



A Christmas message from the President and Vice-President for 2024

Imagine this—it's 1750. Revd David Taylor and a companion are travelling through the hills of the Peak District in a blinding snowstorm, tired and almost freezing. Finally, they reach a solitary house. They knock on the door, walk in, and shake the snow off their clothes.

Can you picture the owner of the house, John Hadfield, feeling wary, reaching for his sword - thinking the strangers had bad intentions? But then, David Taylor approached him and said, "Peace be to this house."

Revd David Taylor was one of Methodism's early itinerant preachers, beginning in 1739. He notably converted John Bennet, and they travelled together for some time. David Taylor had some chaotic experiences: he was with Charles Wesley during the riots at Sheffield and Thorpe in May 1743. He defended John Wesley and Bennet against the mob at Bolton in 1749 and embraced the peace and quiet whenever he could.

After their chance encounter, Methodist services started in John Hadfield's house, and a Society was formed, with John becoming the first member. By 1817, Edale Methodist Chapel was built and open to the community.

Much of life can feel like we are living in that speeded-up film where everything is clamouring for our attention. The news from round the world disturbs us, the voices on social media pull us in different directions, issues within our communities trouble us, family and health problems are in our minds, each day there seems to be something new to make thoughts buzz round in our minds.

We are now in advent and a time of preparation for Christmas and the voices and noises in our hearts and heads can feel amplified, but we have the chance to pause in our thoughts, look around us, hush the noise and listen for the song of the angels.

Hushing the overwhelming "noise" of all the pressures around us so that we can be still and hear the voices of messengers telling us of good news of joy and love and hope is so important.

At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the son of God, God coming close to us, and our lives. This is good news for all of us. God is born among us, in us, in our world.

It means that the love of God comes close to us, to those we love and to those who we struggle to love and care for. God does not discriminate.

This Christmas we invite you to rejoice in the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ, whose coming among us as a vulnerable baby, born in a land of occupation to a young girl, who became a refugee from violence, and who grew to show the love of God in his life and death to all he met.

This Christmas may you hear the message of the angels, be still in the presence of God born here among us and know God's never-ending love, God's hope for the world and the deep, deep joy of knowing you are seen, known and loved tenderly by God, now and forever as God's beloved child.

A prayer of blessing.

The angels are still singing.

Prophets are still speaking.

Hush the noise, hear them sing, repeat the song, seek justice.

And the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be yours/ours, now and always.

Amen

Finding peace during busy periods can be challenging. Sometimes we want peace. Sometimes we need peace.

Edale and its small Methodist Chapel have a long history of being a place of rest for horseback journeys between Manchester and Sheffield, before becoming a sought-after destination for hill walkers.

Set back from the road, behind a stone wall and black metal gates, Edale Methodist Chapel stands. Ready to provide a quiet shelter for everyone who needs it.

This Christmas, how can you make space to escape the busy noisiness and find peace? How will you let God speak to you in times of quiet amongst the joyous celebrations?

We hope you can hush the noise and hear the angels sing.

A happy Christmas from us to you – God bless.

