

**The Drive
Methodist Church**

Newsletter

December - January 2025



Eastern Avenue Ilford IG13PP

Minister Rev. Jacqueline Jones

Email: rev.jacquelinejones@outlook.com

www.drive-methodist.church

The Drive Methodist Church Mission Statement

The Drive Methodist Church aims to be faithful to the commandments of Jesus, and the calling of the Methodist Church.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission, and to fulfil the promises detailed in the Methodist Worship Book.

To provide a weekly opportunity for all people to worship God in Christ, here at The Drive Methodist Church.

Enable people to grow and learn as Christians through mutual support and care.

Be a good neighbour to the immediate and wider community. Sharing our faith with others through pastoral care, church activities and communication.

Ministers Message

Dear Friends,

As I write our December article, I do so in reflection of attending a naturalisation ceremony - my own. After 19 years of living in the UK - amidst the fears of changing immigration laws, I applied and have been given citizenship. What does it mean? A sense of security, maybe. I hasten to add that I now hold dual citizenship- to this country and the country of my birth.

As we look towards the beginning of the festive season, we enter a time of waiting; waiting for the arrival of the Christ Child again into a world at war, a world where peace is disturbed, a world where belonging can be elusive for those displaced. A world where light shining in the darkness may seem to make little difference. Yet...

The Christ Child comes again into a world of disruption to bring light, to be the Light of the world. The light that shines in the darkness and the messiness of humanity, into a world where the shadows seem dark and long. To bring light into the darkest corners of our world and lives if we allow.

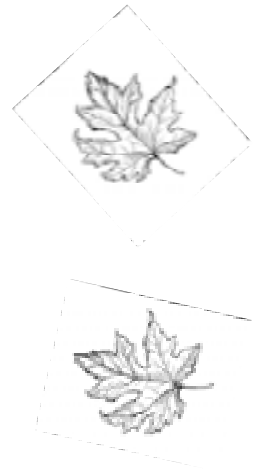
As we allow the light of the Christ Child to shine in and through us again - through welcome and hospitality, we too

become light bearers within the darkness and the darkest of corners. We too become light that draws others to the Christ Child, as we reflect the light and glory of the good news of the Christ Child and the love which God has for creation and humanity.

The Light of the World comes again and again into our world, there is nothing that can stop that light and the hope that the light brings. Christ came into the world and made a home among us, to set an example of God's kingdom - of justice, peace and valuing each as made in God's image. Let us with open hands and hearts welcome Christ and welcome the lonely and misplaced.

In singing the faith (173) "Thank you music" we find these beautiful and meaningful words:

***Into the darkness of this world,
Into the shadows of the night;
Into this loveless place you came,
Lightened our burdens, eased our pain,
And made these hearts your home.
Into the darkness once again –
O come, Lord Jesus, come.***



*Blessings and warm wishes for a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year.
Mmasape*

LET US PRAY

Precious Jesus,

You came so that we might know we are yours by
choice;

loved, embraced, saved by your love and grace,
welcomed to your family and precious in your sight.

You came, so that we might be made complete,
all we were ever meant to be.

You came, as a Shepherd seeking every sheep that is
lost, so you might bring them home.

And beyond even the cruel Cross, You are still
Saviour, Messiah, to all who would heed your call.

Amen

Anon

CHURCH
FAMILY
NEWS

We send our continued prayers to Janet Brunnen and her family. May they find comfort in God's everlasting presence.

Andrew Taylor is now at home and continuing to receive treatment. Andrew is grateful for the support he and Audrey have received.

I understand that Janet and Geoff's little granddaughter Elodie has recovered well from her recent operation, which is good news indeed.

We remember Derek Gabbidon, Peter Bendon and Kathleen and Brian Taylor, all of whom are coping with long term illness.

We were sorry to hear that Kay Whidden has broken her wrist. Wishing you speedy healing Kay.

We wish our friend Sanjay all the very best as he makes a move to settle in Cambridge to begin a new job. Good Luck Sanjay.

