

## Sunday Services

Evening services are at 6.30pm unless otherwise shown.

### December

- 6th Peter Reed - *Gift service for HARP*  
Brenda Gutberlet  
13th Brenda Gutberlet (S)  
Brian Gameson  
20th Colin Turner  
Carol Service (4pm) followed by tea  
(Worship Leaders & FJ Club)  
25th Brenda Gutberlet (10.30am)  
27th Sue Sigfrid  
No Evening Service

### January

- 3rd Brenda Gutberlet (Annual Covenant Service) (S)  
No evening service  
10th Lt Col Roy Girling, SA(Retd)  
Brenda Gutberlet  
17th Family Day  
No evening service  
24th Brenda Gutberlet  
Rev Keith Page  
31st Len Ward  
No Preacher Available

*There are some 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

- 20 Carol Service, Worship Leaders, 4pm  
24 Christingle service, Church members, 4pm  
25 Family Service led by Revd Brenda (10.30am)

### January

- 3 Annual Covenant Service, 11am  
17 Family Day  
18 An evening of *Music, Mirth and Melody*, featuring renowned concert organist Victor Patterson, Benfleet, £5  
24 Last date for articles for *Rochford Methodist*

### February

- 3 Church Council, 8pm  
7 Next planned publication date.

### March

- 4 Circuit Meeting at Belfairs, 8pm  
7 General Church Meeting, 4pm  
27 The "Big O" Barn Dance. Several members are celebrating 'significant' birthdays and wedding anniversaries in 2010. Tickets on sale in the new year, raising money for church funds

The 'What goes on?' section has been held over until the next edition. If you wish to get more information about the times of meetings, including the new hirings, please see the Weekly Notices leaflet.

The new Circuit website has now been set up and is working. You can find it at:

[www.SouthendandLeigh.org](http://www.SouthendandLeigh.org)

To submit articles about our church, advertise activities, or write-ups on how successful past events have been, email the Circuit Administrator, Ruth Lowden, at [r.ager40@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:r.ager40@yahoo.co.uk)

Or write to her at the Circuit Admin office which is New Road Methodist Church, New Road, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2EA.

You could phone her on 01702 715802 but it is far, far better to send it in writing.

# Rochford Methodist

The Methodist Church 



Merry Christmas!

**Best wishes for a Happy and Peaceful New Year**

**Details of our Christmas services can be found on page 9**

## Dec 2009/ Jan 2010

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

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)

## A special invitation from Revd. Brenda

On Boxing Day I will be hosting a relaxed coffee morning at RAYLEIGH Methodist Church from 10-12 noon. This is open to everyone, children and adults - come and go as you please.

## Our best wishes, thoughts and prayers are with . . .

Christine and Andrew Poulson on the loss of their mother Beryl.

Wendy Wilson, Zubie and Joshua as they move away from the area for work and personal reasons.

Marie and family as they wait for the results of tests following Marie's recent operation.

Len and Babs Ward as Len returns to work following his course of treatment

The next planned publication date is 7th February 2010. Articles, etc, should be with Dave by 24th January please.

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

## Don't forget your Christmas Quiz

Do you want something to keep your mind busy over Christmas!!

Copies of Revd Brenda's Christmas Fun Quiz are available from the Stewards priced £1 per copy (proceeds to Church funds). Questions for all ages so please sell as many as you can amongst friends and other contact groups.

## Diamond issue

Avid readers may be interested to know that this edition of what I call the 'second series' is issue 60 of the *Rochford Methodist*. This represents 10 years of publication.

No wonder I'm getting tired!

## Don't throw away your stamps!!

Your used postage stamps can be used to raise money for charity. Pass them on to Helen Willson who will make sure they go to the right place.

