



outlook

Newsletter of **Pond Square Chapel** | Highgate United Reformed Church | **December 2025 - February 2026**

Advent & Christmas Services

Sun 7th Dec 10.30 am Morning Worship

Sun 14th Dec 10.30 am Service of Carols & Lessons

Sun 21st Dec 10.30 am All Age Family Nativity Service

Christmas Eve 6 pm Candlelit All Age Family Service

Christmas Day 10.30 am All Age Family Service

Sun 28th Dec 10.30 am Morning Worship



Minister:	Rev'd Dr Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley	
Administrator:	Patricia Judd Tel: 020 8341 5463	Email: admin@pondsquarechapel.org
Treasurer:	Robert Gorrie	
Outlook Editor:	Michelle Swer	Email: michelleswer@aol.com
Website:	www.pondsquarechapel.org	

• Minister's Reflection

For a week at the end of October, anyone travelling on the Northern Line knew the particular frustration of “severe delays due to signal issues.” For several days in a row, the familiar rhythm of commuting was replaced by cancelled trains, crowded platforms, and replaced by having to take the 43 bus everywhere. Carefully planned journeys were suddenly unpredictable. But somewhere between Archway and London Bridge, as I stared out of a steamed-up bus window, it struck me: **Advent is, at its heart, a season of interruptions.**



We often imagine the Christmas story bathed in candlelit serenity, but the biblical narrative is anything but tidy. It is full of people whose lives are stopped, redirected, or upended entirely.

Consider Mary. A young woman with an ordinary future ahead of her until an angel appears and interrupts her life with a calling as astonishing as it was bewildering. Joseph, too, has his plans overturned. His respectable path is disrupted by a dream that asks him to embrace confusion, risk reputation, and trust God more deeply than he ever imagined.

Then there's the census itself, a mass, empire-wide interruption. Families uprooted and forced to travel, neighbourhoods emptied, roads filled with weary feet. Mary and Joseph's long journey to Bethlehem is not a spiritual retreat; it is an inconvenient government requirement that disrupts everything, landing them in a crowded town with nowhere to stay.

The shepherds, working the night shift, are interrupted by a sky bursting into song. The Magi's scholarly routine is disrupted by a star too significant to ignore. Even King Herod experiences an interruption—one he responds to with fear rather than wonder.

Every person in the story is taken off their expected route. Every character must decide how to respond to the holy disruptions that break into their lives. As I queued onto yet another crowded bus, I found myself asking: **What if the interruptions we resist are actually places where God is speaking?** What if the detours, delays, and disappointments in our days are not merely obstacles but invitations?

Advent reminds us that Christ comes not when the world is ready but precisely when it is not. He enters a landscape of disruption, political, social, and personal and transforms it with presence. Emmanuel, God with us, is not deterred by chaos. He steps directly into it.

So if this season feels interrupted, you are in good company. The story of Christ's birth begins in interruption, but it ends in hope.

May we have the courage, like Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and even weary commuters on the 43 bus, to look for God in the detours. And may we discover, in every unexpected turn, that Christ is already there waiting for us.

• Ceilidh Fundraising

Fundraising for the new heating starts!

Our first fundraising event took place on 22 November with a ceilidh. The band was lively, the dancing even livelier and great fun was had by all.



This was our first fundraising event. After meeting the costs of the band and drinks we raised £720 – it's a start!

• Dates for the diary

DEC 2025

Sun 7th Morning Worship.	10.30 am	Thur 18th No Informal Bible Study. Noon Christmas Community Lunch <i>(the lunch will take a break over the festive season and return on Thursday 8th January at Noon).</i>	11.00 am
Wed 10th Carols in The Square, followed by mulled wine, mince pies and a performance of The Nutcracker by Highgate Ballet School in the chapel.	6.30 pm	Fri 19th Meditation via Zoom	12.30 pm
Thur 11th Informal Bible Study Noon Drop-in Community Lunch till 13.30 pm.	11.00 am	Sun 21st Morning Worship All Age Family Service. This service will include the children and young people's nativity.	10.30 am
Fri 12th Meditation via Zoom	12.30 pm	Wed 24th Christmas Eve Candlelit All Age Family	6.00 pm
Sun 14th Morning Worship. The service will also include communion.	10.30 am	Thur 25th Christmas Day All Age Family Service	10.30 am
		Sun 30th Morning Worship.	10.30 am



