

**The Drive Methodist Church**  
**Eastern Avenue**  
**NEWSLETTER**

**December 2020**



Minister: Revd. Mmasape Zihle

[www.drive-methodist.church](http://www.drive-methodist.church)

**Church Mission Statement**  
**of**  
**The Drive Methodist Church**

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.

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.

## **Our Minister writes:**

Dear Friends

Advent is underway. It is the season where the promised Messiah was and is awaited. During this time of advent, we journey with Mary from the unusual announcement by an angel that she has been chosen by God to be the mother of God incarnate in human flesh. This leads us to the difficult conditions in a stable where God makes his presence into the world, with no midwives or medics just an anxious Joseph and an array of animals looking on. And beyond the stable, angels raise a song of praise declaring Joy to the world as the saviour is born.

In the midst of the challenges of 2020 and the ongoing pandemic God continues to make his presence in the world. Not with pomp, lights and great feasting, but rather calling us to draw close through our own experience with those who live life daily in difficult conditions.

It is not as newspaper articles would want us to believe that any one man or politician has saved Christmas. God gives us Christmas through Christ no matter where or what we are going through.

So friends, as we together go through the challenges of waiting for the revelation of God in our lives let us do so with joyful and obedient hearts that seek to embrace God's will. And when Christmas morning dawns, let us join the angels choir as we sing peace on earth.

Wishing you a Christ centred Christmas wherever you may be and however you celebrate it. May God's unconditional

and eternal love be the best gift you unwrap today and always.

With love

**Mmasape**

*Special thanks to Mmasape for taking the time to provide us with a message when she is in South Africa with so many calls on her time. LB*

*At the time of compiling this newsletter, I have no information about any plans to open the church for services. Please check on the church website or call one of the church stewards to be updated.*

## *We hold in mind .....*

The families and friends of Betty Griffiths and Elsie Blanchard who sadly both died in October.

The Service of Thanksgiving that took place at church to celebrate the life of Betty, followed a committal at Forest Edge Crematorium in Hainault on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

A committal for Elsie took place at Forest Edge on 27<sup>th</sup> November. Elsie's family plan to hold a Memorial Service at The Drive in 2021 when it is safe to do so.

Two special ladies who will be missed by so many.



Many in our church family are in poor health and receiving medical treatment or at home recovering. Others have been recently bereaved or remembering the anniversary of their loved ones and we pray for their peace and comfort.

We also remember those who are caring for family members or in the caring profession amid all the restrictions in these difficult times.

### **Memories of Elsie**

I will always remember being a young boy at church and seeing Elsie with her sister Ella; they were always very kind to me and my sister. However, my lasting memory of Elsie will always be the incredible, and at times unbelievable,

stories from her life she used to casually come out with after a Sunday morning service – hopping from her time in Malta during the war and marvelling at the Royal Navy officers in their white uniforms, to going exploring on the Russian side of the divide in post-war Berlin before the Wall went up and being rescued by some British soldiers. I am sure there were countless other stories that I never got a chance to hear!

**Matthew Foster**

*Congratulations and Best Wishes*



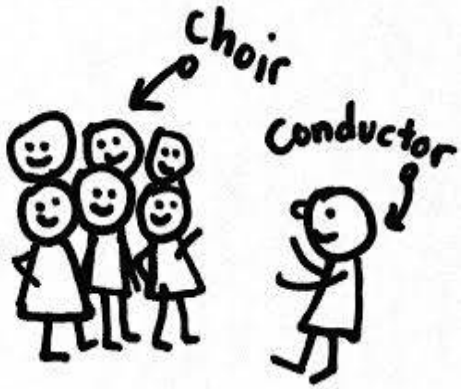
Love and Best wishes to Rochelle who celebrated her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

We hope you found a way Rochelle to make your 18<sup>th</sup> memorable!

Happy Birthday to Jo on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Peter and I celebrate our Golden Wedding Anniversary on 5<sup>th</sup> December, and I think we are both a bit lost for words. 50 years!! He said he had recommended me for an OBE. Maybe we need two!

**Lorraine**



Have you all enjoyed seeing and hearing the choir as much as I have on the rare occasions, we have been able to attend church?

Thank you, choir and Andrew, for the joy you bring to us all.



Remember.....



