


| Services for December 2025 / January 2026                                       |                      |  |    |  |
|---|----------------------|--|----|--|
|  | 7 <sup>th</sup> Dec  | Barry Hart                               | LS | 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan <b>Covenant Service</b> Barry Hart LS                  |
|   | 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec | J. Whatton                               |    | 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan Alan Jones  |
|   | 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec | 10.45am: Janet Aspey<br>3.00pm: Nativity |    | 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan Jim Mollitt<br>25 <sup>th</sup> Jan David Moulson     |
|   | 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec | Margaret Whatton                         |    | <b>A Warm invitation to join us in our celebrations is extended to all</b> |
|   | 28 <sup>th</sup> Dec | Jack Whatton                             | LS |  |

## Mount Zion Diary—December 2025 / January 2026

### Regular Meetings

**Family Worship & Sunday School** at 10.45am  
*1st Sunday—Worship and Communion; Other Sundays—Morning Worship*  
**Women's Auxiliary** (Ladies' Meeting) Tuesday, 7.30pm  
**Coffee Morning** Thursday, 10.00am—12.00 noon

### Advent, Christmas and New Year Events:

**Circuit Carol Service** Monday, 8th December at 7.30pm at Mount Zion  
**Carols with Pemberton Old Band:** Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm at Mount Zion  
**Nativity & Carol Service** Sunday, 21st December at 3.00pm  
**Christmas Morning Service** Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> December at 10.45am  
**Covenant Service** Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 10.45am


Other events and Meetings as announced  
 A warm Christian welcome awaits you



### CHRISTMAS HUMOUR - YULE REALLY LIKE THESE!

- **What did Adam say when he was asked his favourite holiday?**  
*It's Christmas, Eve.*
- **What was Moses' wife, Zippora, known as when she threw Christmas dinner parties?** *The hostess with the Moses.*
- **What do you call a Bible character who just pulled up at church?**  
*A parking Lot.*
- **How did Mary and Joseph know Jesus' weight when he was born?**  
*They had a weigh in a manger.*
- **What do you call a greedy elf?**  
*Elfish.*
- **What did one cranberry say to another at Christmas?**  
*'Tis the season to be jelly!*
- **Why wouldn't Ebenezer Scrooge eat at the pasta restaurant?**  
*It cost a pretty penny!*
- **What is a Christmas carol that you can sing to fruits on the happy event?**  
*Have Yourself A Berry Little Christmas.*
- **What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?**  
*A Holly Davidson!*
- **What says Oh Oh Oh?**  
*Santa walking backwards!*






**Mount Zion**  
 Independent Methodist Church & Sunday School,  
 Ormskirk Road, Pemberton, WIGAN, WN5 8ET  
 Charity Number 249330

**Newsletter—December 2025 / January 2026**  
 (Items for inclusion in next issue to: [minister.mountzion@gmail.com](mailto:minister.mountzion@gmail.com)  
 by 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 Thanks)

Minister—Mr G. Barry Hart, BA—215745  
 President—Mr Jack Whatton—215394  
 Vice-president—Mr G. Barry Hart—215745  
 Secretary—Mr Michael Whatton—07553948008  
 Treasurer—Mr David Reed—594832  
 Assistant Treasurer / Lettings officer—Janet Reed—594832

**Officers' Contact Numbers**





### Ways to Love the Difficult People in Church

Concluding part of *Cindi McMenami's* article  
 Difficult people, we know, are everywhere—  
 So, here is the last of the seven ways to love the  
 difficult people and bring glory to God, joy to your  
 heart, and more unity in the local community and  
 church fellowship:

#### Tag-team the difficult person with a friend or mentor.

It's difficult to try to break another person's icy exterior or a difficult personality on your own. So, tag-team the difficult person with a friend at church who can help you show kindness to them.

Do you have a Christian friend or mentor in your life whom you can count on to say the right thing when that difficult person spouts off careless words, gossips about you, or rejects your attempts at kindness?

