CAROL CONCERT**

Join us for an evening of festive cheer, including choral
Christmas classics and sing-along audience carols

**BECKENHAM METHODIST CHURCH
BROMLEY ROAD BR3 5JE**

RESERVE YOUR FREE TICKET AT [SOUTHLONDONSINGERS.ORG.UK](https://southlondonsingers.org.uk)
SUPPORT US IN BRINGING MUSIC TO THE COMMUNITY | DONATIONS WELCOME

South London Singers | Registered Charity No. 800934



A MESSAGE FROM JOY'S KITCHEN – Winter 2024

Hello from me, Chloe, the new manager of Joy's Kitchen and what a Joy it has been, getting to know all of you that have visited over the last three months! Thank you for being so welcoming and supportive.

We have had a busy few months here at Joy's Kitchen with Tuesday and Thursday remaining the busiest, due to custom from lots of people from the various Church user groups. The new window sign, advertising the cafe seems to have brought us some new passing trade too, as we've recently noticed some new faces calling in as well.

We have successfully implemented our occasional bakers' form and have had lots of lovely donations of delicious cake. The form really is very simple, so if you enjoy baking and you haven't yet baked for us then please do, as we are always happy to receive more cake.

Highlights from the last three months for me have been: Getting to know all of the fabulous volunteers who keep Joy's Kitchen going, especially our team of volunteers from Bromley Mencap.

Trying Karin's delicious apple and sultana cake, usually available on a Thursday. I can't recommend it enough. Visits from my children – who seemed to be absolutely amazed by me cooking their lunch! Also, from DJ and Mary, their first visit purely as customers, despite being an

important part of the volunteer team for years. I did feel the pressure cooking for Mary, knowing she used to manage TCs, but they both left happy - phew!

We will be offering a festive menu for the first three weeks of December, before we close on 19 December, for two weeks over Christmas and New Year. The special menu will include turkey, brie and cranberry toasties, non-alcoholic mulled wine and homemade mince pies. So, if you haven't popped in yet to say hello, it would be the perfect opportunity; we look forward to welcoming you all this festive season.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at Joy's Kitchen.

Chloe, Joy's Kitchen

CHURCH EVENTS:-

By the time the Indicator comes out you will know that we held a successful Ploughmans supper and quiz on the 26th October. As reported in the notices we raised **£90**.

Our thanks again to Christine Pope for her great quiz that we all enjoyed and also to all those who helped on the day.

We are pleased to be able to let you know that the coffee morning and sale, held on on Saturday 23rd November, and additional sale after church on Sunday raised **£244.10**.

The combined total is £334.10 and this will all be donated to Living Well. A big thank you to all who helped on the day, brought lots of lovely things to sell and not forgetting those who bought them.

Full details of events and services over Christmas can be found elsewhere in the magazine.

Valerie/Christine



CHURCHES TOGETHER in BECKENHAM

The local churches continue to meet on a regular basis and are an active group. Information on each other's activities are shared and where possible supported by each other. You will find details in our weekly notices of activities being held locally at which everyone will be welcomed.

As I reported earlier in the year a Walk of Witness took place on Good Friday. This was very well attended this year and the Green has already been booked for next years Walk so put Good Friday in your diary.

Due to changes in the Church of England rules they will not be joining in a pulpit swop for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. However there will be some events held in various local churches and details will be advertised once finalised.

CTiB have held several very successful Lent courses over the last few years. I am pleased to be able to report that a Lent course is currently in the planning stages for 2025. This has always been a very successful course and has been held every two years. Full details will be available in the new year.

David Keall and Rita Bishop continue to join me as representatives to the clergy/lay meetings and if anyone has any questions or would like more information, please speak to any of us.

Christine

OUR VISIT TO TOKYO

Jacky and I have just had four weeks in Japan with our son and his family. We've been to Japan several times before but this time we stayed exclusively in Tokyo to concentrate on the many aspects of that fascinating city.