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

# News of meetings from Jan and John



## **Bible Reading Group this month**

The Bible Reading Group has decided not to meet on December 25 as we might all be busy, so the meeting will be on Friday 8th January. Time to be arranged nearer the time and we will post a Zoom link on the Bible Reading Group WhatsApp and on The Drive Together WhatsApp.

Most of us found Joshua heavy going. We will be reading 1 Peter chapter 1 in preparation for our discussion.

## **Church Prayer Meeting**

Prayer meeting Thursday December 31st from 7:15pm-7:45pm. We hope you can fit this into your New Year's Eve celebrations. There is a prayer sheet on The Drive Church website to guide you in your prayers.

Happy Christmas

**Jan and John**

**Thank you** to all who have planned, provided and contributed to the circuit online services. They are much appreciated by so many. **LB**







## **OUR DAILY PRAYERS on the THE DRIVE TOGETHER WHATSAPP**

The background to the daily prayers. At the start of Covid, I was asked to do morning and evening prayers for The Drive. I think they may also go elsewhere but not 100% sure. For this Hollywood epic, 7 of us were originally asked to be magnificent and I think of myself as Steve McQueen as he survived in the film. The others are Mmasape, Jan, John, Brian, Bambo and Pauline. Like all good dramas, we replace, and Collins has taken over from Pauline with Sharon guesting occasionally. There is no theme and we are given free range to do what we want. I know Jan and John like to concentrate on officials. Pauline and myself are more like....what shall we do today? Pauline looks at the Methodist Web Site whereas I like to Google and also to wrap my prayers in an introduction. But the aim is to help people during lockdown and the difficult times we are having.

I thought it would only be a month or so. It is now 8 months. Have I repeated myself? Who knows? I am not going to look back and rely on the forgetfulness of the WhatsApp group not to go "We've had this before". I think I am pretty safe there. There have been times when it has been a chore, especially when I was still working. But as time as gone on and perhaps I have got more confident, then it is easier. I don't worry anymore whether people will like it. I hope you do but we say what is important to us and that is sufficient. Will it continue once normal life returns? Will we have more guests? Will there be themes? Will I be sacked for speaking out? Will I ever get paid?

Hugs and kisses? **Colin**

## **Small World - Brian Taylor**

This is the time of the year when many charities both small and large are sending us their urgent requests for donations. Many are in particularly dire straits this year as the result of the pandemic that has closed their shops and cancelled the events planned to entertain us and bring them an income. So many requests all so deserving but many have to go in the bin.

We all have our favourite charities, which we support with our money, time or encouragement. Many years ago, I heard about 'Intermediate Technology', now known as 'Practical Action'. This was a small group of people, mainly in UK, who were trying to use their technical skills to improve the living conditions for people world-wide who were struggling against poverty, natural disasters and man-made destruction. They had seen well-meaning aid sent in the form of expensive vehicles for which there was no provision for spares or maintenance, of crops grown on a large scale without provision for marketing or thought of the effect on local subsistence farmers.

Practical Action was founded by E F Schumacher, author of 'Small is Beautiful', which became a best seller and created a wide interest in small scale technologies. In Nepal, many people die from chest infections caused by smoke from indoor cooking stoves. Practical Action has helped to design new stoves and hoods, to be made locally, which take the noxious fumes away and burn fuel more efficiently. Everyone benefits children are healthier so do not miss education, mothers spend less time gathering firewood, stove makers are trained and have an income to support their families and the environment is protected from pollution and denudation. Would you like to know more? Look at [www.practicalaction.org](http://www.practicalaction.org)

## **Christmas in India**

Our Christmas celebration in our family which starts on November 25<sup>th</sup> is popularly known as Suppose Christmas. I've not much idea how it originated, just followed our grandparents ... We make a special dish tasting something like sponge cake but it is not soft.

We put our Christmas tree up on White Christmas, that's the first Sunday of December. All our houses will hang stars outside. We go carol singing with our church choir and the church I visit had a congregation of around 1000 families, so the carol group are split and visit in groups. Every day after 9pm the carol rounds start and we go around the streets singing carols and visiting all the houses with a Santa who distributes chocolates. One week before Christmas we hang a Christmas wreath on the front door.

We start making lot of sweets, cookies and cakes just one week before Christmas and pack them into parcels for distribution to neighbours and relatives on Christmas day.