We all need positive, encouraging Christians in our lives to balance out the challenging ones.

Meet regularly with a mature believer who can help you stay grounded spiritually, pray with you for the difficult people in your church, and cultivate a heart and life that is pleasing to the Lord (**Titus 2:3-5**).

Meeting regularly with someone wise can help you step back from hurt, expectations, and overall "difficult people drama," and align your heart and thoughts with God's so you can not only know how to handle a difficult person, but also make sure YOU are not being one, as well.

When your mentor or friend can join you in your efforts to be kind and loving to the difficult people in your church, you then have a team project and not an individual effort. **Ecclesiastes 4:9** tells us "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour" and tag-teaming a difficult person with love might be a perfect example of that.

*For more on dealing with difficult people or improving your relationships overall, see Cindi's book:*

*Drama Free: Finding Peace When Emotions Overwhelm You.*

## Review of 2025

We are blessed to have a Strong Caring Fellowship at Mount Zion through which we can share in the good and happy times and the sorrowful times of loss, disappointment and bereavement.



Despite a number of deaths during the year, I am pleased to report that during 2025 we have been happy to welcome into our midst a number of former members of **Clowes Methodist Church**, which, sadly closed in August 2025, in addition to the “new faces” added in the recent past. I would ask that you uphold these people in your prayers and daily devotions.

**2025** started with the continuation of the on-going conflict, pain, suffering and hardship caused in the Ukraine, Israel and Gaza along with the economic impact of the increases in the cost of living yet, despite all the negatives that we encounter at times, we should be encouraged by comments from visitors regarding the warm, friendly welcoming caring atmosphere that they feel in our fellowship. I am sure that, even though at times progress does seem slow, we are moving in the **right direction** and in the **right Spirit** that meets the needs of the Church, Sunday School and the Community that we try to Serve. I pray that we may continue to seek God’s will, feel His presence in our lives and find His plan and purpose for our Church in what looks like another year of doubt and uncertainty—a year of Challenge, Adventure and Service..

Throughout the year we have continued to **“work together with God”** to find solutions to set-backs that we have encountered in continuing with the work that God has given us in reaching out to others and preaching the gospel.

⇒ We continue to support the initiatives of local and national charities in their programmes to help those in need at home and abroad. **Pots, Pans, Warm clothing, Medical Items Toiletries and Food-stuffs** have been sent to **Storehouse at Billinge Family Church, The Brick** and to the **Ukraine Appeal** for distribution in addition to regular **Cash donations** to **Wigan & Leigh Hospice**. Please continue to support these appeals.

⇒ The **Councillors’ Surgeries** on the last Thursday of the month, during our Coffee Mornings, offer a forum and venue for members of the public to air their concerns to the local representatives.

I would like to thank all who, in whatever capacity, have taken an active part in the support that we are trying to give through our local Charities and Community: working hard in our efforts in what has been a stressful year, and am sure that all the activity of 2025 has been a reminder to members, locals and passers-by alike, that we at Mount Zion are alive, well and working in the community despite the many “ups” and “downs” we have experienced, individually, as a fellowship and as a nation.

Sadly, our **Prayer / Bible Study Group** is not currently meeting, though we plan to restart meetings at the earliest opportunity and would invite suggestions for a more convenient meeting time so that we can resume our lively non-threatening debate.

The unfolding New Year will, no doubt, contain fears and uncertainties that, through our **Covenant Service** we, as members of the fellowship at Mount Zion, are given a reminder to regularly reconsider the **Promises** made when we took church membership as we enter another year of Service.

At a personal level, I would particularly like to thank friends in the congregations of this and local churches for their continued prayerful support of my Ministry here at Mount Zion—it has been of great help and comfort to me.

**WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS and PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!**

**REMEMBER—JESUS IS STILL THE REASON FOR THE SEASON**

**G. Barry Hart (Minister)**

**THE 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** took place on 25th November with members comprising the meeting.

