

## Sunday Services

Evening services are at 6.30pm unless otherwise shown.

### December

- 7th Gift service for HARP (led by Len Ward)  
Sue Manning (S)
- 14th Pam Smith  
Brian Gameson
- 21st Pam Freeborn  
Carol Service and Nativity, led by Brenda Gutberlet (4pm)
- 24th Christingle (4pm)
- 25th Christmas Day family service, Local Arrangement (10.30am)
- 28th Brenda Gutberlet (S)  
No evening service

### January

- 4th Roger Thomas  
No evening service
- 11th Brenda Gutberlet (Covenant Service)  
Diane Smith
- 18th Family Day (AAW), led by Worship Leaders  
No evening service
- 25th Hannah Bucke  
Brenda Gutberlet

*There may be changes from the Circuit Plan - the ones above are correct at the time of printing. All services are subject to change at short notice - see your printed notices for up to date information each Sunday.*

## Dates for your diary:

### December

- 6 Rochford Christmas Festival, West Street. We have a stall there. 12-6pm
- 7 Gift service for HARP, 11am
- 12 Film night at Hadleigh, *It's a Wonderful Life*, 7.30pm
- 18/20 Benfleet Choristers Christmas Concert 2008 at Benfleet Methodist Church, £6, 8pm
- 21 Carol Service & Nativity, 4pm
- 24 Christingle Service, 4pm
- 25 Christmas Day family service - come and show off your Christmas presents. Local Arrangement, 10.30 am.

### January

- 11 Covenant Service, 11am
- 18 Last day for Newsletter items
- 18 Family Day
- 18-25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

### February

- 1 Publication date for Rochford Methodist
- 1 HARP Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, St Michaels Church, Leigh Road, 6.30pm

### March

- 29 General Church Meeting, 4pm
- 29 Start of British Summertime - clocks go forward

### April

- 9 Maundy Thursday service at Hockley, 8pm
- 19 Women's Fellowship Anniversary

The Methodist Church 



Merry Christmas!

A peaceful and joyous  
Christmas to you from all at  
Rochford Methodist Church

(See page 6 to catch up on our  
celebrations this Christmas.)

# Dec 2008/ Jan 2009

The Newsletter of  
**Rochford Methodist Church**  
77-79 North Street  
Rochford  
SS4 1AD



I SURE HOPE MY WIFE LIKES MYRRH



PETER FINDS HIS FAITH TO BE MUCH STRONGER IN  
THE WINTER

# ROCHFORD Methodist

Rochford Methodist Church is a  
member of **Southend and Leigh  
Circuit**, part of the **Beds, Essex  
& Herts District**

[www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk](http://www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk)

# Just words on a piece of paper? Editorial

One problem we have as a church is getting our message over. No, not just telling people outside the organisation about ourselves and our beliefs, but telling our own congregation about what we're doing, and what we intend to do.

You are looking at one way of communicating now - our Newsletter. On top of this we have our Weekly Notices. They complement each other and are both intended to be taken home and used for reference.

But so often we hear 'nobody told me about ...'. Without intending to embarrass anyone, on one occasion we announced something, put it in the same edition of the Newsletter in three different places AND put in the Weekly Notices for a couple of weeks. We were still told 'I didn't know about it'. Sometimes it seems that what people are being told is just words on a piece of paper or sounds in the air. The 'Dates for your diary' section is just that - for you to write in your diary the items that may interest you for the future.

One important area of our church life is coming up during the next month - Christmas. We have special services as usual and they will be advertised in the usual places, as well as a special leaflet, so there's no excuse for not knowing about them.

But what is *your* main idea of Christmas? Even to many Christians the Christmas story is not seen as being relevant to everyday living. It is 'for the children', it is 'for the family', it is 'for singing carols', it is 'for the Nativity', it is 'for giving presents', it is 'for tradition', it is for eating the turkey, pudding, mince pies, nuts, chocolates . .

Is the story of the birth of Christ a cause for celebration for *you*? Do *you* find each year that sense of wonder that God loved you so much that he brought himself down to earth in the form of a baby - Jesus, his son, who 33 years later was sacrificed like a lamb. As a result, if we truly believe that Christ died for us and are really and truly sorry for the things we do wrong, then our place in Heaven is assured.