Few days before Christmas we feed the poor and needy and distribute gifts generally to around 50 persons in our family. But that purely depends upon each individual family. The elderly in the family teach us the meaning of festival and the Christmas message of caring and sharing being part of the celebration.

On Christmas Eve we paint our front entrance to our homes with Kolam (Kolam is a form of drawing that is drawn by using rice flour, chalk, chalk powder or rock powder, often using naturally or synthetically coloured powders)

We all buy new clothes for Christmas day; when we have an early morning service at 4.30 am, so we get up early have a bath and wear our new clothes. Ladies and girls put lots of jasmine flowers on their hair as a symbol of celebration.

After the service we have our traditional breakfast meal then the children of the family visit neighbours distributing sweets and cake.

All relatives gather at one place every year as we take turns to be organisers. We start with prayer, carol singing, bible quiz and so on. Lunch will generally be turkey biryani with of course a lot of accompaniments. In the evening, we play indoor board

games and end the day stuffing ourselves with all the left overs and watch movies on TV. So ends our Christmas Day celebration.

**Sheela Selwyn.**

Really interesting, thanks Sheela. **LB**

### *Christmas in the 1950's*

I spent most of my childhood in rural Essex where new housing estates were being developed in the 1950's and where at Christmas it always snowed. Not the little fluttery bits we get now; but big drifts of snow that slipped off the rooftops and blocked doorways. Proper snow for making snowmen that lasted for weeks.

Our house was heated from the central coal fire and each room had a vent for the warm air to circulate, although it wasn't enough to melt the frost on the inside of my bedroom windows. My sister and I often used the vents like an intercom system to call to each other. But my abiding memory wasn't of feeling cold; I suppose we just wore more appropriate clothes and moved about a bit more than we do now.

The vent in the kitchen was larger than in the other rooms with lots of holes that were just big enough for us to poke our notes for Santa through. A few days before Christmas, we would be told to listen out for Santa as he would be talking to us and, like magic through the little holes in the vents we heard him call our name and we would excitedly tell him how good we had been, hoping for the toys we wanted. As you would expect of Santa, he was always very friendly and jolly and made a point of emphasising how good we must be....just like my dad was always telling us.

For some of my childhood my Dad worked at Fords in Dagenham. During the year he paid into a children's party fund with the purpose of providing a party, entertainment, and gift for each child in the lead up to Christmas.

I don't recall having any choice in the matter and with my naughty little sister in tow we were squashed onto a coach which whisked us away to a venue where we sat on long utilitarian tables and were fed with cakes and sandwiches, entertained and introduced to Father Christmas. No parents were present although I'm sure there were well meaning ladies who volunteered as chaperones.

Photos were taken of the children enjoying themselves, although photos of me didn't reflect this at all. No doubt I was fed up being the big sister in charge and, as quite a reserved and studious child, mass jollity just wasn't for me.

Although young, I remember being aware of not spoiling my parents' pleasure at providing us with this treat. What a relief when I became too old to be included.

My Mum and Dad didn't attend church but on Christmas morning after opening the presents left in a pillowcase at the end of our beds; we always went out for a walk, snow permitting.

My dad loved Christmas and always went for a stroll down the market on Christmas Eve coming home with last minute

gifts for us including an enormous Christmas Cracker, several feet long. Mum of course was in charge of cooking our Christmas dinner, helped by my lovely Little Nanny who would wear her best blouse and brooch.

I would have used my pocket money to buy small gifts for the family, always buying my Nanny a jar of bath salts or some bath cubes for Christmas and she was always so pleased. I think I was an adult when it dawned on me that she didn't have a bathroom in the old Eastend house she lived in!