Tokyo is a city of about 35M people. It is well organised, clean, efficient. The Japanese are a disciplined people in many ways; which side of the pavement or escalator to walk is very important, as is always waiting for the Green man before

crossing the road. When waiting for a train the place to stand is marked, very important at rush hour. And no-one eats, drinks or talks on a mobile phone on the train; that would be considered very rude and inconsiderate. People are very helpful to visitors who look lost. If you're standing trying to make sense of a map or one of the many information boards spread around the city it won't be long before a very polite Japanese comes up and says 'May I help you?' The trains run on time, they pull up precisely where they should on the platform and the on-board information appears in English as well as the three Japanese alphabets. As a result it's easy to get around Tokyo on the subway system though it's also easy to get lost in some of the stations if your concentration slips for a moment or two. There are stories, apocryphal but almost credible, of people being lost in Shinjuku station for hours and days at a stretch.

The old Tokyo was largely destroyed in the Second World War. The great rebuilding effort began in the late 1940s and the city now is noticeably more modern in its architecture and layout than, say, London or Paris. The city also famously stands on a geological faultline and earthquakes are a constant feature of life. It's not unusual to feel a tremor or to see the pictures on the wall start to sway. The earthquake regulations are updated constantly and strict building regulations govern the construction of the huge towers that form the skyline. Our son works on the 30th floor of a tower overlooking the Imperial Palace gardens; the tower is built to sway when the earth moves. It does sway and no-one thinks it out of the ordinary. They know that they will get the next big earthquake one day but until then no-one gets excited.



Most Japanese people are atheist in the sense that they don't have a concept of a personal God who is to be worshipped. They do, however, have a strong spiritual tradition expressed in formal gardens, and in the many Shinto shrines and

Buddhist temples which are scattered throughout the city, often tucked away on corners or in a side street, barely noticed by visitors, or crouching at the foot of some huge tower. Some of the shrines, however, are themselves very large, very old and treasured symbols of Japan's history and spiritual legacy. The Meiji Jingu shrine, for example, is a national monument much visited by Japanese as well as by tourists. The huge Kamakura Buddha is another symbol of Japan's spiritual history. Christianity is a very small presence; less than 2% of the population are Christian, despite Christian missionaries being present in Japan since the Jesuits first reached Yokohama in the 16th century. The Jesuits do have one success to their name: the Roman Catholic cathedral in Tokyo was constructed in the 1950s and is a masterpiece in steel and concrete with the most amazing acoustics. We were lucky enough to be there when a choir was rehearsing and the sound was truly ethereal.

We were in Tokyo for family reasons of course. Our son married a Japanese girl, Yuko, and their life with their two children, Maya 11 and Kazuya 8, is in Tokyo. We enjoyed meals and games like Monopoly and Cluedo. We watched

sport practices like volleyball and more cultural pursuits like taiko drumming. We had a family meal with Yuko's parents - they speak little English and we have very little Japanese. Our granddaughter was translator/interpreter and kept the conversation going. The meal was traditionally Japanese; it had endless courses using chopsticks and all seeming to consist of raw fish until, blessedly, spoons came with the ice cream.

The trip was hugely enjoyable and we were very fortunate with the weather; the average temperature was in the mid 20s until early November. We're not sure when we'll be able to go again but ideas are being discussed already.

David

FUND FOR HUMAN NEED



Here are some of the messages of thanks received by FHN from recipients of an 'award' published in FHN's current newsletter.

I just want to express my immense gratitude for this payment. I know you mention it is a small payment but for me this is gigantic and I am so grateful that I'm able to receive this at a time where a lot of people are in need. I am honestly

struggling with life in all areas and this has brought a smile to my face when I've cried for weeks on end. I hope that when I am in a better position, I can donate the funds back to yourselves to help someone else out of a bad situation too. Thank you so much.

Thank you so so much. It helps a LOT. I really appreciate it. Thank you.

Thanks. I'm starting a new job next week so it will definitely help until I get paid.

I received it. I just want to say thank you very much. I didn't even expect to get a reply & this week I literally had 0 money in my bank account you guys really saved me, I really appreciate it thank you & God bless.

Thank you so much for the provision. Kind regards,
Casework Coordinator, Refugee Services, British Red Cross,
Leicester.

I have received the amount of £100. Thank you FHN.
Thank you so very much for confirming and providing these needed funds for our clients. Your support is invaluable and very much appreciated. Love to Learn, Educational Case Worker Katherine Low Settlement.

Thank you so very much for this. The client is extremely grateful. Best wishes Advice Services Supervisor, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre.