This wonderful offer is recorded in the Bible and we hear about it each year at Christmas - and Easter. These are not 'just words on a piece of paper or sounds in the air' this is a real offer from God and something for your 'Heavenly appointment diary' - make a special note of it!

The next planned publication date is 1st February 2009. Articles, etc, should be with Dave by 18th January please.

I prefer articles by email, floppy disc or typed with a good DARK original (because, being lazy, I can handle these without re-typing them!), but I am happy to receive them in any form - so long as I get *something* from you!  
Emails can be sent to me at either of the addresses shown in the box on the right.

The **Rochford Methodist** is published on behalf of Rochford Methodist Church. Opinions expressed in this newsletter may not be those of the Methodist Church.

**Minister:**  
Revd Brenda Gutberlet, 259 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7LF (01268) 770333.  
Email: brendagutberlet@btinternet.com  
**Editor:**  
Dave Dobbin, 130 Ashingdon Road, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1RR (01702) 544096  
email: dvdobbin@aol.com or rochfordmeth@aol.com

## What goes on at Rochford Methodist Church?

### Sunday

10.55 am FJ Club  
10.55 am Morning Service  
6.30 pm Evening Service

### Monday

2.30 - 4.30 pm Women's Fellowship (Sept - May)  
7.15 - 8.45 pm *Blossom on the Oasis*.

### Tuesday

9.30 - 11.30 am *Happy Hands* Baby and Toddler Group  
12.00 - 2.00 pm *Happy Hands* Baby and Toddler Group  
3.00 - 7.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing  
8.00 pm Wesley Guild (Oct-Apr)

### Wednesday

7.00 - 10.00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous

### Thursday

9.30 - 11.30 *Music Dreams* (for 0-2 years)  
3.45 - 7.30 pm Hildale School of Dancing  
7.30 - 9.30 pm Table Tennis

### Friday

8.00 pm Rochford Floral Group (2nd Friday of month)

### Saturday

9.00 am - 3.15 pm Hildale School of Dancing

The premises are available for use outside the above times. Contact Margaret Rayner on 544252 for more information.

### And in addition . .

Two open House Groups meet each month in a different place each time. One usually meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month and the other on the 3rd Wednesday. Look in the weekly notices for the dates and venues. A third House Group is for newer members of the Church and is by invitation only.

## Where do we get our words from?

When the words of hymns and worship are projected on the screen on Sundays we have a couple of ready-made sources.

If the preacher chooses something from Songs of Fellowship, the suppliers of the software have provided us with the words of all the songs, but we may still need to change the background and the typeface.

If we need to project words from Hymns and Psalms we have two options. The Family Friendly Churches Trust (Rev Mike Bossingham) has produced a set of slideshows. To make it easier, we keep a list of the ones we have with the computer. Unfortunately some of the early ones are not too clear and up until now we haven't been able to change them, but we are working on this.

If we still haven't got the words then we have to resort to typing them in ourselves.

You can help too by providing us with a wider selection of backgrounds.- what we would like are pictures with a suitable theme. If you have taken photos you think we might find useful, and are willing to let us use free of charge, let Dave know. They must show *lots* of sky, sea, wall, grass, etc, so we can display the words over the plain part of the picture. I must emphasise that *they must have been taken by you* as commercial pictures cannot be used without payment of royalties - and lots of money must change hands first!

---

A burglar broke into a house one night. He shone his torch around, looking for valuables; and when he picked up a CD player to place in his sack, a strange, disembodied voice echoed from the dark saying, 'Jesus is watching you.'

He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his torch off, and froze.

When he heard nothing more after a bit, he shook his head, promised himself a holiday after the next big haul, then clicked the light on and began searching for more valuables.

Just as he pulled the stereo out so he could disconnect the wires, clear as a bell he heard, 'Jesus is watching you.'

Freaked out, he shone his light around frantically, looking for the source of the voice. Finally, in the corner of the room, his torch beam came to rest on a parrot.

'Did you say that?' he hissed at the parrot.

'Yes,' the parrot confessed, then squawked, 'I'm just trying to warn you.'

The burglar relaxed. 'Warn me, eh? Who on earth are you?'

'Moses,' replied the bird.

'Moses?' the burglar laughed. 'What kind of people would name a bird Moses?'

The parrot responded: 'The kind of people that would name a Rottweiler Jesus.'