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

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## Little Donkey

*Little donkey, little donkey on the dusty road*

*Got to keep on plodding onwards with your precious load*

The RSPCA have issued strict guidelines with regard to how heavy a load a donkey of small stature is permitted to carry, also included in the guidelines is guidance regarding how often to feed the donkey and how many rest breaks are required over a four hour plodding period. Please note that due to the increased risk of pollution from the dusty road, Mary and Joseph are required to wear face masks to prevent inhalation of any airborne particles. The donkey has expressed his discomfort at being labelled 'little' and would prefer just to be simply referred to as Mr. Donkey. To comment upon his height or lack thereof may be considered an infringement of his equine rights.

## We Three Kings

*We three kings of Orient are*

*Bearing gifts we traverse afar*

*Field and fountain, moor and mountain*

*Following yonder star*

Whilst the gift of gold is still considered acceptable - as it may be redeemed at a later date through such organisations as 'cash for gold' etc, gifts of frankincense and myrrh are not appropriate due to the potential risk of oils and fragrances causing allergic reactions. A suggested gift alternative would be to make a donation to a worthy cause in the recipients name or perhaps give a gift voucher. We would not advise that the traversing kings rely on navigation by stars in order to reach their destinations and suggest the use of RAC route finder or satellite navigation, which will provide the quickest route and advice regarding fuel consumption. Please note as per the guidelines from the RSPCA for Mr Donkey, the camels carrying the three kings of Orient will require regular food and rest breaks. Facemasks for the three kings are also advisable due to the likelihood of dust from the camels hooves.

## Rudolph the red nosed reindeer

*Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer*

*had a very shiny nose.*

*And if you ever saw him,*

*you would even say it glows.*

You are advised that under the Equal Opportunities for All policy, it is inappropriate for persons to make comment with regard to the ruddiness of any part of Mr. R Reindeer. Further to this, exclusion of Mr R Reindeer from the Reindeer Games will be considered discriminatory and disciplinary action will be taken against those found guilty of this offence. A full investigation will be implemented and sanctions - including suspension on full pay - will be considered whilst this investigation takes place.

## SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

### The Rocking Song

*Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;  
We will lend a coat of fur,  
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,  
We will rock you, rock you, rock you:*

Fur is no longer appropriate wear for small infants, both due to risk of allergy to animal fur, and for ethical reasons. Therefore faux fur, a nice cellular blanket or perhaps microfleece material should be considered a suitable alternative. Please note, only persons who have been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check and have enhanced clearance will be permitted to rock baby Jesus. Persons must carry their CRB disclosure with them at all times and be prepared to provide three forms of identification before rocking commences.

### Jingle Bells

*Dashing through the snow  
In a one horse open sleigh  
O'er the fields we go  
Laughing all the way*

A risk assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to travel on. The risk assessment must also consider whether it is appropriate to use only one horse for such a venture, particularly if passengers are of larger proportions. Please note, permission must be gained from landowners before entering their fields. To avoid offending those not participating in celebrations, we would request that laughter is moderate only and not loud enough to be considered a noise nuisance.

### While Shepherds Watched

*While shepherds watched  
Their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around*

The Union of Shepherds has complained that it breaches health and safety regulations to insist that shepherds watch their flocks without appropriate seating arrangements being provided, therefore benches, stools and orthopaedic chairs are now available. Shepherds have also requested that due to the inclement weather conditions at this time of year they should watch their flocks via CCTV cameras from centrally heated shepherd observation huts.

Please note, the angel of the Lord is reminded that before shining his/her glory all around she/he must ascertain that all shepherds have been issued with glasses capable of filtering out the harmful effects of UVA, UVB - and Glory.

With grateful thanks to Grove Books, publishers of books providing clear and concise explorations of Christian living and ministry. For more information about the company, go to [www.grovebooks.co.uk](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk)

## A Christmas message from our Minister

*Dear Friends,*

As I write this article in mid-November I realise all that needs to be accomplished between now and Christmas day. Yet in our business let us make and take time to reflect on our Saviour's birth and the reason why He came so concisely expressed in John's Gospel chapter 3: 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Perhaps you have heard the story of the young child who looked forward to helping with the Christmas decorations. In this particular year his mother thought he was old enough to be trusted to unwrap the precious Nativity scene figures. The little boy was delighted to be trusted to do this and as he unwrapped the figure of the baby Jesus he exclaimed sadly, "Look mummy! Jesus hasn't grown any bigger since last year!"