**Lorraine**

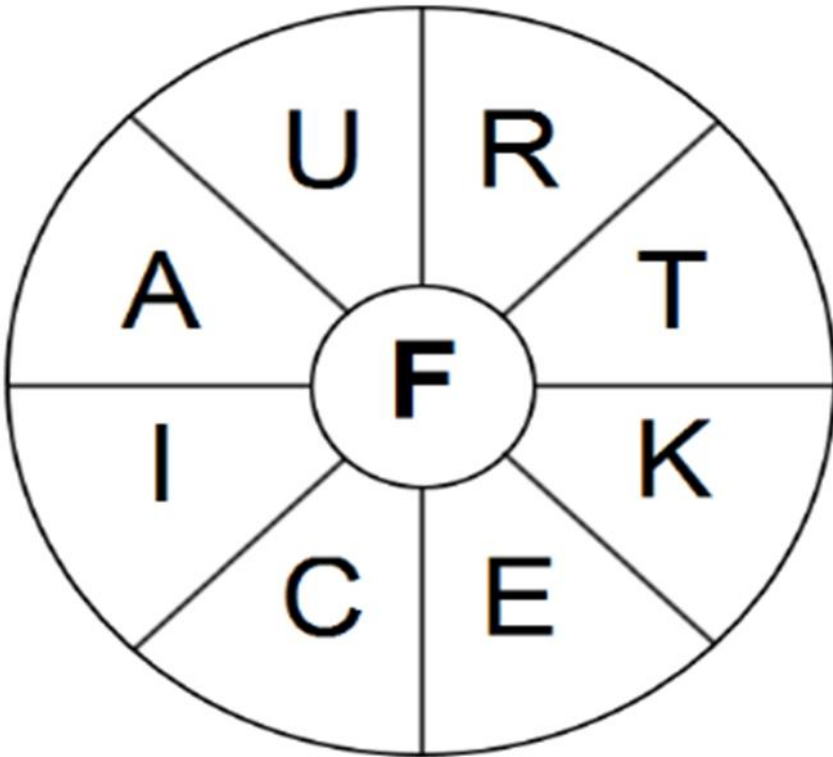


## **Christmas in Ghana**

As a former British colony, Christmas in Ghana is celebrated in the same way as in England. Except that church services tend to be a little longer than average, there is also a party atmosphere with people playing drums, mostly in the rural areas. Lots of sharing of food and gifts.

**Liz Amar**

## *Christmas Word Wheel*



This Christmas themed word wheel is made from a 9 letter Christmas themed word. Try and find that word, then make as many words of any length as you can from these letters. You can only use each letter once, and each word must include the letter **F**.

*GOOD LUCK*

## *Preparations, Puddings and Pickles*



Throughout the past months of uncertainty there have been many moments of solitude when I have wrapped myself up in a blanket of nostalgia. With Christmas approaching, the usual list of things to do is on hold as we wait to be told if we can spend time with our families this year. How different our lives have been as we have had to adapt to lockdown. As the months passed by I found the luxury of spare time a great asset and often recalled my childhood. Would I swap the experience of watching my mum prepare for Christmas, in order to get an online shopping slot? Never!

As a child I recall November to be a very cold month. I remember the damp mist that hovered over us, everywhere seemed so dull and dismal, until December when my mum would begin her preparation for Christmas. Chatsworth Market was a ten-minute walk from our house and mum had every shop she needed, along with fruit and veg stalls too. At Christmas time the shops would allow the stalls to run leads from the roadside into their electric sockets, (health and safety was a long way off yet.) in order for the stalls to light up their wares. I remember the Salvation Army band playing on the corner and I loved singing the carols.

Every day was a shopping day as 'fridges were a luxury and everything had to be fresh. There was a routine to the shopping experience as mum started at Vi's veg stall, moving onto Les the butchers, the Co-op and the bakers. Everyone was on first name terms except for the shoe mender who was a very distinguished man whom mum called, "Mr Gaisford".



I was not aware just how much I absorbed on those shopping trips, but I do recall the amount of time it took to get home as there was always someone mum had to chat to.

'Stir-up Sunday' the last Sunday before Advent, was the day when the Christmas pudding would be prepared, and everyone would be invited to have a stir and make a wish for the year ahead. By tradition, a silver sixpence would be placed in the mixture to bring luck to anyone who found it on Christmas day. My mum would not put the sixpence in at this stage preferring to put it into a bowl on the day so that she could keep an eye on it in case someone swallowed it! The pudding would be boiling for hours and the kitchen resembled a sauna. I can remember the noise of the basin wobbling in the large saucepan mum kept for this annual boil up, it went on for hours.

Pickled onions and red cabbage had been bottled weeks before. The Christmas cake was baked and ready for the marzipan (homemade) and icing to go on the top along with the snowmen and robins that had been languishing in a tin box for the past year. In the early years of marriage I carried on with the same traditions but now I leave it to my family of online shoppers. It was all a long time ago but how sweet the memory.