## From our Minister

Dear Friends,

A couple of years ago when on holiday in Northumberland, I visited an old Church which had a most unusual Christmas scene depicted on the walls. Sculpted into the walls from medieval times was a group of twelve wise men (magi) arriving at the manger and bearing gifts for the baby Jesus. Now you might be thinking apart from there being twelve and not three what is so surprising? Answer—they were all wearing Northumbrian kilts and some were playing the Northumbrian pipes! This was of course an attempt by a former generation to make the birth of the Saviour of the world relevant to people then of a different time and culture in England as compared to first century AD Israel.

That sculpture still speaks today for though the precious Gospel remains the same in every generation, how we present that message must be real and relevant for today's generation. Today we hear a great deal about 'communication problems'. As you share in Christmas celebrations ponder the wonder that the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ was and is God communicating with us, real and relevant for every time, place and generation. As the angels said to those startled shepherds, "To YOU this day in the city of David a Saviour has been born. He is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2: 11). The Apostle John writing of Jesus Christ said, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory..." (John 1: 14).

It is because Christ lives we can have hope and confidence, not in this uncertain world, but in HIM. What is certain is that life, (and our individual lives) are incomplete without Jesus Christ being central.

Therefore amidst the busy-ness of Christmas preparations, celebrate Christ's birth and invite others to attend one or more of our Christmas Services and activities.

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come !

Let earth receive her King;

Let every heart prepare Him room,

And heaven and nature sing." (Hymns and Psalms 77)

God's peace and blessing to you and your family as we go forward with hope into 2009.

---

May I say thank you for your loving kindness and prayerful support to me and my family as we have struggled to obtain a measure of justice since Natalie's death. With the Inquest now behind us we now turn to changing the Law so that our roads are safer for pedestrians and road users. We are seeking an informed public debate of the issues at a national level. If you want any further details, please email or leave a phone message on this number (01268 680844). Thank you. I commend to anyone in a similar situation the work of RoadPeace a national charity.

## It's not only an angel that needs a HARP

On the morning of Sunday 7th December we are holding a Gift Service for HARP.

The Homeless Action Resource Project (HARP) is the local charity dedicated to homeless people in the area. Every year food is donated to HARP through harvest collections from schools, churches and local organisations. We are one of the churches that collect all the year round and the gifts we send are always gratefully received.

Their Christmas wish list (below) includes a few treats as well as basic necessities. Please consider donating one or two of these items at our Gift Service if you feel able.

Gift vouchers (HMV, Boots, Superdrug, Argos)

Book tokens

Toiletries, gloves, scarves, hats, socks (for both men and women)

Chocolate

Stocking fillers

Flasks and sleeping bags

If you can't decide what to give, money would be appreciated to help cover the cost of Christmas Dinners for their clients at both the Day and Night Services.

After Christmas we will continue to support HARP by regularly taking gifts of food to help them produce the 13,000 meals a year they provide at their two centres in Southend. We have also produced a leaflet which lists the sort of things they need. Make sure you get, and keep, your copy so that you will be able to help those who are homeless.

More details about HARP can be found at [www.harpsouthend.co.uk](http://www.harpsouthend.co.uk)

## Christmas Cards

Once again we're giving you two options this year.

1. The post box is already in place for you to put your cards in. They will be distributed after the Carol Service on 21st December.
2. The large card has been placed on the notice board for you to add your greetings.

What you choose is up to you, or use both. All proceeds to *Action For Children*.

## Fancy a good film?

Our friends at Hadleigh Methodist church hold a monthly film show in the church. The next one is on 12th December and they're showing *It's a Wonderful Life* - the classic black and white James Stewart film.

The evening starts at 7.30pm with light refreshments

Admission is free but voluntary contributions are welcomed.

Future showings include *The Sound of Music* and *Mama Mia*.

## What have the Worship Leaders been up to?

Dave & Val Dobbin, Sue Edwards and Mike Sims continue in the role of worship leaders. This has involved planning and leading entire services, either using all the leaders, or Val/Dave and Sue/Mike pairing, and we also regularly assist the appointed Preacher with prayers, readings, intercessions (or anything else we may be asked to assist with)!

Mike took an evening service last May based on the Methodist Worship Book service *Second Service*. Service sheets were prepared specifically for the act of worship and were given out to people as they arrived so that the service could flow uninterrupted.

