



UPPER TROSNANT BAPTIST CHURCH

December 2018

Newsletter



**"God is light; in Him there is no darkness."
(I John 1 verse 5)**

**Sunday Services at
11.00 am and 4.00 pm**

A very warm welcome to you

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Newsletter Items:

We are always happy to receive items for the newsletter.
 Please email articles or features for the January 2019 edition to
uppertrosnantbc@gmail.com by **Sunday 9th December 2018**

Letter from Pastor Richard

It's that time again!

Season's greetings to you all. As you read this, no doubt preparations for the Christmas season will be well under way. There always seems to be so much to do doesn't there? There's all of the cards to write (remember that you can send one card to everyone at Trosnant!), presents to buy, food to get and prepare, lists of things that have to be done...



All of this is very important to make sure that Christmas time is enjoyable for everyone. And there is something else that we need to prepare – our hearts. What do I mean? By our hearts, I mean the part of us that determines what matters most. And while all these things that we mentioned are important, is there something more important?

The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world – the most important event in human history. Why should that be? Because it is God himself who came, in the person of his Son. And if God has come into this world, surely that makes it very important indeed. And we need to make sure that we are preparing our hearts by finding time to remember and rejoice that he came.

And he came for a particular reason – so that we could know God for ourselves. In the words of John's Gospel:

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1 v 14 (NIV))

And we can know him! In his life, death and resurrection he has done everything that we need for that to happen. He has dealt with all the wrong things that stop us knowing him. Come and find out more at our Christmas services. During December I will be preaching a series of Christmas sermons entitled, 'Just the right one – Jesus' coming in the Epistles.'

A very happy Christmas to you all.

Love in Jesus,

Pastor Richard

Pastor's Preaching Schedule for December

December 9	am: Just the right son	1 John 5
	pm: Just the right saviour	1 Timothy 1 v 15
December 16	am: Just the right plan	1 Timothy 3 v 16
	pm: Carol Praise: Traditional and modern carols by candlelight	
December 23	am: Just the right word	Hebrews 1 v 1 – 4
	pm: TRADITIONAL CAROL SERVICE BY CANDLELIGHT	
December 25	10 am: Just the right gift	2 Corinthians 8 v 9
December 30	am: Just the right time	Galatians 4 v 4 – 7
	pm: Just the right attitude	Philippians 2 v 6 - 11

Lighting the Advent Candles...

The word 'Advent' means 'Coming', and every year at Upper Trosnant we enjoy following the Christian tradition of counting down to the birth of Jesus by lighting four candles to remind us of God's promises about the Messiah. Then in our special service on Christmas morning, we light a final candle as we celebrate His birth. If you would like to light a candle and read a short Scripture passage during one of the services in December, please speak to Pastor Richard. be provided – but also a delicious fellowship lunch at the end!

Greetings from Doreen

Among the millions of heavenly lights established with accuracy on the fourth day of creation, one had awesome responsibility: consider St. Matthew's account of the first Christmas when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us – and we beheld His glory (St. John chapter 1).

Matthew reports, "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is He who has been born, King of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and we have come to worship Him." Perfect timing – set in motion before time had fully begun. "And the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the young child was. And they bowed down and worshipped Him!"

Many circumstances prohibited the pleasant, peaceful presence of Jesus in clean hay in a carefully sanitised manger as shown on most Christian Christmas cards! Caesar Augustus decreed that everyone in the entire Roman world should return to his own birthplace to be counted for a census. As a result of this decree, prophecy concerning the birthplace of the Messiah was fulfilled (see Micah chapter 5). Mary's pregnancy was almost completed, when Joseph and Mary set off for Bethlehem. A donkey, a bumpy road, maybe, early birth pains – and when they reached Bethlehem, there was no room vacant for the weary couple. So, as St. Luke writes, "Mary wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room available for them." And, maybe, no friendly faces to welcome the child – only people who might have picked up the gossip from other people from Nazareth. "It's Mary, who was pledged to be married to Joseph. But before they came together – she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit!!"

The steadfast stars continue to shine. God always accomplishes His plans and purposes. When we do not know what to do, wise advice is given in 2 Chronicles chapter 20: "We have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON YOU."

Today we face a vast army of disbelief, dislike, distrust, even direct ridicule for our faith in Jesus, Saviour of the world. Look up and rejoice – your plan for time and eternity was affirmed before time itself. Enjoy the carol with this chorus:

"O star of wonder, Star of Light,
Star of royal beauty bright,
Westward leading Still proceeding,
Guide us to your perfect Light."

Look up. The God Who lit the Christmas star before time began knows all you need and cares for you – always.

With love, Doreen

Treasured Memories of David Wigley....