JAN 2026

Sun 4th	10.30 am	Fri 16th	12.30 pm
Morning Worship.		Meditation via Zoom	
Thur 8th	10.00 am	Sun 18th	10.30 am
Little Village Donation Drive.		Morning Worship.	
	11.00 am		
Informal Bible Study.		Thur 22nd	11.00 am
	12-13.30 pm	Informal Bible Study.	
Noon Community Lunch		Noon Community Lunch	12-13.30 pm
Fri 9vth	12.30 pm		
Meditation via Zoom		Fri 23rd	12.30 pm
		Meditation via Zoom	
Sun 11th	10.30 am	Sun 25th	10.30 am
Morning Worship.		Morning Worship.	
The service will include communion.			
Thur 15th	11.00 am	Thur 29th	11.00 am
Informal Bible Study.		Informal Bible Study.	
	12-13.30 pm	Noon Community Lunch	12-13.30 pm
Noon Community Lunch			
		Fri 30th	12.30 pm
		Meditation via Zoom	



• Poem

Winter

Winter has come early this year.
Short days;
long, dark nights.

The Jasmine is early.
Snow clouds are gathering...

Ancient trees stand like sentinels.

The man is aware,
as the season repeats itself,
of the circularity of existence.
His existence.
Bringing back images from childhood.

The years melt away.
The man, and child, are one.

Rooftops and trees are silhouetted
in darkening turquoise evening light.

Dennis Evans

• Christmas: A Season of Joy...

A Season To Care For Creation

The Christmas season is a time of joy, generosity, and celebration. Yet it's also one of the most waste-heavy moments of the year. From gift wrap to food packaging, decorations to disposable tableware, our festive habits can leave a surprising mark on God's creation. As followers of Christ, we are called to be good stewards of the earth (Genesis 2:15), and one simple, meaningful way to honour that call is through mindful recycling.

At Pond Square Chapel, we are encouraged by our Eco Church Bronze award and are working to see how we continue to build on the foundations we have in place. Therefore, we always feel it is important to raise awareness, increase consciousness and individually and collectively to try to affect change.



Small Choices, Big Impact

Every piece of paper, card, plastic, or metal we recycle reduces the strain on natural resources, cuts pollution, and helps protect wildlife. Choosing recyclable wrapping paper, reusing gift bags, or opting for natural decorations like foliage and pinecones are small acts that add up to big change. When we choose to recycle, we proclaim that creation is worth protecting.

A Season of Hope

Christmas reminds us that light shines in the darkness. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World, we can also shine a bit of that light by caring for the world He came to save. Recycling at Christmas is a simple, hopeful gesture—one that honours God, helps our neighbours, and protects the beautiful gift of creation.

May this Christmas season inspire us not only to give generously but also to live responsibly, cherishing the earth that reflects the glory of its Creator.

• Can you help us stay warm?

Since it was built in 1859 Pond Square Chapel has been a welcoming and warm home for its congregation, numerous outreach programmes, and many local community organisations and activities.

The warm welcome for all requires, especially over the winter months, reliable and effective heating whether for Sunday morning worship, weekly Community Lunch, the overnight Winter Shelter for the homeless, Highgate Ballet School, concerts and other events. Over recent years, despite significant maintenance expenditure and attention, the existing boilers have become increasingly unreliable.



As a result the Elders and Trustees have decided the best way to ensure warmth for all the buildings' many users is to replace the boilers. This work will be carried out in Spring 2026 and will cost in the region of £100,000. This is clearly a huge challenge for the congregation and charity.

We are therefore appealing to all those who support Pond Square Chapel as a church, as a centre for the various community and social support activities it hosts, or as a home for their club or school, to consider making a donation towards the cost of the new boiler system.

If you are able to help with a donation, would consider fund raising on our behalf, or simply wish to register your support for ensuring Pond Square Chapel stays warm please get in touch.

**For more information contact
Patricia (*Admin*) or Robert (*Treasurer*)
at admin@pondsquarechapel.org**