It is a time of year when there are so many opportunities to catch one bug or another and so we send love and best wishes to all who are currently feeling unwell. Please ask if you need any support.



We look forward to the beginning of Advent and the gathering of our young people and supporting adults in the Joy that is The Drive Nativity.

Get your Diaries at The Ready!

**CIRCUIT ADVENT CAROL SERVICE 1st
December 4pm**

Do come along to this lovely service at the start of Advent. This will be followed by refreshments.



NATIVITY REHEARSAL AND CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Saturday 7th December we will be having our Nativity rehearsal and then our TDY Christmas party. The rehearsal will start at 2.30pm and the party will follow afterwards. All Nativity characters are welcome to the rehearsal.

NATIVITY and Christmas Toy Service

It will be wonderful to tell the familiar Nativity story through drama and music. The Nativity service is on Sunday 8th December at 11.15 am. Everyone is welcome to come and join the celebration. We look forward to seeing you there.

The Toy Service takes place alongside the Nativity.

What is the Toy Service?

If you can, we ask that you bring a new unwrapped present for a child such as a toy, book or game or a donation. This can be for any age and please don't forget the teenagers. These will go to the Redbridge foodbanks and help to spread Christmas Joy.

Why can't we wrap the presents?

Before being distributed, they have to be checked for suitability and safety, but you can add a roll of Christmas wrap if you wish.

If your toy requires batteries, please include some.



December Birthdays

Lorraine on the 3rd

Bernadino 21st

Jo and Funmi 30th

Wishing you all a very Happy Birthday

Sandra's Craft Stall

This was a great success and raised £97 for church funds. Thanks to everyone who came along and helped themselves.

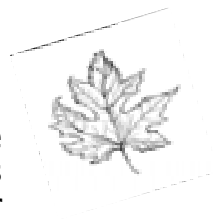
Given how much Sandra had and went on the stall, you won't be surprised to learn that when I looked again, I found some more craft books in a bedside cabinet I hadn't looked in before.

Cheers, Colin

That's an excellent result Colin and it was a privilege to be able to give a home to Sandra's much loved books and materials. LB



REDBRIDGE - Adopt a Tree



Don't miss your chance to Adopt a Tree Pit for 2025. The application takes less than 5 minutes to complete, and your efforts contribute to making a Redbridge a brighter and more biodiverse place to live and work. A tree pit is the soil area at the base of trees on the street, and it is perfect for planting wildflowers in.

Successful applicants are provided with beautiful wildflower seeds to plant and attract those all-important pollinators such as bees and butterflies, whilst also reducing the need for chemical spraying on their adopted tree pits. Previously adopted tree pits?

All adoptions last for 12 months, if you would like to continue your great work, you will need to reapply this year.

Applications for Adopt a Tree Pit close at 11:59pm on Sunday January 5 2025.

Want to go a step further and remove your entire street from the chemical weed control spraying schedule?

This means adopting all tree pits along your street and manually controlling plant growth on the pavements and kerbside - creating a pesticide-free corridor of pollinator friendly plants. [Check out our Pollinator Pathways scheme!](#)

To take part, or for further information.

www.redbridge.gov.uk/our-streets/adopt-a-tree-pit-and-pollinator-pathways

Less than 1 month to go!

As the holiday season approaches, it can be a time of lots of waste and unwanted gifts. Here are some tips for alternative gift giving:



Experiences over Things:

Give the gift of memories! Whether you're sharing a skill, like cooking or repairing an item, or buying tickets for a concert or day out, experiences create lasting joy without the environmental footprint of physical gifts.

Upcycling and Repurposing: Are you good at sewing? There are plenty of brilliant ideas for handmade gifts upcycling unused or unwanted fabric. Any baskets or crates can be filled with jams and chutneys to make beautiful repurposed hampers! Why not have a look around and see what you could pull together from items you already own.

Second-Hand Treasures: Charity shops and online marketplaces can be goldmines for unique, pre-loved items. From vintage clothing to games, toys and even homeware, second-hand gifts are both budget-friendly and planet-friendly.

