The Methodist Church
Herefordshire (South & East) Circuit

Good Morning Church - 29th November 2026 - Advent Sunday

Well, here we are at the beginning of Advent! The Christmas lights are appearing, the shops are getting busier, and no doubt some of us have already started thinking about Christmas presents, food and all the things that need doing before the big day!

But Advent is about much more than counting down the days to Christmas. It's a time of waiting, preparing and looking forward. It's also a time to pause and think about the hope that Jesus brings into our world.

This year, the Methodist Church's Advent and Christmas theme is **"Don't Be Afraid"**, and the theme for this first Sunday is **"Hope is hiding in plain sight."**

Our object for today is a branch with buds. At this time of year, many trees look bare and lifeless. Yet, if we look closely, there is often new life quietly waiting to emerge. Those tiny buds remind us that even when things look bleak, there is hope and new growth just around the corner. God is at work, often in ways we don't immediately notice.

Our readings this morning help us explore that theme.

In **Isaiah 64:1–9**, we hear the prayer of a people who feel lost, unsettled and desperately need God to come close again. They long for God to intervene and put things right. It's a very human prayer, particularly when we look around at a world that can sometimes feel frightening and uncertain. Yet, even in their struggles, they remember that God is their Father and they are the work of his hands.

Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19 continues that cry for God's help, with the repeated plea: "Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved." It's a reminder that we can turn to God when we need to find our way again.

In **1 Corinthians 1:3–9**, Paul gives thanks for the gifts God has given to the church at Corinth. Despite all their imperfections and difficulties, he reminds them that God is faithful. I particularly like that reassurance as we begin Advent. Our confidence isn't in how well we manage everything ourselves, but in the faithfulness of God, who walks alongside us.

And in **Mark 13:24–37**, Jesus speaks about difficult and unsettling times, using dramatic language about the sun and moon and stars. It might not sound like the usual Christmas build-up! But his message is important: don't panic, don't give up, and don't stop looking for God's presence. Jesus tells his followers to stay awake and be alert, because we don't know when God will act. Like the budding branch, we

need to learn to recognise the signs of new life and hope, even when they are not immediately obvious.

The message running through all our readings is that Advent isn't about pretending everything in the world is wonderful. There are plenty of things to worry about, both in our own lives and across the world. Rather, Advent invites us to look beyond our fears and notice where God is already at work.

One of the lovely phrases from this Sunday's Advent liturgy sums it up beautifully:

"Don't be afraid: hope is hiding in plain sight."

Perhaps that's something we can take with us into the coming week. Look out for those little signs of hope – a kind word, an unexpected kindness, a neighbour checking in, a moment of laughter, or somebody doing something to make life better for someone else. These might seem like small things, but they can be signs of God's love at work in the world.

So, as we light the first Advent candle and begin our journey towards Christmas, let's remember that even in the darkness, there is light; even in the waiting, there is hope; and even when we are afraid, God is with us.

Wishing you all a very happy and blessed first Sunday of Advent. I hope you have a lovely time of worship with us, whether you're joining us in one of our churches or worshipping with us online.

God bless, Phil

Sunday Services - Advent Sunday

This Sunday, our services are:

Bromyard - 10:30am: Mr Ethan Ottershaw - Christingle

Ledbury - 10:30am: Rev'd Phil Warrey (Stream Source)

St John's - 10:30am: Rev'd Nigel Williams - Gift Service

Lectionary readings

The streaming this Sunday will be from Ledbury.

Watch the live stream live on YouTube

Sunday Worship Page on the Circuit Website

Please pray for our preachers and worship leaders as they prepare to lead worship.

Next Sunday – 6th December 2026 – 2nd of Advent

Next Sunday, our services are:

Bromyard - 10:30am: Mr Chris Ottershaw

Ledbury - 10:30am: Rev'd Kath Baldwin - Holy Communion (Stream Source)

St John's - 10:30am: Rev'd Linda Catlow - Holy Communion

Lectionary readings

funeral of the Late Miss Lorna Bebbington

As we go to press on this Good Morning Church, we can advise that the date for Lorna's funeral is looking like it will be 11th December, with a burial at Ledbury Cemetery in the morning, and a service in the afternoon at Ledbury Methodist Church at 1:30pm. Freddie Davey and his wife, one of Lorna's few remaining family will be attending. We are just waiting the final go ahead from the solicitor.

Action of the Week - hope school Bethlehem

Next week I am travelling to Jerusalem on a trip to meet up with Dave Hardman our man in Jerusalem, and I will see first hand the situation there and hope to meet folk with stories to tell.

Many of us, have handled the Bethlehem Carol Sheets for years and years. It often carried pictures of Children from Hope School Bethlehem, and this has been one of our Circuit Charities these last few years. We have been able to send them some much needed money, and as I visit next week, I am giving you a chance to give.

Chris Ottershaw, our Bromyard Treasurer has set up a campaign on our Bromyard "Give a little" account. This means we can collect some money straight into Bromyard's account and then we can hand over the money (less some bank fees - there's always bank fees these days) to Hope School. Some folk had offered me some money towards my self financed trip, but I would prefer if we could donate to Hope School instead.