All the Worship Leaders prepared and helped lead the morning service on 25 May when we considered the theme of *God and Possessions*, and Sue led the service for the Family Day on 29 June on the title *Giving and Receiving*.

We are delighted that the church has decided to invest in the multimedia system. This can add an extra dimension to our worship and opens up a whole new area of resources that were difficult to use before. (We remember that Dave would faithfully bring along and set up his own laptop and projector when needed – but no more!) The books are still available for all those who prefer/need to see print in front of them, but if you can see the screen we think that it frees up the individual from needing to find pages in the books etc.

We have not yet been able to continue our on-going training through the joint meetings with the Worship Leaders from Rayleigh and Hockley but, with Brenda's agreement, Mike has now canvassed all the Worship Leaders concerned for areas that they would like covered and these include: revisiting the *Worship Leaders Training Pack* to firm-up on any areas that may not have been covered in detail; the practicalities of speaking in front of a number of people; what WLS can put in a service to replace the "sermon slot". We are now waiting for dates when Brenda will be free to progress these.

We make no apology for reminding everyone that the Worship Leaders are *not* an exclusive group. If you feel that you are being called to this ministry, please do have a chat with Brenda, or any one of us and we would be happy to give you any background or answer any questions you may have.

**Mike Sims**

It was announced at a recent Circuit Meeting that Wendy Wilson now feels able to continue with her studies as a Local Preacher. With several new Local Preachers also coming on to the Circuit Preaching Plan this should ease the load on the existing Preachers - and, hopefully, no more 'NPA's'!

Please pray for Wendy and all the other Local Preachers as they perform this vital work for the Methodist Church.

## Wesley Guild

It seems that no sooner have we started and settled into a pattern than it is 'all change'. During December we're out and about singing carols at various places around the area - there might be another one or two to come yet! Please note that these evenings start at 7.30pm. We will also be supplying mince pies for everyone, so if you feel you want to bring some along, have a word with Margaret and she will tell you when (if?) there are gaps you can fill.

### December

- 2 Carol Singing at St Lukes Place (7.30pm)
- 9 Carol Singing at Coachman Court (7.30pm)
- 16 Carol Singing at Spa Court, Hockley (7.30pm)
- 23 & 30 No meetings

### January

- 6 Bob Clipsham
- 13 *Pairs*
- 20 *Right up your street (Neighbourhood Policing)*, Andrew Hill
- 27 *Antiques Roadshow*, Mark Stacey (not *that* one, the other one!)

---

## Women's Fellowship

It's been an interesting and enjoyable Autumn session and now we have reached the Christmas period. It's a short break after the festivities and we move smoothly into our Spring Session for the run up to Easter and Summer.

If you are free on a Monday at 2.30pm, why not come along to the church. There will be a warm welcome and a cup of tea waiting for you.

### December

- 8 Christmas Lunch, *John and Cecile Entertain*
- 15 Carol Service, Revd Brenda Gutberlet
- 22 No meeting

### January

- 5 Revd Brenda Gutberlet
- 12 Members' Afternoon
- 19 Len Ward
- 26 Jenny Sims

## Treasurers Report

Did you know that in Las Vegas churches accept gambling chips?

This may come as a surprise to those that don't live in the area, but there are more churches than casinos in Las Vegas. Not surprisingly, some worshipers at Sunday Services will give casino chips rather than cash when the collection plate is passed around. Since they get chips from many different casinos, the churches have devised a method to collect the offerings. The churches send all their collected chips to a nearby Franciscan monastery for sorting and then the chips are taken back to the casinos of origin and cashed in. This is done by CHIPMONKS!!!

Very sorry for this joke, but it leads me nicely in to report, as I did to the Church Council and the Pilgrims Way Review, that over the next 3 years our assessment will need to rise by nearly £4000 a year to bring us in line with our present membership.

To break this down means that it will cost us £6.50 per member per week, instead of the present £5.00. As I said at the previous meetings I'm fully aware of the present financial position and the effect that it's having on us all. So I have looked at our income and by using the weekly collections plus the gift aided tax refund the shortfall is reduced to just over a £1000 or 42p per week per member. Obviously if the weekly collections increases, then the call on the gift aided tax refund become less.

It was agreed at our last church council meeting that we start to catch up this year by increasing our assessment by £1500. So if we can increase our giving in any way and (especially if we pay tax) through the envelope scheme the shortfall can be reached. Many thanks for what is being done already both by giving money and time.