It was our pleasure to share our early years in Trosnant with David. He was always such fun to be with that we loved his company. He loved our mother Dorothy Gist and she loved him! Sunday evenings were so special when he came to our house after chapel. Mam used to cook a 'fry up' for our supper which was special for us all. We used to have a sing around the piano.

We remember David and Kenny Blake practicing 'the old rugged cross' and singing it at the top of their voices at anniversary – which was a huge event in Trosnant with the church being filled to capacity and extra seats in the aisles. Mam would always make us a new dress for the occasion and David always looked very smart! We had a very large tiered area where we children would sat – which covered the pulpit area and was very impressive. Our memories growing up in Trosnant have always been so special!

Marion and Cynthia Gist

Ask the Pastor



That may sound a strange question, with an obvious answer. And so, why am I discussing it?

Recently I was speaking to somebody who had been listening to a Christian speaker, who said that it was wrong to celebrate Christmas. The argument went that we are not told to do so in Scripture, we are only instructed to remember Jesus' death. In addition to that, it is only a pagan festival which has become commercialised.

I must admit straight away, as you may have gathered from elsewhere, that I am a massive fan of Christmas. I love the weeks leading up to it; the sights, sounds and smells. It is lovely to send and receive cards and presents. As I think I have mentioned before, it gives me a lovely warm feeling.

I appreciate that not everyone feels the same way about the season, sometimes Christmas brings about sad memories, and it can be associated with things in people's lives that are not so good. And, even though 25th December may be the date of a pagan festival, we don't have to use it in a pagan way, we can worship God on that day. And I agree that there is a lot of commercialism associated with the festive season, but we don't have to be caught up in that either.

But, is it *wrong* to celebrate Christmas?

Now, it is true that we are not told to celebrate Jesus' birth in the Bible. And there are many more verses about his death and resurrection than his birth. But that does not make it wrong.

Just consider what an amazing thing happened. God, the one in control of all things, the one who is so awesome and mighty that we cannot understand Him, came here, to this earth, where we live, as a human being. Surely that is worth celebrating.

And yes, His purpose in coming was actually to die! He came to be the Saviour of the world, as the woman at the well in John's Gospel came to realize. As He died, He took the punishment for sins that had separated us from God. And now we can know God. That is why it is important that we remember His death, which we do, as we take the bread and wine at Communion, and with His resurrection at Easter (Another pagan festival!).

But, in order for Jesus to die, He had to be born in the first place. And the fact that He was born in such humility, put in an animal feeding trough, is significant. He identified with us as human beings. And we must never forget that. Surely that is worth celebrating!

Christmas is also a great time to share this message with others. We can tell the world the good news that a Saviour has been born. I found an old Christmas carol which I don't think is sung very much these days, but it sums this up well.

*Rejoice and be merry
in songs and in mirth!
O praise our Redeemer;
all mortals on earth!
For this is the birthday
of Jesus our King,
Who brought us salvation,
His praises we'll sing!*

(from an old Gallery Carol)

And so, should we celebrate Christmas? It's a definite YES from me!

Pastor Richard

A Song for Christmas

God give us eyes this Christmas
to see the shining star,
and give us ears to hear the song
of Angels from afar.
And with our eyes and ears attuned
to a message from above,
Let 'Christmas Angels' speak to us
of hope and faith and love.
Hope to light our pathway
when the way ahead is dark,
Hope to sing through stormy days
with the sweetness of the lark,
Faith to trust in things unseen
and to know beyond all seeing,
That it is in our father's love
we live and have our being,
and *Love* to break down barriers
of colour, race, and creed,
Love to see and understand
and help all those in need.

Helen Steiner Rice

Chosen for the Newsletter by Rhoswyn Williams

From the B.M.S. World Mission Stamp Bureau

Thank you all who have recently donated material to the BMS Stamp Bureau. So far this year the Stamp Bureau has passed £13,000 to BMS and we are on course to donate more than the £15,000 that we did last year. We could not do this without your donations. So please keep the donations of stamps, albums, covers, coins and postcards coming. Also a big thank you to those who sort the stamps into Great Britain and Foreign/Commonwealth. Sorting helps me speed up the selling of material.

Best wishes, **Ken Flint**

Don't forget to save the stamps from your Christmas cards this year, and place them in the box in the Vestry!

200 Years of Silent Night

Did you know that Christmas Eve 2018 will be the 200th anniversary of the world's favourite carol? The song that we know as 'Silent Night' is sung in hundreds of languages and in hundreds of thousands of churches all around the globe, and it never fails to come top in polls of peoples' favourite carols. Some of the stories about how it came to be written, however, are nothing more than legends.

