



The Methodist Church

This quarter includes the season of Advent when we prepare for the coming of our Lord. Occasionally the period of Advent is thought of as simply preparation for Christmas, but this definition is too narrow. The season of Advent encourages all of us to think about how we are preparing for Christ's coming again, and indeed how we are preparing for Christ coming to us in each moment of every day.

Whenever we prepare it takes an investment of time and energy, and we also need discernment to know what tools and resources we may require. As the preparations continue, we might discover that we need to get some new equipment, or we may need to let go of some things to make the space so that the preparations can run smoothly. Some of us might be more temperamentally suited to planning and preparation and others of us may like things to happen more spontaneously, but whatever our personality we realise that at times we need to take stock and consider whether we are ready for the events that are to come.

Preparing to meet Christ is in many ways no different. We need to invest in the time to prepare ourselves through prayer and reading the Bible, in acts of service and witness, so that we become more and more attuned to recognising Christ's way of living.

Hospitality is one example of doing this and some of you will know that as well as being a Methodist presbyter I am also a member of a Benedictine community. The abbey includes a guesthouse and in the Benedictine Rule we read that 'all guests who present themselves at the abbey are to be welcomed as Christ.' Some guests may come at an appointed day and hour and some may just turn up out of the blue, so you need to be prepared to welcome them and show hospitality. This needs not just a practical preparation of food and clean rooms, but also an attitude of love and generosity. All of this is possible from a foundation of worship, prayer, and service which nourishes and strengthens each person as they wait for the next knock at the door.

In this Advent season and beyond we recommit ourselves to making the time to being prepared to welcome Christ. We open ourselves to receive Christ perhaps in unexpected places and guises, and we continue to prepare to welcome him and his kingdom day by day.

Revd Ian Mead

Bristol District
Upper Thames Circuit 7/23
Registered Charity No. 1134231

December 2025 to
February 2026

Dates for the Diary

Circuit Meeting – Monday 8th December, 2025 at 7.30 pm
at Royal Wootton Bassett MC Annex

CLT Meeting – Date 12th February, 2026
10 am in the Circuit Office.

CHURCH EVENTS

CRICKLADE

19th December – 10 am to 11.30 am
Coffee/tea with mince pies and carols
25th December – 10 am

HIGHWORTH

21st December – 4 pm Carol Service
Rev Ian Mead
25th December – 10 am Rev Ian Mead

ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT

7th December - Messy Nativity at 4 pm
21st December – 6 pm Carols by Candlelight
24th December – 11.15 pm Midnight
Communion Rev Shirlyn Toppin
25th December – 10 am Rev Shirlyn Toppin

SHRIVENHAM

17th December - Village Carols at 2 pm
20th December – Church open for craft bags
and treasure hunt. 10 am – 12 Noon
20th December – 2 pm Nativity @ Farmer
Gow, Longcot.
24th December – 10 am to 12 noon church
open for silent communion.
25th December - 9 am Rev Ian Mead

TOOTHILL

25th December – 11 am Rev Shirlyn Toppin
31st December – 11.15 pm Watchnight
Service Rev Shirlyn Toppin

		DECEMBER 2025				JANUARY 2026				FEBRUARY 2026				
Date		7 th Advent 2	14 th Advent 3	21 st Advent 4	28 th	4 th	11 th	18 th	25 th	1 st	8 th	15 th	22 nd Lent 1	
Lectionary Readings Year A		Isaiah 11: 1-10 Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19 Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12	Isaiah 35: 1-10 Psalm 146: 5-10 James 5: 7-10 Matthew 11: 2-11	Isaiah 7: 10-16 Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19 Romans 1: 1-7 Matthew 1: 18-25	Isaiah 63: 7-9 Psalm 148 Hebrews 2: 10-18 Matthew 2: 13-23	Jeremiah 31: 7-14 Psalm 147: 12-20 Ephesians 1: 3-14 John 1: (1-9) 10 - 18	Isaiah 42: 1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10: 34-43 Matthew 3: 13-17	Isaiah 49: 1-7 Psalm 40: 1-11 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 Matthew 4: 12 - 23	Isaiah 9: 1-4 Psalm 27: 1, 4-9 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31 Matthew 5: 1-12	Micah 6: 1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31 Matthew 5: 1-12	Isaiah 58: 1-9a (9b-12) Psalm 112 1-9 (10) 1 Corinthians 2: 1-12 (13-16) Matthew 5: 13-20	Deuteronomy 30: 15-20 Psalm 119: 1-8 1 Corinthians 3: 1-9 Matthew 5: 21-37	Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9-18 Psalm 119: 33-40 1 Corinthians 3: 10-11, 16-23 Matthew 5: 38-48	
Cricklade StF HP SF 1&2	10.30	Bell	Francis HC	Simpson C	OA	Bunce	OA	Simpson Cov	England	Musungu	Simpson HC	Simpson	Stinton	
Highworth HP StF	10.30	Cafe	Mead HC	Corkett	OA	Mead	Phoenix- Stone	Mead Cov	Longhurst	German	Cafe	Mead HC	Toppin	
Purton HP MPA	10.30	Phoenix- Stone	Toppin HC	Mead C	OA	Longhurst	Toppin US Cov	M Dowling	Musungu	Toppin HC	OA	Bunce	Mullin	
Royal Wootton Bassett HP StF MPA	9.00						Mead HC				Toppin HC			
	10.30	R Dowling	Mullin	Toppin HC	OA	Toppin Cov	Corkett	German	Mead	OA	Phoenix- Stone AIW	Toppin HC	SS	
Shrivenham StF CMP	10.30	Mead HC	Bunce	OA C	Mead	OA	Mead US Cov	Torchon	Toppin	Mead HC	R Dowling	OA	Mead	
Toothill StF	10.30	Toppin HC	OA 4 pm	OA C	German AAW	Mullin	Musungu	Toppin Cov	R Dowling AAW	Corkett	Toppin HC	Longhurst	M Dowling AAW	

AAW All Age Worship
AIW All In Worship
B Baptism
COV Covenant

CI Café Inspire
CS Circuit Service
F Family Service
H Harvest

SS Stewards Service
HC Holy Communion
AGM Annual Church Meeting
OA Own Arrangement

P Parade
PP Prayer & Praise
N Nativity Service
V Village Service

C Carols
CA Church Anniversary
US United Service
SP Songs of Praise

C Aid Christian Aid Service
Y Youth Service
CH Christingle
GCM General Church Meeting

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Readings:
Isaiah 9: 2-7; Psalm 96: Titus 2: 11-14; Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)
and
Isaiah 62: 6-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3: 4-7; Luke 2: (1-7) 8-20