**WINDY NOOK NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022**



**A message from the Minister**

I have a confession to make. I often (and if you’re honest, quite a lot of you do too) have a good old moan in the run-up to Christmas – shops with Christmas displays in September, the endless playing of ‘Christmas’ music, children with their Christmas lists for presents (often including expensive items such as I-pads and X-boxes), the endless advertising of ridiculous ‘gift ideas’.

We all get really frazzled with all the things we have to do before Christmas, as well as moaning about some of the things I’ve mentioned, so if we’re not careful we sound like real ‘Bah, humbug’s, to quote our old friend Scrooge.

This is really ironic, of course, because of all people Christians are the ones who have a real reason to celebrate Christmas. Even though it’s quite unlikely that Jesus was actually born on December 25th (that was the date of a Roman winter festival which Christians ‘appropriated’), that is when we celebrate his birth and that is what it means to us. But it’s easy to lose the truth among all the tinsel and the (let’s be honest again) nonsense – flying reindeer, a ridiculous fat man with a big white beard who manages to visit billions of homes in a few hours.

The truth is awesome, stupendous, amazing. That the God who created everything that exists, even time and space, loves this planet of ours and, even more amazing, its people so much that he took on human form and came and lived here with us for 33 short years. Here he showed us how we should live together, how we should relate to one another, the values we should hold (very different from the selfish, consumerist values of so much of the world today) and even more he showed us what real love is like as he hung on the cross.

So let’s all remember what the real meaning of Christmas is as we celebrate together, that ‘Jesus is the reason for the season’. But also let’s all enjoy ourselves – let’s face it, this year especially we need a good excuse to!

Merry Christmas and every blessing for 2023

Paul

A Christmas joke: Why is Christmas just like most peoples’ job?

 Because you do all the work and some fat guy in a suit gets all the credit!

**Church Updates**

**Windy Nook Baby and Toddler Group.**

Myself, Helen Moore and Pauline Dixon successfully started up the Windy Nook Baby and Toddler Group in September. We have approximately 80 families on our books with an average of 30-40 Babies and Toddlers attending each week. This has become a very popular and lovely little group and is much needed for our community. Pauline and Helen having been amazing over the past few months keeping the group going whilst I have been poorly and would like to thank them greatly for doing so. I would also like to thank all the helpers that give their time each week too.

On the 8th December we held a Christingle Service where Jane came along and families each made a Christingle whilst Jane lead the little service. The Babies and Toddlers were invited to come along dressed as something from the Nativity Scene too. Lots of fun was had by both the children and their Grown Ups and we even had some angels and sheep turn up. 15th December is our last week before Christmas we are getting a special visit from Santa Claus this week and are having a Christmas Party. If you check out our church Facebook page there will be plenty of photos on there.

We cannot wait to see what the new year brings us and are looking forward to doing more fun filled activities. If anyone thinks that they may be able to help us in anyway possible then please come and speak to me. It could even just be making some juice or cleaning a table. Whatever you feel you could offer we would be really grateful for. Thank you to all those who have already have/are offering us support.

Merry Christmas from all the Leaders and Helpers at Windy Nook Baby and Toddlers

Holly.

**Girls Brigade update**

We've had another great, busy term at 1st Windy Nook Girls' Brigade.

On top of our usual fun, games and crafts the Ngage group have looked at what it means to serve with the story of Martha and learned about love with the help of the story of Ruth. In Ncounta we've been thinking about what it means to be a community, how we can be a good community of people tackling the negative things that might happen around us and looked at what the Bible says about living as a peaceful community. We've also been doing about our identity and learning about our emotions.

We are looking forward to our trip in the new year to see the pantomime Beauty and the Beast at The Tyne Theatre.

All of the girls have worked so hard this term and we continue to be very proud of all they do! Everything we are able to do at Girls Brigade wouldn't be possible without the support of all of our great volunteers who give up their time to support the girls each week, we are grateful to be blessed with their dedication.

If you are interested in your child coming along to Girls Brigade please get in touch with us at windynookgirlsbrigade@gmail.com as we currently have spaces for girls aged 7-14.