If you prefer new items, opt for sustainable brands. Look for products made from recycled materials, or those that support fair trade practices.

Shop Locally: Pop along to local craft fairs, or your local high streets for locally sourced, small business treasures. Often small businesses make their products locally, reducing air miles of our gifts.



A Prayer

*In our moments of doubt
and unbelief,
when worldly pressure
or circumstance
become the distance
between us,
draw near, we pray.
Remind us of the grace
that we first knew,
your healing touch,
the Father's love,
the Spirit's breath.
Grant us courage,
a faith that endures
and the sure knowledge
that you are with us
in our journeying,
now and always.*

Amen

The Valentine Singers
Christmas Concert



A feast of seasonal music with carols
for everyone to join in.

Friday 13th December 2024 at 7:30pm

The Drive Methodist Church
The Drive, Ilford, IG1 3PW

Tickets: £13, £7 (students/benefit holders) in ad-
vance [Buy your tickets here](#)

£15, £9 (students/benefit holders) on the door

Admission free for under 16's

**CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE at THE DRIVE
22nd DECEMBER 6.30PM**

Stop the shopping, wrapping and cooking and
spend some time at peace

The church will be lit with candlelight for our special
service of ten traditional Car-
ols and Readings, followed by
refreshments and of course
mince pies and Christmas
songs around the piano.



The Magi

In Matthew's Gospel, he focuses on the time shortly after the birth of Jesus, talking about the "wise men," or *magoi* (in Greek), rendered Magi, and the star they follow:



Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." . . . And behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 NKJV).

So, some larger Nativity scenes include wise men or kings carrying their gifts. However, Matthew's Gospel never calls them kings, and the term Magi more often refers to priests from the Persian and Parthian empires who performed sacrifices, interpreted omens, and tutored the sons of the kings. As such, they are often translated as "wise men." The Magi in Matthew are also said to follow a star that indicated Jesus's place of birth in Bethlehem. Thus, the reason behind including wise men and a star. But how many wise men were there?

Matthew never states how many came to worship, only that there were "men" in the plural, pointing to more than one. In Eastern Christian traditions, the number is 12, while in Western traditions it's three.

In the early third century, the Magi were thought to be kings, perhaps in interpretation of the prophecy in Psalm 72:11 (ESV): “May all kings fall down before him.” Within a few centuries, the Magi had names—Bithisarea, Melchior, and Gathaspa. Today, they are known as Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar (or Casper). Balthasar is said to represent a king of Arabia or Ethiopia, Melchior a king of Persia, and Gaspar a king from India. These names appear on a sixth-century mosaic in the northern Italian city of Ravenna that depicts an enthroned Mary in royal purple holding Jesus as the Magi open their gifts. Above their heads the inscription identifies them as Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar.

And just as the Magi became kings with names and kingdoms, so too did their gifts take on additional interpretations. Gold symbolized Jesus’s kingship (Daniel 7:13-14), frankincense represented Jesus’s deity (Colossians 2:9-10), and myrrh foretold his death (John 19:38-40).

To further complicate Nativity scenes, the Magi often appear right after the birth, together with the shepherds. According to oldest Christian holidays, however, they arrive 12 days after Christmas, referred to as Epiphany or Three Kings Day. Roman Catholics celebrate this feast day on January 6, while Orthodox Christians celebrate on January 19.

The two Gospels account for the wide number of characters present in Nativities, but what about the location of the Nativity? Luke referred to the place of Jesus’s birth using a somewhat ambiguous term in Greek that’s often translated “inn” or “guest room” (*katáluma*), while Matthew calls the place the Magi find a house (*oikos*). It is impossible to say for sure, but several scholars believe that the setting was most likely a type of cave.