After opening devotions, Minutes of September 2025 and AGM 2024 Meetings were read and approved as correct records and Current Membership reviewed.

A time of remembrance and respect for those who had passed away during 2025 was observed.

Reports were presented by the sections and thanks given to those who had served in 2025.

The following appointments for 2026 were ratified

|                           |                         |                                |                            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>President</b>          | J. Whatton              | <b>Vice President</b>          | B. Hart                    |
| <b>Treasurer</b>          | D. Reed                 | <b>Assistant Treasurer</b>     | J Reed                     |
| <b>Secretary</b>          | Michael Whatton         | <b>Assistant Secretary</b>     | <b>Vacant</b>              |
| <b>Plan Secretary</b>     | J Whatton               | <b>Baptismal Attendant</b>     | L Hart                     |
| <b>Flower Stewards</b>    | M Vernal<br>L Hart      | <b>Visitation Coordinators</b> | L Hart<br>Margaret Whatton |
| <b>Musical Director</b>   | B. Hart                 | <b>Organist</b>                | J Sharples                 |
| <b>Assistant Organist</b> | B Lancaster<br>M Porter | <b>Welcome Stewards</b>        | D Reed<br>M Sharples       |
| <b>Catering Manager</b>   | M Vernal                | <b>Property Steward</b>        | M Sharples                 |
| <b>School Leaders</b>     | J Reed<br>C Britner     | <b>Safeguarding Officers</b>   | L. Hart<br>H. Nellany      |

(Unfilled posts are to be advertised through notices)



## LADIES’ (W.A) ANNIVERSARY

30<sup>th</sup> November.2025

Sandra O’Nions, in a challenging message focussed upon **“Preparedness”**

We were reminded of the prophecies regarding the coming of the Lord Jesus in a Commercial world and our attitudes and responses to their impact upon those with whom we come into contact—especially in these times of austerity.



**LADIES’ MEETINGS** resume on TUESDAY, 5th March 2024 at 7.30pm.

All Ladies welcome!



## Puzzle Answers :

### Bible Quiz

#### Round 1

1. December 25th
2. A Stable
3. Angel Gabriel
4. A Star
5. Three
6. An animal feeding trough
7. A Carpenter
8. In Palestine
9. Judea
10. That He gave His only Son....’

#### Round 2—Multiple Choice

1. a) A type of incense
2. c) Luke
3. c) Egypt
4. a) David
5. c) Elizabeth
6. a) To register for the census
7. b) 700 years
8. c) Nebakaneza



### Colouring Page

**Magi Hymns:** We Three Kings  
Wise men seeking Jesus  
**Manger Scene:** Matthew: 2, 2



## DON'T PANIC!

Bible Reading: II Thess 2:1-12

At first glance, we might smile as we think about the words uttered regularly by Corporal Jones in "Dad's Army".

These verses from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians may seem confusing. Paul's purpose however, is to remind the Thessalonians that, despite the doom and gloom happening all around, the Lord Jesus Christ will prevail and his people be vindicated.



Paul encourages them to persevere and not be thrown off-balance by teaching which allegedly came from him but actually did not <sup>(vs 1,2)</sup> and tells them not to be afraid because 'the day of the Lord' has not yet come <sup>(vs 2,3)</sup>. Then he refers to what will happen when 'the man of lawlessness' comes <sup>(vs 3-10)</sup>.

First will be a great rebellion against God <sup>(v 4)</sup>.

The 'man of lawlessness' <sup>(v 3)</sup> can also be called both anti-Christ and anti-Law. Paul does not explain who this person is, only that he is to come and will be a rebel in league with Satan. [Look at verses 9 and 10.]

How does Paul describe 'the man of lawlessness' and what he will do?

Despite all the uncertainties around Paul's meaning, the one thing beyond doubt is that Jesus will defeat this man <sup>(v 8)</sup>.

Verses 1 and 2 remind the Thessalonians, and ourselves, that those who believe the lies of 'the man of lawlessness', live in the dark and take pleasure in wicked deeds will also be defeated by Jesus.