For the Christmas and the New Year I wish you all God's Blessings.

**Colin Rayner**

---

As Colin says (above), we will have to pay the Circuit £6.50 each week for every member towards the expenses of employing ministers, their housing, etc. The church has to pay this for each member, whether they come to church on a Sunday or not.

Our envelope scheme is one way of reminding you whether or not you have contributed in a particular week. If you are unable to come to church, you just put that week's collection in the specially dated envelope and bring all the envelopes with you when you next come. See Dave, who has several spare sets available and he will only have to throw them away if they are not used!

If you pay tax, the church can claim 28p from HM Revenue & Customs for every £1 you give - and all you have to do is to sign a simple declaration. Contact Bruce for this.

## Christmas at Rochford Methodist Church

Looking back at last year's *Rochford Methodist* I realised that it didn't seem as though we did much to celebrate the birth of Jesus and to spread the message about him. We did (of course) as we usually do but not much of it was highlighted as it should have been.

So here's putting it right for this year.

There's the **Carol Singing** of course, this year at St Lukes Place, Coachman Court and Spa Court on 2nd, 9th and 16th December respectively (all at 7.30) where we (try to!) entertain the residents.

The **Women's Fellowship** have their **Christmas Lunch** on 8th December and their **Carol Service** on the 15th. John & Cecile Low will entertain on the 8th and Revd Brenda will lead the Carol Service. The WF have already sent their shoeboxes to the Samaritan's Purse appeal.

On the 7th December we will be holding a **Christmas Gift Service** for HARP. This is the first time we have held this so we hope it will be successful.

Our traditional **Nativity and Carol Service** will be held on 21st December at 4pm and this will be followed by light seasonal refreshments and the cards from the Christmas post-box will be distributed.

There will be a **Christingle service** on 24th December at 4pm, led by some of our own members.

And there will be our traditional **Family Service on Christmas Day** where children and adults alike are invited to bring along their presents to 'show and tell'. This will be at 10.30am and will be led by our own members.

There has also been an invitation from Rethink for a few members to go and sing again this year (date still to be confirmed at the time of printing).

Our services are open to everybody, whether or not they usually come to our church, so feel free to bring along your friends, family and neighbours.

**For more details of our 'in-house' services, make sure you pick up a copy of our Christmas leaflet which will be available from 6th December. The leaflet is also available on our website at [www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk/content/pages/documents/122786450.pdf](http://www.rochfordmethodist.org.uk/content/pages/documents/122786450.pdf)**

## The story of Christmas through carols old and new

The Benfleet Choristers will present their annual Christmas Concert on 18th, 19th and 20th December at 8pm at Benfleet Methodist Church.

Tickets are £6 each and all the proceeds will be donated to Fair Havens, Action For Children and Benfleet Methodist Church. To make sure of a seat, ask any of the choristers for a ticket, or phone 01268 759704 (Marilyn Robinson) or 01268 751393 (Richard Reeves).



### December

- 6 Dave & Val Dobbin, Roy & Olive Pavitt, Gwenda Andrews
- 13 Malcolm & Pat Rubidge, John & Marian Webb
- 20 BIG CLEAN (getting the church ready for Christmas!)
- 27 No cleaning this week

### January

- 3 Colin & Margaret Rayner, Ron Castle
- 10 Bruce & Carole Glendenning, George & Sue Edwards
- 17 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull
- 24 Judy Garner, Rosie Isaacs, Maureen Whalley, Ivy Blenkinsop, Sheila Webber
- 31 Dave & Val Dobbin, Roy & Olive Pavitt, Gwenda Andrews

### December

- 7 Pat Rubidge
- 14 **Christmas Arrangement**
- 21 Beryl Scoging
- 28 Olive Pavitt



- 4 Helen Willson
- 11 Maureen Whalley
- 18 Carole Glendenning
- 25 Ivy Blenkinsop

## Did you know we have a Prayer Chain?

So what is it?

The Prayer Chain is a group of people who will pray for you for a **specific** and **urgent** reason. If there is something, or someone, in your life that you feel needs praying for, let Heather know and she will contact the other members.

Do you want to be part of the Chain? If so, have a word with Heather. If you get a call from another member on the chain, you pray for the topic and call the next person in the chain. Simple - there's no other commitment.