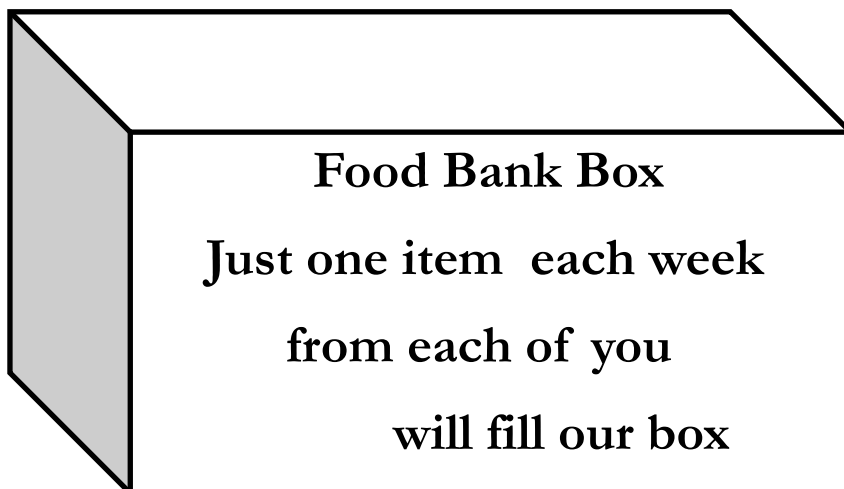
Unwrapping the Nativity. The Museum of the Bible

Thank you for your generosity

Lets make a real effort over the next couple of months to support the supplies of our local food-banks.

Their current shopping list is:

- **Tinned Fruit**
- **Vegetarian Food Items (tins / packets)**
- **Long Life Fruit Juice**
- **Jam / Spreads**
- **Biscuits**
- **Shampoo**
- **Size 5 & 6 Nappies**
- **Long Life Milk**
- **Pasta Sauce**
- **Sanitary Pads**
- **Tinned Tomatoes**
- **Cereals**



Redbridge Council are looking for foster carers who would like to care for children who are disabled or have additional needs.

Gloria Samuel, Head of Service for Fostering and Children with Disabilities Services in Redbridge Council, previously fostered for 20 years. Many of the children she cared for had physical and learning disabilities. Now retired from fostering, Gloria states “I don’t think potential foster carers realise just how much training and support is available when looking after children who happen to be disabled or have additional needs. There are many different care packages offered to support the child and foster carers fully, additional allowances for the foster carers, and the training involved is outstanding”.

If you are considering fostering and would like to know more, please call us on 020 8708 6068 or visit <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/fosteringfaith> to book a place at one of our information sessions.

We can’t wait to hear from you!

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

Thank you for the kind words that follow. I truly have enjoyed editing our newsletter for the past few years. It certainly helped me through the strangely odd time when Covid restricted our lives. I recall how those readers who were more vulnerable very much enjoyed the newsy aspect of the newsletter and hearing about the lives of others who they were no longer able to see. After all there was nothing much happening at church.

Also, I had recently retired to look after Peter who had been so ill and who had a long recovery ahead of him. In my work as a Social Worker, I was used to challenges, deadlines and writing long analytical reports for court, and I was missing this. Taking on the challenge of the Church Newsletter when Diane needed a break was just what I needed to provide a bit of balance to my life. Isn't it interesting how our needs are met when we are least expecting it.

Again, my life is changing and my challenges are caring for elderly relatives and new babies being born...4 in 2years and another one fairly soon, and so the baton passes to the next in line in Gods rich plan for us.

Thank you to all who helped me in any way and the wonderful people who fed my need for stories and tales of past and present. They helped to enrich the lives of many.
Lorraine

Newsletter Thanks

Thank you, Lorriane, for producing our wonderful church newsletter each month. It has always been full of interesting news, anniversaries, celebrations, good wishes, stories, and articles from our church family and beyond. A task that we know you have enjoyed.

Along with Peter, your wonderful printer and folder, and others who have helped out over the years, you have given us many editions for us to read and treasure, so thank you..

JO

Long Story Short - Anne Dellow

I find it difficult to shorten any story that I wish to tell and seem to start off with the same words, “Long story short” and then I launch into a long dialogue that no matter how much I try to make it shorter, it just goes on and on.