Thanks to all those who give week by week for their after service tea/coffee.

Valerie

FLOWERS IN CHURCH



ROTA for December 2024, January, February 2025

1 st December	Comfort Lawson
8 th December	Jan Duck
15 th December	Valerie Wilson
25 th December	Christmas
29 th December	---- Circuit Service at Beckenham
5 th January	Barrie Stewart
12 th January	----
19 th January	Brenda Hotham
26 th January	Jan Duck
2 nd February	Ena Hamblyn
9 th February	Valerie Wilson
16 th February	----
23 rd February	Sheila Priestman

You will see that there are three Sundays in the coming months when there is nobody down to provide/donate towards flowers; if there is anyone who would like to do so, please speak to me as soon as possible. Thank you.

Margaret

ECO HARVEST LUNCH 2024

The aim was to prepare a meal using ingredients that had as small a carbon footprint as possible. We reckon that about 85% of the food offered on the day was grown locally. That's a great achievement and definitely worth celebrating.

A huge thank you too, to everyone who grew food, cooked food, ate food and helped in any other way.

It was a happy and successful day and an added bonus is that it should help us in our quest for the Eco Church Silver Award. If anyone wishes to see the lovely photos please speak to Christine or Sandra.

Don't forget to keep reading the eco tips and messages and, where you can, implement them. We'd also love to hear any feedback you have.

Once again a huge thank you to all.

The Church Eco Group



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
ARRANGEMENTS
At
BECKENHAM METHODIST CHURCH

8th December 10.30am	Gift Service for Living Well
14th December 7.45pm	SLS Carol Concert
22nd December 6.00pm	Carol Service
25th December 11.00am	Christmas Morning Service
29th December 10.30am	Circuit Service

ALL ARE WELCOME



SUNDAY SERVICES

Beckenham Methodist Church, Bromley Road
at 10.30am (unless otherwise stated)

1 st December	Revd Duncan MacBean + Holy Communion
8 th December	Jim Holman
15 th December	David Lemmon
22 nd December	Revd Duncan MacBean – Carol Service at 6.00pm
CHRISTMAS EVE:	Revd Karen George – Circuit Service + Holy Communion at BROMLEY at 11.15pm
CHRISTMAS DAY	Revd Duncan MacBean – Morning Service at 11.00am
29 th December	Christina Messenger Circuit Service at Beckenham
5 th January	Revd Duncan MacBean – Covenant + Holy Communion
12 th January	Chris Price
19 th January	Maggie Ayres
26 th January	Mike Tinson
2 nd February	Revd Duncan MacBean + Holy Communion
9 th February	Revd David Morris
16 th February	Deacon Laura Macbean
23 rd February	Dr Clive Timehin



CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The foodbank needs your help!

**To help feed someone in need this Christmas:
fill a bag with one of each of the following
and drop it to us 10/12/13/14 December.
(Drop off times on our website)**

Tinned Ham/Corned Beef
Tinned Salmon
Tinned Veg
Tinned Fruit
Tinned Soup
Long Life Milk
Coffee
Tea bags
Hot Chocolate

Jam/Marmalade
Rice Pudding/Custard
Festive Biscuits
Festive Chocolates
Cereal
Pasta
Toilet Roll
Shampoo
Shower Gel

Nothing containing alcohol please



**Or donate what you can and we'll do the shopping for you!
£40 covers the cost of a full food parcel.**

www.livingwell.life
charity number: 1157385

USEFUL CONTACTS

Beckenham Methodist Church

(Registered Charity No. 1138006)

Bromley Road Church BR3 5JE

0208 650 2763

Minister: Rev Duncan MacBean
orpchissuper@gmail.com

Senior Steward: Theo Farmer

Church Administrator (including room bookings):

Sarah Reed

Tel: 07570 230555

Email:- beckenhammethodistsbr3@gmail.com

*n.b. Normal working week is Tuesday to Thursday 10.30am to 2.30pm,
with Mondays from home.*

Brownies: Karen Millican

Guides: Karen Millican

Rangers Karen Millican

Beavers: Mandy Allen

Cubs: Robin Woodrow

Scouts: Gordon Wilson

Web Site: <http://www.beckenhammethodistchurch.co.uk>