**Anne**



## **Memories of Christmas?**

No stocking, always a pillowcase! Off to 8am Christmas Communion at Eastern Avenue Church on a crisp, cold morning. Seeing the milkman and his steaming horse leaving many bottles of milk and pots of fresh cream on each doorstep. Home to explore the pillowcase, baste the turkey, boil the pudding, look out for the arrival of aunts, uncles and cousins for Christmas Dinner, play games and tell family stories.

### **Brian Taylor**



Many thanks to those who have shared their thoughts and given us an insight into their memories of Christmas. **LB**

**If you or anyone you know is experiencing distress or hardship due to Covid 19 please contact the Minister Reverend Mmasape Zihle.**

**[www.drive-methodist.church](http://www.drive-methodist.church)**

## **A message from Emma Revie CEO of The Trussell Trust**

As a nation we expect no one should be left hungry or destitute – illness, disability, family breakdown or the loss of a job could happen to any of us, and we owe it to each other to make sure sufficient financial support is in place when we need it most.

It's hard to break free from hunger if there isn't enough money coming in to cover the rising cost of absolute essentials like food and housing. For too many people staying above water is a daily struggle. It's completely unacceptable that anyone is forced to turn to a food bank as a result.

**Emma Revie**

# **SUPPORT REDBRIDGE FOOD BANK**

Jubilee Church - 14 Granville Road Ilford IG1 4JY

020 8518 0056

Website <http://redbridge.foodbank.org.uk/>

While we are unable to use the foodbank box in the church foyer. Please take donations to Granville Road. **Apart from food- Urgently needed are toilet rolls, shampoo, shower gel, size 6 nappies.**

## NORDIC CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

**In Scandinavia**, the Norse celebrated **Yule** from December 21, the **winter solstice**, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.

The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. At that time of year, most cattle were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. For many, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat. In addition, most wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

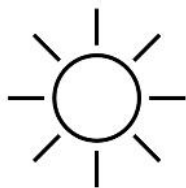


**Sweden: 'God Jul!'** Most people in Scandinavian countries honour St. Lucia (also known as St. Lucy) each year on December 13. The celebration of St. Lucia Day began in Sweden but had spread to Denmark and Finland by the mid-19th century.

In these countries, the holiday is considered the beginning of the Christmas season and, as such, is sometimes referred to as "little Yule." Traditionally, the oldest daughter in each family rises early and wakes each of her family members, dressed in a long, white gown with a red sash, and wearing a crown made of twigs with nine lighted candles. For the day, she is called

"*Lussi*" or "*Lussibruden*" (Lucy bride). The family then eats breakfast in a room lighted with candles.

Any shooting or fishing done on St. Lucia Day was done by torchlight, and people brightly illuminated their homes. At night, men, women and children would carry torches in a parade. The night would end when everyone threw their torches onto a large pile of straw, creating a huge bonfire. In Finland today, one girl is chosen to serve as the national Lucia and she is honoured in a parade in which she is surrounded by torchbearers.



Light is a main theme of St. Lucia Day as her name, which is derived from the Latin word *lux*, means light. Her feast day is celebrated near the shortest day of the year, when the sun's light again begins to strengthen. Lucia lived in Syracuse during the fourth century when persecution of Christians was common. Unfortunately, most of her story has been lost over the years. According to one common legend, Lucia lost her eyes while being tortured by a Diocletian for her Christian beliefs. Others say she may have plucked her own eyes out to protest the poor treatment of Christians. Lucia is the patron saint of the blind.

**Finland: Hyvää Joulua!** Many Finns visit the sauna on Christmas Eve. Families gather and listen to the national "Peace of Christmas" radio broadcast. It is customary to visit the gravesites of departed family members.

## A Christmas Colouring



## IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER



*In the bleak midwinter  
Frosty wind made moan  
Earth stood hard as iron  
Water like a stone  
Snow had fallen  
Snow on snow on snow  
In the bleak midwinter  
Long, long ago*

*Angels and Arc Angels  
May have travelled there  
Cherubim and Seraphim  
Thronged the air  
But only his Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped the beloved  
With a kiss*

*What can I give him?  
Poor as I am  
If I were a shepherd  
I would give a lamb  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part  
But what I can I give him  
Give him my heart  
Give him my heart*

**CHRISTINA ROSSETTI 1872**

**GUSTAV HOLST 1906**

## **News from our Treasurer**

The November Circuit meeting was again held via Zoom.