It was on 24 December 1818 the beautiful words and haunting melody of '*Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht*' were heard for the very first time, sung in German to a guitar accompaniment, in a small village church in Oberndorf in the Austrian Tyrol. The author of the new carol was Father Joseph Mohr, assistant pastor of the Church of St Nicholas. In 1816, while serving as a young priest in the isolated pilgrim church of Mariapfarr, he wrote a simple four-verse poem reflecting on the night of Jesus' birth. Joseph's grandfather lived nearby and some writers speculate that he may have been inspired by the divine beauty of the stars above as he walked through the snowy mountains to visit the old man. In 1817 Joseph was transferred to Oberndorf, near Salzburg, and in December 1818 he showed his poem to his friend Franz Gruber who was a musician and schoolteacher, and conductor of the church choir. Joseph asked Franz to write a melody to sing the poem at midnight mass – although nobody knows why he particularly wanted to sing a new carol. Many stories have since come to be told about the carol's origins; for example that hungry mice had chewed through the bellows of the church organ, and a new song had to be hurriedly written to be sung to the guitar instead! In fact, there was plenty of time for it to be practiced in advance of the first performance, at which Joseph played the guitar accompaniment himself while the choir was conducted by Franz Gruber.

Four verses?! In fact, both the tune and the words of Silent Night have changed significantly over the past two centuries. The earliest surviving manuscript dates from about 1820 and shows that the carol then had 6 verses, sung in four-part harmony by the choir, with the last line repeated by the congregation. In the years since, it has been adapted rearranged numerous times. One of the first people to make it famous was Karl Mauracher, a master organ builder from the Ziller

valley, who was hired to repair the Obendorf organ. He obtained a copy of the lovely carol and shared it widely as a 'Tyrolean Folk Song.' Then, in a way that may remind us of the story of the 'Sound of Music', two travelling families of folk singers called the Strassers and the Rainers started including the carol in their concerts, performing in the city of Leipzig in December 1832, to an altered tune similar to the one we know today. In 1855 the Rainer family performed the carol before the Austrian Emperor, Franz I, and the Russian Tsar, Alexander I.

Franz Gruber died in the town of Hallein, where Joseph Mohr's guitar can be seen in the local museum. In 1848 Joseph Mohr died penniless in the Alpine village of Wagrain, and he was described as 'a reliable friend of mankind, toward the poor, a gentle, helping father.' The greatest memorial of him, however, will surely be his beautiful carol, and its timeless message of heavenly peace.

<p>1. Silent night! Holy night! All's asleep, one sole light, Just the faithful and holy pair, Lovely boy-child with curly hair, Sleep in heavenly peace! Sleep in heavenly peace!</p> <p>2. Silent night! Holy night! God's Son laughs, O how bright. Love from your holy lips shines clear, As the dawn of salvation draws near, Jesus, Lord, with your birth! Jesus, Lord, with your birth!</p> <p>3. Silent night! Holy night! Brought the world peace tonight, From the heavens' golden height Shows the grace of His holy might Jesus, as man on this earth!</p>	<p>4. Silent night! Holy night! Where today all the might Of His fatherly love us graced And then Jesus, as brothers embraced. All the peoples on earth! All the peoples on earth!</p> <p>5. Silent night! Holy night! Long we hoped that He might, As our Lord, free us of wrath, Since times of our fathers He hath Promised to spare all mankind! Promised to spare all mankind!</p> <p>6. Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds first see the sight. Told by angelic Alleluia, Sounding everywhere, both near and far: "Christ the Saviour is here!"</p>
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Services/Meetings

Sunday 2 nd	11.00 am	Rev. Richard Harrison.
	4.00 pm	Rev. Richard Harrison (Communion).
Sunday 9 th	11.00 am	Pastor Richard Miles.
	4.00 pm	Pastor Richard Miles.
Sunday 16 th	11.00 am	Pastor Richard Miles (Communion)
	4.00 pm	Carol Praise: a mix of traditional and modern carols by candlelight.
Sunday 23 rd	11.00am	Pastor Richard Miles.
	4.00 pm	Candlelit Carol Service.
Christmas Day	10 am	Christmas Service with Pastor Richard.
Sunday 30 th	11.00 am	Pastor Richard Miles (BMS Collection).
	4.00 pm	Informal Service in the Hall with Pastor Richard Miles (BMS Collection).

Outreach Services

Monday 3 rd	3.00 pm	Service for residents at Ty Bryn
Monday 17 th	2.00 pm	Service for residents at Ty Ceirios

Sisterhood Speakers

Tuesdays	4 th	Rev. Richard Harrison.
at 3 pm	11 th	Christmas Tea, with Pastor Richard.
	19 th	No meeting.
	25 th	No meeting.