My one saving grace has been the church newsletter, as fortunately Lorraine has always welcomed my stories, long or short.

When I heard that the December/ January newsletter would be the last one produced by Lorraine, I understood the reasons for her decision but felt sad as I know how much she enjoyed working on it each month. Her attention to detail was amazing and her patience admirable as I have often kept her waiting for one of my stories, some sent last minute on a Sunday evening.

Thank you Lorraine, here’s one I wrote earlier, I hope its not too long!

A Tale of Two Churches

The Drive Church has been a second home to me, in fact my husband had a Mantra and he would say, “I have one Wife, one job, one football team and one church” How we used to smile when he often stated the facts and how much he loved his ‘one church.’ Ray had such a great faith and would often say to me, “Trust in God.” Our church has provided so much for us through the years, none more, when we needed prayers and comfort following his illness. Our church family were there for us throughout that difficult time and beyond. Life has to go on and I found so much strength from the love of my family, my church family and friends.

I have been reflecting quite often lately upon all the years that have passed and realised that I have never spoken of a church in Suffolk that we attended on our first Christmas together. I had been through some difficult times and the future was beginning to look brighter for myself and my young daughter as I had met Ray a year earlier.

His parents kindly invited us along with my mum to spend Christmas with them. That Christmas Eve Ray and I walked through the village to the 11th century Church of St Edmunds. The beautiful wooden Lych Gate was lit with hundreds of twinkling lights and the church doors were open to welcome us in, it was a cold, frosty night but the church had a warmth of friendliness to it, much the same as our own church provides.

The memory of that night has stayed with me for almost fifty years and I have often been back to the village, the church doors are always open. A few weeks ago I sat in the church for quite a while and felt so calm and at peace. How blessed I am to have two churches that mean so much to me. This is the shorter version of the story, the longer version awaits for our next newsletter!

Anne Dellow

Our Newsletter

When I first came to The Drive over 40 years ago I realised there were a few things integral to our church. The choir and of course our monthly newsletter are two things that come to mind. It goes back a long way and it is a great vehicle to share our news and to keep up to date with the whole church family. In my time at The Drive there have been a few editors – Barbara Foster, Roy Brunnen, myself and latterly Lorraine Bendon all with their own way of doing things. Other people have also been involved with typing, proof reading, printing and collating - Frank and Catherine Sayers, John, Audrey, and Andrew Taylor, and Peter Bendon.

Since taking over from me in 2020, Lorraine has produced informative, interesting and anecdotal newsletters. She has spent a lot of her time enabling us to enjoy our newsletter with varied articles each month and it is with great sadness, though understandable, that she now feels it is time to step down. It would be a great shame to lose our newsletter and would be missed by many.

So what are we going to do? Well having given it a lot of thought I would be willing to take the editorship on again. Just a minute though....having said that I don't promise to spend as much time as Lorraine researching extra items. Of course as well as including news of our church family and details of upcoming events, I will be happy to receive any articles people wish to be included, and will rely on you to let me know about any special birthdays and celebrations.

Also I have to say that come the summer there will be times when Jeremy and I will be away so maybe we will have a few 'bumper' two month editions Finally I certainly won't get in anyone's way if they would like to take on the newsletter so let me know what you think. **Diane Foster**

Was that a unanimous show of hands I saw! You've certainly got my vote Diane and you won't need to join the queue.....because there isn't one. `WATCH THIS SPACE. LB

What's Happening at Wesley's

Let's Celebrate Christmas Together /
Thursday 12th December / City Carol
Service, Carols in the courtyard,
Christmas decorated open house,
Georgian re-enactment & live
period music. Free entry / ALL ARE
VERY WELCOME - DROP IN AND
FEEL FESTIVE





**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



BEETLE'S ALIVE IN 25!!

**JMA FAMILY BEETLE DRIVE
AND TEA (and raffle)**

**SATURDAY 29th MARCH 2025
THE DRIVE METHODIST
CHURCH HALL**

2.30pm for 3pm start

**Tickets available in the
New Year from
Diane Foster**

Watch out-there's a BEETLE about!!