During the meeting Churches were asked to give a brief précis of the effect Covid-19 has had on them. It was very apparent that all Churches within our Circuit are suffering financially from the shutdown, due to lack of rental income and freewill offerings.

Fortunately, we at The Drive do still have some limited rentals, and their income contributes to our Circuit contribution and additional cleaning costs. Even better we have many of the congregation who have set up monthly standing orders, to continue making their freewill offerings. These contributions make a tremendous difference, and although we still have to dip into our reserves for unavoidable expenses, we are managing with your help to keep the Church open. A BIG THANKS to you all.

**John Higgins**

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## **TEST AND TRACE**

In line with UK Government guidance we have set up NHS COVID19 Test & Trace QR codes which are now displayed in both the Church and Hall foyers.

If you have the NHS Test & Trace application on your smart phone, please scan the code whenever you enter either building. This will ensure that your presence is recorded by NHS Test & Trace.



**We are living in very difficult times and it is evident that the amount of scams and criminal deceit is on the increase. So here is some good advice from Colin.**

### **Some Golden Rules**

Never give out anything personal such as your credit card details, bank details in an email

If it says click here to win a million – stop being greedy and delete the email

If you don't know who sent the email, then delete it. Why even bother reading it.

Just replying to the email tells the sender they have a valid email and then they can start identifying theft.

Your email provider will try and block fraudulent emails, but it is an ongoing battle which they cannot win as the fraudster just tries another way.

**Think .....and if it looks dodgy delete it.**

In my email, in the top left corner of the emails I receive, I see the friendly email name, e.g. Colin Rodway followed by the real email address in brackets, e.g.

<[colin.rodway@microsoft.com](mailto:colin.rodway@microsoft.com)> If the address in the < > is unknown to you, delete the email

**Conclusion: If you are not 1000% sure of the email DELETE IT.**



## Advice and Support

The Redbridge Handyperson Scheme carries out odd jobs around the home for vulnerable residents, free of charge or at a low cost, depending on your eligibility. This includes fitting locks and security chains and key safes. phone 020 8501 7778 or

email [handyperson@atlantic-housing.com](mailto:handyperson@atlantic-housing.com).

Redbridge currently has two crime prevention officers who offer free advice on a range of crime prevention, including fraud, CCTV, security lighting and alarms. If you want to discuss home security or need advice you can call a crime prevention officer on 020 8554 9264 or

email [RedbridgeCPO@met.police.uk](mailto:RedbridgeCPO@met.police.uk).

Thanks to Brian for this.

A P7oster found in a church in France (translated)

*When you enter this church, it may be possible that you hear `the call of God`*

*However, it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile.*

*Thank you for turning off your phones. If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him.*

*If you want to SEE Him, send Him a text while driving.*

# **NHS VOLUNTEER RESPONDERS**

DELIVERED BY THE ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Do you need some help at this time?

Do you need help to isolate due to a health condition?

If you need a hand with collecting shopping or prescriptions, or just want someone to talk to, our **NHS VOLUNTEER RESPONDERS** are here to help.

**CALL 0808 196 3646**

or go to

[nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk)

**Victim Support** is here to help anyone affected by crime. Because we're an independent charity, you can talk to us whether or not you've reported the crime to the police. We are here just to support you. Freephone **08 08 16 89 111**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/east-england/essex](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/east-england/essex)

**Domestic Abuse** Call Refuge's National Domestic Abuse free 24 hr helpline for confidential advice, on **0808 2000 247**. To access further information, and the live chat service [www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk). If you are in immediate danger, call 999.

### **Mind for mental health support**

Infoline: 03001233393 Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

**Samaritans** If you need someone to talk to urgently and in confidence — the Samaritans are able to offer 24hr emotional support. 08457 90 90 90, for the cost of a local call, or alternatively visit their website at [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk).

### **Childline**

You can talk to us about anything. No problem is too big or too small.

Call 0800 1111 or via 1-2-1 chat between 7.30am and 3.30am every day.

The first Christmas was pretty simple  
Its ok if yours is too.



*We pray for joy in our hearts,  
hope in our God,  
love to forgive,  
and peace upon the earth.  
Holy Spirit, fill our hearts  
with your love and power.  
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.  
Amen.*

A short news sheet will be produced for January. Please send items by 28<sup>th</sup> December. Thank you