Hannah

Team Leader

**Reflection and Remembrance Service**

On the 6th December we held a service where about 20 of us gathered to spend some time thinking about those who will be missing from our family celebrations at Christmas.

We, as a church,are aware that this Christmas will not be a good time for some families- whether this is due to the death of a loved one, a breakdown in relationships, some families not getting to meet up due to distance or travel problems or those who cannot celebrate due to financial worries.

In the past we have concentrated on those members of the family who have died and remembered them by writing names on a star and hanging it on our tree. This year we asked those at the service to write names on a luggage label which was tied to a chair. The chair symbolised the empty place at the table. Those who were unable to come to the service can still write a label and attach it to the chair. Just ask one of the stewards for one.

We hope you all have a blessed Christmas

Pauline

**Christmas Services**

Sunday 18 December – 10:30 Carol Service

Monday 19 December – 19:00 Community Carols

Sunday 1 January – 10:30 Church Service

**Coffee Morning**

The coffee morning is on the first Saturday of every month at a new time of 10:30-12:30. This is to accommodate new fitness classes – see later in newsletter.

**Warm Space**

There is a warm space with a warm welcome in church every Sunday between 12 & 2. This includes refreshments, lunch, books, board games and baby changing facilities. Everybody is welcome.

**Hall Hire**

The hall is available to hire for £15 an hour. This can be booked by contacting us via the website windynookchapel.weebly.com

**Old Chapel Pews**

Two old chapel pews are available for rehoming for a donation to church funds. If interested please contact a member of the church council.

**Fitness Classes**

In the New Year LD Fitness & Development will be running classes in the church hall. These classes focus on:

* Full Body Workouts
* Cardio & Strength Training
* Weight Management
* Group Classes
* 1-2-1 Training

Classes will be held as follows:

Monday 18:30

Tuesday 09:30

Wednesday 18:30

Friday 09:30

Saturday 09:00

Booking is essential for the classes. Contact LD Fitness & Development via Facebook to get your first session free.



**Christmas Day**

**,What do I wish you? By Charlotte Gray**

The family reunited,

All squabbles set aside,

Food in the larder,

Knocks at the door,

Friendly faces,

Parcels piling up.

Cards from everyone you love,

Nothing forgotten,

Nothing singed,

Laughter, a little silliness,

Hugs, kisses,

Happy memories.

I wish with all my heart that

Your Christmas will be all that it

was meant to be-

a little warmth in the depth of

winter, a light in the dark..

Have a happy Christmas from Pauline

**Christmas Craft**

The act of making a gingerbread house is both creative as well as tasty. But where did it all come from? How did we ever arrive at making delicious gingerbread houses and why during Christmas?.

Who Invented the gingerbread house?

The actual inventor is largely unknown as gingerbread constructions can be found as far back as ancient Greece and even further in China, but for the Europeans and North America, the practice of making gingerbread houses originates in Germany during the 1800’s. As gingerbread was already used to make different forms of art, German bakers took this to the next step, basing their creation off a very popular fairy tale from the Brothers Grimm, “Hansel and Gretel” where two children are abandoned in a forest before discovering an edible house made of bread and sugar. The Grimms’ original fairy tale includes the line: “When they came nearer they saw that the house was built of bread, and roofed with cakes, and the window was of transparent sugar.” (In later versions it became gingerbread, rather than just bread.) Bakers took descriptions of this house from the story and began making their own take on a gingerbread house. This would be most popular during christmas, as it was common place tradition to consume ginger snap cookies around this time. The modern tradition of making gingerbread houses has become a family event at Christmas markets around the world.

Gingersnap cookies have always been associated with the spirit of Christmas, and as such, it was very popular to bake a large assortment of ginger products during Christmas. Eventually this tradition merged with the idea of adding gingerbread houses to their baking list. Since Christmas is an important time in Germany, the practice became associated with Christmas

It is a tradition that unmarried women in England would often eat gingerbread men for good luck in meeting a husband !!

On the next page is a printable gingerbread house to cut out and colour. Just score the dotted lines and follow the glue instructions.

Kaz

Hope you all have a lovely Christmas and all the best for 2023 from all at Windy Nook Methodist Church