Yes, a child's 'take' on what he saw but it also reminds us to expect the Lord Jesus to grow up! How many who celebrate this Christmas will keep Jesus as a baby in a manger? What of us who believe - are we still open to growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus our Saviour and Lord? Here at the Church we have many opportunities to help us in our personal journey of faith-Sunday and midweek worship, Bible study, social and spiritual activities for adults and children and special events plus many avenues of service to others in the wider community.

Why was Jesus born? The angel gave the reply to those astonished shepherds, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11). At Christmas we celebrate Emmanuel - GOD WITH US. He shares our human nature, our joys, woes, and grief He came to offer Himself wholly and perfectly upon the Cross for all people in every generation. He fulfilled His God given purpose on earth and now shares with us in daily life.

We remember the words at Holy Communion, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again".

So let us celebrate with renewed vigour throughout this Christmas season, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come". Don't keep such a wonderful truth to yourself-find ways of sharing your faith and inviting others to "come and see" - that's what those shepherds did on the night that Christ was born. It remains our task today in Rochford, Rayleigh, Hockley, Hawkwell or wherever.

From me to you and your family, with love and prayers at this joyful season,

*Revd. Brenda Gutberlet*

Please remember in your prayers those for whom this coming Christmas season will be difficult due to illness, bereavement, homelessness, unemployment, or breakdown in relationships. We remember too those serving the Country in Afghanistan or with the United Nations.

## Len & Babs Ward — Grateful Thanks

Hello, Len the Lay Worker returns!

Babs and I would like to publicly thank you all for your love, prayers and good wishes during my convalescing period following the radiotherapy treatment that I received recently.

The medics were surprised how well my body withstood the treatment throughout the seven and a half weeks, however, I found out that the effects of the treatment would not be at their peak until two weeks after the treatment had finished; it accumulates in the body; I therefore needed time to recuperate, you completely lose all energy, as well as bodily side effects, but these are rapidly improving.

One thing that I have been doing during my time off is to ask God what he would have me learn whilst travelling through this experience. The answer seems to be, 'You need to rest in me.'

As human beings we are not normally good at exercising patience, and I was reminded that the body takes a long time to heal internally.

I prayed to God when I was on the treatment table every day, giving Him thanks and praise, thanking Him for His loving presence and protection, I would therefore like to end with a verse of scripture —

**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful.** (Col 3:15)

Many Thanks, Much Love and God's Blessing upon you all,

**Len & Babs**

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I have a new phone which allows me to make calls across the Internet as well as the usual phone line. I can keep the telephone numbers of the calls I receive and store them along with the name of the person who calls. The next time they call, I get a display saying 'Joe Bloggs' (or whoever) so I can see who it is calling before I even answer.

The process of storing the number is straightforward - I press a couple of buttons and I'm then given the chance to key in the name. When I press 'Save' I get a message back saying '**Joe Bloggs saved**'. So far I have been able to save about 20 people - including three ministers!

If only the Christian life were that simple. We could call up God, who presses a couple of buttons and Bingo - '**Dave Dobbin Saved**'.

Perhaps we can. Praise and worship, serving others, praying and preaching God's Kingdom here on earth. It's a bit more complicated (and sometimes frightening!) but if you are *really* sorry for the wrong things you have done, or the good things you have not done, you can still enter the Kingdom of Heaven and be saved.

But we can't rely on others to save us. It's up to each of us to lead our own lives as God would wish us to.

## Christmas services

Apart from our Carol Singing evenings at St Lukes Place, Coachman Court and Spa Court on Tuesdays, we have services to suit everybody.

On 20th December we hold our Carol Service, led by our Worship Leaders and participation by the FJ Club. It starts at 4pm, and afterwards we will have a tea with festive goodies.