Here is our - Hope School Bethlehem campaign

A new chapter for children in Bethlehem

The school was established back in 1962 to give children from disadvantaged families, including orphans, the opportunity of an education and a better future. Today it continues to provide education and support for children from difficult

circumstances, including those with additional learning needs. It welcomes children from both Christian and Muslim families.

The school is supported by the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem, which has been helping through fundraising, visits and raising awareness of its work. In June this year, the Methodist Church received a lovely reminder of that partnership when the school presented it with a plaque of appreciation.

I was particularly struck by something David Hardman, our Methodist Liaison Officer, said. As you enter the school, there is a sign which simply says **"God is Love"**. He described how those words are lived out every day by the staff and governors in the way they welcome and care for the children.

I think that's a wonderful expression of what our faith should be about. Not simply words, not just going to church, but showing God's love in practical ways, giving children opportunities, helping them discover their gifts and enabling them to believe that their circumstances today don't have to determine their future.

As we think this Advent about new chapters beginning, let's remember the children of Hope School, and all those growing up in Bethlehem and across Palestine. Let's pray that they might have the opportunity to write their own stories, with education, friendship, security and peace. And perhaps remember those words above the school entrance: "God is Love."

Women Against Violence Sunday

One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence. This weekend, the Church marks Women Against Violence Sunday. It comes ahead of the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the start of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence on 25 November.

The Methodist Church is hosting a free webinar about domestic violence, also on 25 November.

Sign up for webinar here

The Vice-Chair of Methodist Women in Britain, Philippa Hill,shares her reflections in this blog

Find information and resources for Women Against Violence Sunday here

Something to Think About page

There is a new item on the Something to Think About page of the Circuit Website entitled "Christmas Feasting 2026".

In addition, on the same page there will appear a series of 7-10 minute videos, released every Sunday in Advent and the Sunday after Christmas Day. These are monologues from a number of the characters that were witnesses to the Nativity.

God bless, Martyn

Coming Up This Week

Monday 30th:

Ledbury - 10:30am - 1pm - Place of Welcome, 2pm Wellbeing Art Group

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Tuesday 1st:

St John's - 10am - Twins & Tots

Wednesday 2nd:

Bromyard - 10am - 2pm - Place of Welcome

St John's - 12:15pm for 12:30pm - 2pm - Lunch Club, 7pm - Zoom Bible Study

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Thursday 3rd:

Friday 4th:

Saturday 5th:

Ledbury - 9am - Women's Breakfast Fellowship

St John's - 10am - 12pm - Place of Welcome

Sunday 6th:

Services as listed above

The Vine at Home - Advent Sunday

The Vine at Home for Sunday 29nd November 2026

Ledbury Methodist Notices

Ledbury Methodist Notices 18/11//26

Methodist Connexional Weekly Newsletter

Newsletter for 26/11/26

La Voci Concert - This Saturday 28th November 7pm

The La Voci choir will be holding a concert at St. John's this Saturday, November 28th at 7.00 pm.

This multi award winning ensemble features former Cantabile Girls' Choir singers alongside members of the Hereford Cathedral School community.

This will be an evening of seasonal and choral music welcome the Christmas season.

Tickets are priced at £10 and are available on the door.

Tea church at St John's

Please note that Tea Church at St John's in December will be a week earlier than usual (i.e. 13th December, the 2nd Sunday in the month instead of the 20th as it would usually have been) to allow the Carol Service to be held on the 20th.

Invitation to LEAF Shoots Lunch Wednesday 2nd December 2026

LEAF is excited to launch a new monthly community lunch, offering a warm, welcoming space to enjoy a simple meal, meet others, and feel connected. Poster can be found here.

Join us at St Katherine's Hall on Wednesday 2 December. The lunch is free, with optional donations supporting LEAF's work in Ledbury.

Please book for catering purposes: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/5rkhP85XzR

Please share with anyone who may benefit from a warm meal and friendly company.

God bless,

Tara Campbell LEAF Administrator & PA

WhatsApp Groups

Each of our churches have a WhatsApp group, if you'd like to join please ask and we will add you.

Vacancies

We have the following vacancies in our circuit and churches:-

Circuit Archivist - Role Description - More Details

EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Officer - Role Description - More Details

If you would like to know more about any of these vacancies, please speak to Phil.

Circuit Admin & Ledbury Admin

Lynne will be generally working her 12 hours across Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

She can be contacted at admin@herefordshiremethodists.org.uk

Circuit Administrator - Herefordshire (South & East) Methodist Circuit

Tel 01432 356023

Church Administrator - Ledbury Methodist Church

Tel 01531 598007

Links

The links below are to websites or adobe cloud documents (all underlined in blue) A mouse click on the link will open the relevant documents for you or direct you to the websites referred to. These have all been checked and are safe links to click.

Watch the live stream live on YouTube at 10:30am

Sunday Worship Page on the Circuit Website

Click to watch any of our services again, or refer your friends and families to our services

November 2026 InTouch

Preaching Plan

Our website

Sign Up for Methodist News

Joint Public Issues Team Newsletter

Gallery - Ledbury Methodist Art Project