SATURDAY LUNCH

**Our next Saturday lunch will be on 18th January
In the church parlour at 1pm.**

**We will be serving a Beef
and a Vegetarian Lasagna
with salad**



Tea/coffee and cake

cost is £5

**Please add your name to the list at the back of
the church**

Saturday Lunch in February will be on the 8th

Charity Raising Recipe Book

**In the New Year, Ruth, Anne and Lorraine will be
collecting recipes used in our Saturday Lunches
and Afternoon Teas to make up a recipe booklet
that we will use to raise money for an appropriate
charity.**

**Any ideas or offers of illustration will be very
welcome.**

HELPLINES

SAMARITANS

Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts. www.samaritans.org **116 123** (free to call from within the UK and Ireland), 24 hours Email: jo@samaritans.org

MIND

Mind offers advice, support and information to people experiencing a mental health difficulty and their family and friends. Mon to Fri 9am to 6pm (except bank holidays). www.mind.org.uk **InfoLine: 0300 123 3393 to call, or text 86463** Email info@mind.org.uk

PAPYRUS UK

PAPYRUS is the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. They support young people under 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, as well as people concerned about someone else. Their HopelineUK service is open 9am - midnight every day of the year (including weekends and bank holidays). www.papyrus-uk.org **Helpline: 0800 068 4141** Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

YOUNGMINDS

www.youngminds.org.uk

Parents helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri from 9.30am - 4pm, excluding bank holidays)

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY (CALM)

A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support.

thecalmzone.net Helpline: 0800 58 58 58

thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/ 5pm—midnight, every day of the year

BROOK YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE

Information, support and signposting service for young people under 25 on sexual health. Local services available via text message offering free contraception, pregnancy testing, counselling.

brook.org.uk

CHILDLINE

Emotional support for children and young people on issues relating to child abuse, bullying etc. **0800 1111**

FORCED MARRIAGES

Enter Forced Marriages into search bar at top of site - Service provided by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to protect young people from forced marriages abroad. Service offers help to young people in these circumstances to help get them back to the UK.

020 7008 0151 gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

NSPCC CHILD PROTECTION 0808 800 5000

email help@nspcc.org.uk www.nspcc.org.uk

For anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

FREEPHONE 24 HR NATIONAL DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

Run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, this is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

NATIONAL LGBT DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

0800 999 5428 galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines/

Emotional, practical support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Helpline providing support for families and friends of problem drinkers, whether the person is still drinking or not. **0800 0086 811**
www.al-anonuk.org.uk

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY <https://capuk.org/>

Free help getting out of debt, budgeting and making your money go further

AGE UK ADVICE 0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk

Information and advice for older people

A Blessing

Be thou a bright flame before me,

Be thou a guiding star above me,

Be thou a smooth path below me,

Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,

Today - tonight - and for ever

Columba (521-597)

Irish monk and missionary in Scotland



December /January CHURCH DIARY for The Drive

1st December at 11.15am Advent Sunday Worship with HC led by:
Rev'd Jacqui Jones

4pm Circuit Carol Service at The Drive

8th December at 11.15am Nativity and Toy Service.

15th December at 11.15am Advent Sunday Worship led by: Rev'd
Jacqui Jones

22nd December at 11.15am Advent Sunday Worship led by
Robert Agyekum

CANDLELIT CAROL SERVICE at 6.30PM AT The Drive

29th December at 11.15am Sunday Worship led by own
arrangement

JANUARY

5th January at 11.15am Sunday Worship with HC, Epiphany led
by Rev'd Jacqui Jones

12th January at 11.15am Sunday Worship led by Alfred Mensah

18th January SATURDAY LUNCH at 1pm in The Parlour

19th January at 11.15am week of Prayer for Christian Unity led
by Rev'd Diane Smith

26th January at 11.15am Sunday Worship led by Robert Debrah