On the 24th, once again we will have our Christingle service. Our members will be leading us in the making of Christingles. Aimed mainly at children, this is suitable (and fun) for all ages, so come along at 4pm and enjoy yourself.

And on Christmas Day, it's our traditional Family Service led by Revd Brenda; this is at 10.30am. It's a chance for kids to show off their favourite presents (oh, and the adults too!) and it's also a chance for a quiet break and well as reflecting on the true meaning of Christmas before the rush-around that makes the modern Christmas Day.

For more information, pick up one of our leaflets. And don't keep it to yourself, tell your friends, invite them along - and give them a leaflet so they don't forget!

## Christmas Post Box

If you have read your weekly notices, you will have seen there are some changes to the Christmas cards system this year. You will still have the 'green' option of the 'big card' but this year we are suggesting that instead of writing on it, you can pin one of your own cards to the whole church on it instead of individual cards to everybody (thus saving several trees in the process!).

And you can still send individual cards to those you wish to remember personally but, if you do choose this option, you will have to do a bit more for yourself. As an experiment, Judy will be putting out boxes in which *you* sort your cards. To collect your cards, you will need to look in these boxes for your cards and take them out yourself. But your last chance will be on the 20th

Donations from these will go to Action For Children, as usual.

Judy will also be grateful for any feedback on how successful this turns out.

As not enough people have shown interest in the trip to the historic Methodist New Room in Bristol, it is not possible to fill a coach and so the visit has been **cancelled**.



## Women's Fellowship

We've had a varied programme so far with some changes to our advertised meetings.

- Dec** 7 was our Christmas lunch  
14 Anne Bryant will be showing us scenes of Christmas  
21 Revd Brenda will be leading our Carol Service

After which we will break for Christmas. Have a Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In the New Year, our meetings are planned as:

- Jan** 11 Gwenda Andrews  
18 John and Cecile Low  
25 Jenny Sims

- Feb** 1 Revd Brenda Gutberlet

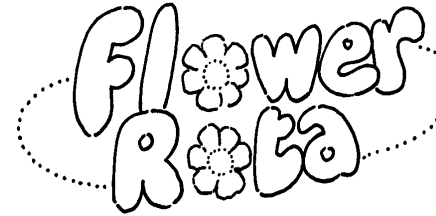
We meet at 2.30 and a warm welcome is assured - you don't have to come to Rochford Methodist (or any) church to join in, so come along any Monday.

## Wesley Guild

By the time this edition is published we will already have held two of our three carol singing evenings and there will only be the one at Spa Court left before we close down for Christmas. We hope you have a very good Christmas and a Happy New Year. After the break, our meetings will be:

- Jan** 5 Rev Michael Hayman (Devotional)  
12 *Ring in the New Year* (Social)  
19 *Why I became a Councillor*, James Cottis  
26 *History of Rochford*, Maurice Drage (Rochford Hundred Historical Society)
- Feb** 2 Lt Col Roy Girling, SA (Retd)

We meet at 8pm on Tuesdays at the church and our meetings are open to everybody. If you've ever wondered what it is you're missing, don't make assumptions - come along and find out for yourself. You never know, you might even enjoy yourself!



### December

- 6 Margaret Rayner  
13 Beryl Scoging  
20 **Christmas Arrangement**  
27 **Christmas**

### January

- 3 Helen Willson  
10 Maureen Whalley  
17 Carole Glendenning  
24 Sonia Worthington  
31 Ivy Blenkinsop



### December

- 5 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull.  
12 Judy Garner, Rosie Martin, Maureen Whalley, Ivy Blenkinsop, Sheila Webber.  
19 **BIG CLEAN**  
26 **No cleaning this week**

### January

- 2 Dave & Val Dobbin, Roy & Olive Pavitt, Sonia Worthington.  
9 Malcolm & Pat Rubidge, John & Marian Webb.  
16 Colin & Margaret Rayner, Ron Castle.  
23 Bruce & Carole Glendenning, George & Sue Edwards.  
30 Mike & Heather Sims, Jan Willson, Sandra Hull.

