

Blandford Methodist Church: Sunday 31st December

Good morning and welcome to our Morning Worship which is being led by Reverend Peter McNeill. The stewards today are Christine Lydford and Pat and Brian Dryden. After the service, please join us in the hall for refreshments.

Dates for your diary:

Sunday 7 th January	10.45 am	Covenant Service followed by simple lunch in hall
Sunday 14 th January	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Sunday 21 st January	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Mark Priestley
Sunday 28 th January	10.45 am	Local Arrangement
Sunday 4 th February	10.45 am	Morning Worship with Holy Communion led by Reverend Peter McNeill
Sunday 11 th February	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mrs Joyce Wild
Saturday 17 th February	2.30 pm	Church social afternoon of fun and games, with light refreshments – further details to follow
Sunday 18 th February	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Colin Besant
Friday 23 rd February	2.30 pm	Church Council meeting
Sunday 25 th February	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Mr Brian Skelley

Colehill Methodist: Every Monday, 11.00 am to 12.00 noon(ish), Bible Study, coffee, prayers and plenty of chat. All welcome.

Bible in a year: 24th – 30th December: Habakkuk 1 – Zechariah 14 and Revelation 15 - 21

Meet Reverend Dr Mark Kimber: From 10.00 am every Friday, Reverend Dr Mark Kimber can be found in either the Okeford Room or the Vestry should you wish to have a chat with him.

Janet Miller: Janet's funeral is on Friday 5th January at 3.00 pm in The Barn at the Harbour View Crematorium at Lytchett Minster. All are very welcome.

Joyce Wild

Food glorious food was enjoyed by Lunch Club members at their Christmas lunch and also those who came to the Christmas Day lunch.

Nadia, the supervisor who cooks for **Lunch Club** every Friday and is ably assisted by her three helpers, prepared, produced and served a delicious Christmas feast for those gathered and seated at festively decorated tables filled with crackers, chocolates, bottles of Shloer as well as a £10.00 gift voucher from Morrisons for each person.

As the meal progressed and between courses a shy Nadia and her team were encouraged to leave the comfort of the kitchen to come and be thanked profusely for the superb meal and for all their hard work throughout the year. Appropriate gifts were given to them and also to Rona, Pat, Brian, and David for all their help with Lunch Club.

Alongside the sixty Lunch Club folk, the invited guests this year were Mayor Hugo Melville and his wife Yvonne, and Glenda and Hayden White, trustees from the William Williams Trust who annually donate a generous cheque for use by the Lunch Club throughout the year. In 2023 the money has allowed us to take a number of outings, have visits by local speakers, craft folk and entertainers. Alan Dymond kindly ran some Christmas-themed quizzes with the winners receiving bars of seasonal chocolate. Then following the mince pies and coffee people were encouraged to retire to the church where Christina from Starlit Memories entertained those gathered with her singing. Joining in the Christmas carols and songs was a lovely way to spend the afternoon.

The **Christmas Day** meal saw twenty-five people gathered for typical Christmas fayre prepared, cooked, and served by Mark and a family friend, Tessa. At the start of the meal some of the people were friends, others family and others still strangers, but by the end of the afternoon all were enjoying each other's company and chatting away happily. Christmas quizzes punctuated the three courses and seasonal prizes were handed out. On arrival each guest was offered a glass of non-alcoholic mulled punch and the opportunity to listen to Sam on the piano and Lauren on the violin as they played a variety of Christmas music.

It was only natural that at the end of the meal Mark and Tessa were invited to step out of the kitchen where they received a huge round of applause and a gift in appreciation of all they had done. To round off the proceedings every person was given a goodie bag containing a Christmas cake, a chocolate orange, Lebkuchen stars and a pen, all courtesy of Blandford Stour Rotary Club.

Joyce Wild

Blandford Foodbank news: Faithworks Food Banks right across Dorset have seen over a 200% increase in the number of people receiving food parcels over the last 2 years.

The contributions from Blandford Methodist Church and the Lunch Club are all welcome and being sent to people in real need.

At the Steering Group meeting held in December, we welcomed Nicky Allsopp (CMA Debt Advisor) and Sophie Burditt (Larder Co-ordinator) to their new roles. The Debt Advisor is working with 21 clients, having combined debts of £177,000.

Since January 2023, the food bank has delivered on 614 vouchers, with parcels going to 977 adults and 514 children.

Continued overleaf

The Christian Buddy Team has eight volunteers ready to help isolated and vulnerable people looking for spiritual support. Once a month on a Thursday, the Friendship Club, run by four volunteers, offers friendship, games, puzzles, fun and conversation.

The Nourish Larder looks like a proper shop and has received positive feedback received from clients. So far there are 44 members and space for a few more.

Looking ahead, the team has plenty of ideas for new initiatives in 2024.

John Cornish

Blandford Foodbank is **urgently** in need of -

Jam/marmalade

Squash

Rice pudding

The following items are also running low and need restocking -

Coffee (small jars)

Tinned carrots

Tinned green beans

Washing-up liquid

For those able to support the Foodbank with items, a box has been placed in the Narthex as a collection point.

John Cornish

Artsreach will be holding their next two events in Blandford in early February 2024: full details of both events are on the notice board in the hall. These include Luke Wright, poet and entertainer on 3rd February who has sold out shows worldwide, plus the Scarlet Oak Theatre on 13th February with a wonderful children's theatre including puppets - The Zoo that Comes to You.

Further information can be obtained from Marilyn Joslin (07593 793133).

Prayer: Please can we remember to uphold in prayer those members of our congregation who we know are ill or suffering in some way.

If you know of anyone who would like prayer and be mentioned by name in The Link, please let me know (having obtained their permission first to mention them by name).

Minister: Reverend Dr Mark Kimber

Enquiries via Lead Steward, John Cornish, on 07799 516 735

Pastoral Support: Joyce Wild: Tel: 01258 454091