Midweek Bible Study and Prayer Meetings

Wednesdays	5 th	Pastor Richard.
6.50 – 8.30 pm	12 th	Carol singing.
	19 th	Prayer and mince pies.
	26 th	No meeting.

Ladies' Prayer Retreat

Please join us on Tuesday 4th December for our 'Christmas Special', which will be led by the Covenant Players. Coffee is served from 10 – 10.30 am, and everyone is warmly invited to stay and share in some delicious Christmas refreshments after the meeting.

Ladies' Fellowship Meeting

All ladies are invited to join us on our Evening Out, on Tuesday 11th December. Please see Annmarie for more details.

Eastern Valley Men's Christian Fellowship

Gentlemen, please join us on Tuesday 11th December at 7.00 for an evening of Christmas Fellowship.

Open House

Ladies and Gentlemen are invited to join us from 2.00 – 4.00 pm on Monday 10th December, for a time of friendship and light refreshments. **Please note our earlier meeting time during the winter months.**

Prayer in the Vestry:

Monday mornings, December 3rd, 10th and 17th from 8.45 - 9.45 am.

Prayer Meeting for Christians Against Poverty:

Thursday 6th December - 10.30 am, at the Lighthouse Church.

Monday Night Prayer Meetings in Torfaen

10 th December, 7 pm	Prayer for S Club and children's and youth work in our valley, at Upper Trosnant.
17 th December, 7 pm	Prayer for S Club and children's and youth work in our valley, at Upper Trosnant.

Leadership Team Meeting: No meeting in December.

Weekly Rotas**Cleaning Rota**

December 3 rd	Phil Norman
December 10 th	Janet Pollard & Jonathan Pollard
December 17 th	Keith and Barbara Fordham
December 24 th	Janet Jones
December 31 st	Phil Norman

Sunday 2 nd	Flowers	Rhoswyn Williams
	Door – am	Clare Hopkins
	Teas – am	Yvonne Walker and Clare Hopkins
	Door/Offering – pm	Priscilla Pearson

Sunday 9 th	Flowers	Priscilla Pearson
	Door – am	Barbara Fordham
	Teas – am	Barbara Fordham
	Door/Offering – pm	Jill Morley

Sunday 16 th	Flowers	Christmas Flowers
	Door – am	Anthea Scott
	Teas – am	Rhoswyn Williams
	Door/Offering – pm	Clare Hopkins

Sunday 23 rd	Flowers	Christmas Flowers
	Door – am	Pam Charles
	Teas – am	Clare Hopkins
	Door/Offering – pm	Jill Morley

Sunday 30 th	Flowers	Doreen Harrison
	Door – am	Anthea Scott
	Teas – am	Rhoswyn Williams

Birthdays in December

3 rd	Barbara Fordham
17 th	Eric Jones
19 th	Mike Martin
20 th	Rhoswyn Williams

Please Pray For...

- Pray for Pastor Richard and Annmarie as they work among us.
- Pray for our services, that God will be glorified in Pontypool.
- Pray for our Christmas services, that we will reach many people with the good news of Jesus.
- Pray for a safe conclusion to the building work on the new ramp to the Hall, and for the safety of all who come to Upper Trosnant during the building works.
- Pray that the Lord will raise up new leaders and workers in our Church; especially new S Club leaders on Sunday afternoon.
- Pray for our organisations and meetings: Open House, the Ladies' Fellowship, Sisterhood, the Men's Meeting...
- Pray for the work of Christians Against Poverty as the Christmas season brings great strain to many on a low income.
- Pray for Barbara's sister, Brenda, as she needs and awaits a life-saving heart transplant.
- Pray for all those we know who work for God, including Mike and Sue Martin in Exmouth; Margaret and Roy Collins-Reese in Toulouse; Sue and Dave Verwey in Japan; Chris and Debbie Drew in Nepal; Dale and Naomi with Covenant Players.
- Pray for our brother Ron Saunders that God will bless him in his new home; and for all who are prevented by age or infirmity from worshipping with us on Sundays.

Pray for those who are unwell or who are recovering from illness or accidents, including: Doreen Dixon, Keith Fordham, Doreen Harrison, Helen Norman, Janet Pollard, Ann Price, Anthea Scott, Jo Shanahan, Ann Stephens, Greta and Derek Wagg, Marion Webb, Malcolm Williams...

Please join us for

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 16th December at 4.00 pm
A Mix of Modern and Traditional Carols

Sunday 23rd December at 4.00 pm
All your favourite Traditional Carols

Both services will be followed by tea, coffee, and mince pies.



Contact Details

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