As we make our preparations for the Christmas Season, let us first remember that Jesus is light and defeats the darkness once and for all. Secondly, we must ask him to help us to hold on to that. Thirdly, we must Pray for people who are struggling with darkness at this time.

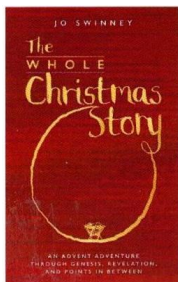
**Author:** Ali Walton (Adapted)

## A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

***In this Christmas Season, Lord, we thank you for your willingness to be Immanuel – God with us – in our troubled world this Christmas time. AMEN***



BOOK REVIEW



**The Whole Christmas Story: An Advent Adventure Through Genesis, Revelation, and Points in Between**

Jo Swinney

The Christmas season with all its glitter and promise can throw our brokenness into stark relief. And our pain is not soothed by the overconsumption of mulled wine and cheese or another set of overpackaged toiletries. Advent offers us the chance to come again to the manger, to sit and wonder at the birth of God's son Jesus, and to receive His gift of shalom – wholeness, healing and peace.

Pb | 144 pgs | BRF

REF 5233 RRP £8.99 Aslan

## THE MAGI - A PICTURE TO COLOUR

Which two popular Christmas Hymns tell of the Visit of the Magi?

(See Page 11 for answer)



**GIFT AID** we would ask that, if you are a tax-payer, you would consider **Gift Aiding** your offerings and donations, as this can help increase the Church's income at no extra cost to yourself. Details from David Reed or Jack Wharton



## A Christmas Bible Quiz



### Round 1

1. On what day do Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus?
2. In what kind of building was Jesus born?
3. Who told Mary that she would have a baby?
4. What did the Kings and Shepherds follow to find the Baby Jesus?
5. How many gifts did the Kings/Wise Men bring to Jesus?
6. In place of a crib, what did Jesus sleep in?
7. What was the profession of Mary's husband, Joseph?
8. In what modern country would you find the town of Bethlehem?
9. What territory did King Herod rule over?
10. Complete the famous line from John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world, ....'

### Round 2—Multiple Choice

1. What is Myrrh?
  - a) A type of incense burned in temples
  - b) A string of beads worn by priests
  - c) A spice used in perfumes and oils
2. The Adoration of the Shepherds is described in which gospel?
  - a) Matthew
  - b) Mark
  - c) Luke
3. Where do Mary and Joseph take Jesus to escape the Massacre of the Innocents?
  - a) Syria
  - b) Phoenicia
  - c) Egypt
4. Bethlehem is often referred to as the Town of ...
  - a) David
  - b) Abraham
  - c) Judah
5. What was the name of John the Baptist's mother?
  - a) Leah
  - b) Esther
  - c) Elizabeth
6. Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel to Nazareth while Mary was pregnant?
  - a) To register for the census
  - b) to attend a funeral
  - c) To pray at the temple
7. How many centuries before the birth of Jesus did the prophet Isaiah foretell that the son of God would be born to a virgin?
  - a) Four
  - b) Seven
  - c) Eight
8. Which of these was not one of the three kings' names?
  - a) Melchior
  - b) Balthasar
  - c) Nebakaneza

Answers on Page 11

## THE MANGER SCENE - A PICTURE TO COLOUR

Where do we read the text below?

(See Page 11 for answer)





## Four Candles

Four candles were burning on the Advent wreath. Everything was so quiet and still that the candles started talking.

The first candle sighed: 'My name is PEACE. My flame is lit but mankind doesn't recognise the value of peace. It seems they just can't – or perhaps won't.'

And the candle's light got smaller and weaker, then finally went out.

The second candle trembled: 'My name is FAITH, but I feel as if I'm not needed. People don't believe anything any more, unless they can physically touch it and hold it in both hands.'

A breeze of air went through the room and the flickering candle died.