## Service of Remembrance

Every year, Tate and Son, the local Funeral Directors arrange a special service for all those who have been bereaved. It is held at St Andrews, Rochford in consultation with Rev Chris Cousins and this year was held on 2nd December.

Revd Brenda had been invited to take part by Chris but was unable to be there as it clashed with something else, so she asked if we could send a representative or two. Following the advertisement in the Weekly Notices, Margaret and Barry Stoll offered to represent Rochford Methodist Church

Margaret reports that as they were there representing our church they were asked to take part. Margaret read 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 and Barry read the prayers.

St Andrew's parish church was absolutely packed full, Margaret has never seen a church so full and people were even sitting in the choir stalls.

Whole families, or people on their own, went up to the altar to light a candle in memory of a loved one who had died in the past year.

It was quite harrowing but very moving. The first hymn was *The King of Love my shepherd is*, and the whole theme of the service was that love continues after death.

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## Culled from another magazine . . .

I've been reading that we are living longer nowadays. Far more people are reaching their 80s and 90s, and in Britain there are now nine times as many centenarians as there were 30 years ago.

So how do we grow old gracefully? The religious writer G. E. Diggle suggests that we "start young" by cultivating interests that we can continue in retirement - gardening, handicrafts, getting involved in organisations that help other people - in fact, anything that helps us to be outward-looking.

What I liked most, though, was this thought:

"While you've a contribution to make, never say 'I've done my share. Now I'm leaving it to the young'. Remember that the young person's contribution is energy, and the older person's is experience."

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Monica Dickens, whose books have given so much pleasure, said she was 60 when she made a great discovery. It was just this: that it's a waste of time trying to make other people the way you think they ought to be. If people are annoying you, it's not because they are annoying, but that you are letting yourself be annoyed.

That may sound complicated, but when I thought it over I knew just what she meant. It's not worth trying to change other people - we ought, instead, to change ourselves to become more tolerant. Then we won't annoy other people either!

## Which way, Pilgrim? The next steps

Following on from the last Annual Pilgrim's Way review, here is a view of some of the ideas you have suggested. Sonia collated all of the comments and this year split them between children and adults as there were so many ideas. The most popular section was the new things to try.

Family days are still very popular and it was agreed to keep them to quarterly events. There were mixed feelings on the Pets Service, 4 approved, but 2 disapproved. Brenda will hold another service before she leaves that will cover all of creation, not just pets.

There was a lot of support for children being involved in services and the Harvest Drums were particularly popular. There was a request for longer FJ Club meetings, but this would be held in abeyance until the children are older.

The church should become more eco-friendly and Paul Gibbinson has offered to complete an audit. The windows in the hall need repairing to allow them to be opened in the summer for ventilation. Double-glazing was considered to be too expensive and would have a long payback period. Windows should be reviewed again when funds have been replenished. The replacement for the Communion rail must be completed this year, but there is also a plan to replace the pulpit.

The suggestion of starting services earlier should be covered by people being given the opportunity to vote (but the final decision will be taken by Church Council).

It was agreed that we would not support an additional external charity this year as funds still need to be replenished. To this end, the FJ Club will consider organizing a concert evening (possibly with items from the Hildale dancing group).

Other suggestions included going to another church out of the Circuit for tea and an evening service, or having a weekend away eg at Spring Harvest.

The family day in March will be based on an idea from a recent Circuit service where there will be lunch followed by preparations for a worship service that will involve everyone, culminating in the service (by approx 4pm).

It was agreed that there was still a lot of interest and enthusiasm for the Pilgrims' Way and the church were happy to continue to follow the initiative rather than do something different.

The Action Plans are now being finalised for discussion at the next Church Council meeting when we will be given the final direction as to how to proceed.

Thank you all for your interest and involvement with Pilgrims' Way.

**Mike Sims**