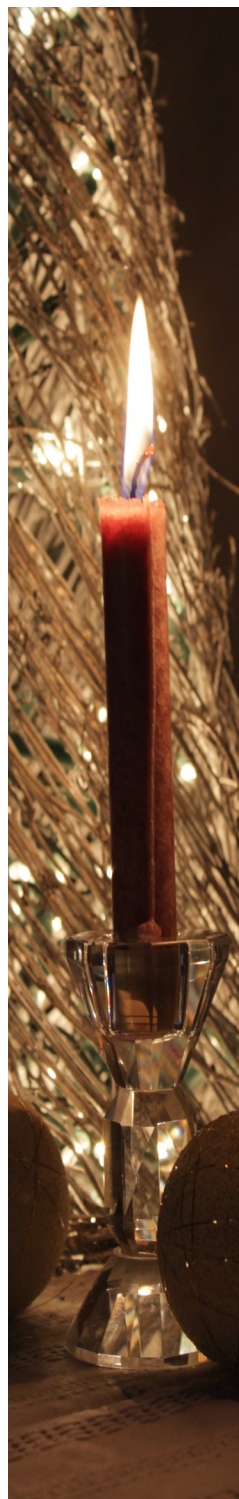
Quietly and timidly, the third candle spoke up: 'My name is LOVE. I no longer have the strength to keep burning. People have become so selfish and uncaring. They only think about what's best for them!'

And with one last flicker, its light also went out.

At that moment, a small boy came into the room. Seeing the candles, he looked puzzled as he said, 'You should be burning! You should all be alight. We need you!'

Then, the fourth candle spoke. 'Don't be afraid. As long as I'm on fire, I will always be able to give the other candles light and life! My name is HOPE.'

And with a small piece of wood, the boy took the light from the candle of hope, and used it to bring peace, faith and love to life again.



## The Story of "Silent Night"

"Silent Night" is about a calm and bright silent night, and the wonder of a tender and mild newborn child, words written in 1816 by a young priest in Austria, Joseph Mohr, not long after the Napoleonic wars had taken their toll.

It was Christmas Eve, 1818, when the now-famous carol was first performed as *Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht*.

Joseph Mohr, the young priest who wrote the lyrics, played the guitar and sang along with Franz Xaver Gruber, the choir director who had written the melody.

An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy of the six-verse song to his home village. There, it was picked up and spread by two families of traveling folk singers, who performed around northern Europe. In 1834, the Strasser family performed it for the King of Prussia. In 1839, the Rainer family of singers debuted the carol outside Trinity Church in New York City.

The composition was translated into over 300 languages with many arrangements for various voices and ensembles.

It was sung in churches, in town squares, even on the battlefield during World War I, when, during a temporary truce on Christmas Eve, soldiers sang carols from home.

"Silent Night," by 1914, known around the world, was sung simultaneously in French, German and English.

Over the years, the carol's mystique grew with its popularity.

After the original manuscript was lost, for decades, some speculated that the music had been written by Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven. In 1994, an original manuscript was found in Mohr's handwriting, with Gruber named as composer.

Today, the Franz Xaver Gruber Museum in Hallein and the Joseph Mohr School in Wagrain, Austria honour the creators of this classic carol.

The Stille Nacht Gesellschaft—or Silent Night Society—hosts a virtual Silent Night museum, tracks events, and promotes the use of all six verses, which in the words of Silent Night Society president "[encourage] peace and [demand] responsibility for the globe."

The English version of "Silent Night" is typically sung in three verses (corresponding with the original 1, 6, and 2.)

*Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.  
'Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,  
Holy Infant so tender and mild.  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ, the Saviour is born, Christ, the Saviour is born.*

*Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from thy holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace.  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.*







**Christmas Gifts for all occasions**



**Handicrafts**



**Teddies in Mugs**



**Chocolates, Sweets & Cakes**



**Toiletries**



**Christmas Hampers**



**and Catering for all**



***Stalls Galore! Stalls Galore! Stalls Galore! Stalls Galore! Stalls Galore!***