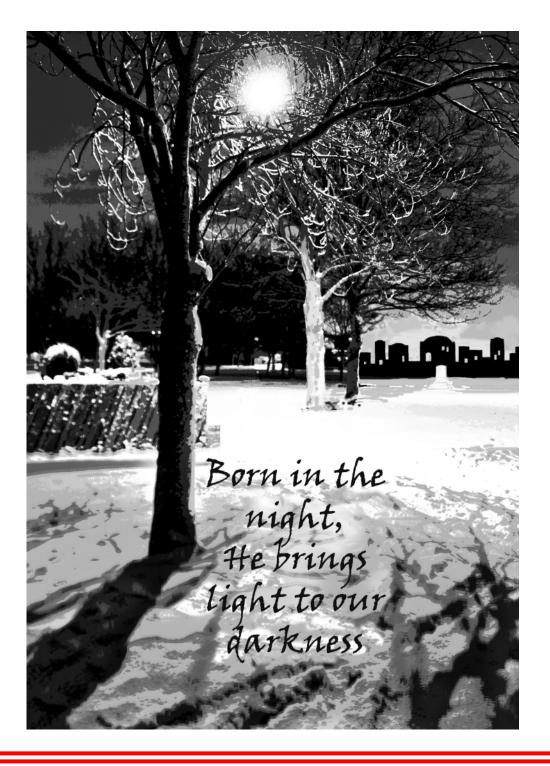
CONNECT

Southgate Church Christmas 2015



SOUTHGATE CHURCH

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REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday	9.45am	Prayer Meeting		
	10.30am	Family Worship (Creche available)		
		Children's Sunday Club		
	6.30pm	Evening service (1 st Sunday)		
Monday	10.00am	CoffeeStop		
	7.00pm	Liquid (13-16s		
Wednesday	9.00am	SPOTS (Parents & Toddlers)		
	3.15pm	Wednesday Gang (Primary School children)		
Thursday	7.30pm	Prayer House (alternating with House Groups)		
	9.15am	Holy Communion Service		
	2.30pm	Friendship Club (over 55's 1 st & 3 rd Thursdays)		
	7.00pm	Youth Club (Middle School children)		
	7.45pm	Thursday Club (Ladies Group 2 nd Thursday)		

Children's mid-week groups run during term time only. See weekly notice sheet for details of all services and activities.

Registered Charity No: 115737

CONNECT The Magazine of Southgate Church

The Angel Gabriel said to a young woman called Mary about her baby, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His **Kingdom** will never end." Luke 1:32-33

The Magi said to Herod "Where is the one who has been born **King** of the Jews "? Charles Wesley wrote: "Hark! the herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King."

As you read these quotations, think, how do you relate to royalty? Are you for it or against it? We can have our views and our choices?

But, God has declared that Jesus is King, and King forever.

King Jesus is not like the bad kings of world history or even the astoundingly good ones, for Jesus is the perfect king

This King, is the King of the 'gentle whisper', the gentle king on a donkey, the gentle lamb, led to the slaughter.

We are encouraged to be like him, be completely humble and **gentle**; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Eph 4:2

Amongst great problems of his day, Pope Pius XI, from 1925, wrote about the Kingship of Jesus. He instituted a new feast which has been adopted by many protestant traditions - **The feast of Christ the King**

He said that Jesus, the King, invests significantly in all people; princes and rulers. In other words, Jesus changes lives, my life and your life.

This Christmastime may I encourage you to have a fresh look at Jesus the King; Jesus, my King; Jesus, your King; Jesus, Our King.

John in Revelations got it right; "The Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings

Henry Baker also did: "The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never, I nothing lack if I am His, and He is mine forever."

This Christmas, the **King of the universe**, requests the pleasure of your company to celebrate his birth and invites you to know Him personally and walk with Him every day of your life.

Will you accept?

Happy Christmas, your friend and Pastor, Peter

NEWS FROM OUR FAMILY & COMMUNITY WORKER

Advent greetings to everyone!

The countdown has begun and Christmas is on its way! We really hope that you'll be able to come and be part of some of our Christmas celebrations.

For Southgate Church, Christmas really kicks off with...

Southgate's Got Christmas

At the Community Centre on Saturday 5th December from 2-4pm.

We're delighted our local schools will be performing, as well as Southgate Pre-school, Dancing Stars and our wonderful Youth Puppet Team. Father Christmas will be paying us a visit, and we'll get right to the heart of Christmas with a dramatic Christmas story presentation by Open the Book. Do come along and enjoy the fun... or get involved! We would love you to help out on one of the stalls or games, so do sign up on the helper list if you'd like to be part of this great community event.

At our morning service on 6th December we are supporting the work of The Ormiston Trust by holding a '**Together On Sunday Toy Service'**. You are invited to bring along a gift for a child aged between 0-16 years. The toys will be given to the children of prisoners at Highpoint Prison at their children's Christmas Party. This is a great way of showing God's love in a really practical and caring way, so have fun choosing a toy which you know will be very lovingly received. (The Ormiston Trust ask that we do not give gifts of Playdoh or replica weapons – thank you)

Our **Christingle Service** is on Sunday 13th December at 4pm. People of all ages are welcome to come along and make a Christingle to take home. Children, especially, will really love this so spread the word and come and join us for this special time. Come and join us at 4pm on **Christmas Eve for our Crib Service**. It's a short, interactive and informal service especially for young children and their families. Celebrate the real meaning of Christmas with us.

What better way to start Christmas?

Are you passionate about Jesus and want to share that passion with children and young people in our church and community?

Do you want to make a difference in young peoples' lives?

Why not get involved with our brilliant Youth and Children's Work Team?

Age and experience isn't important. There are lots of opportunities to make Jesus known in fun and exciting ways.

Speak to Alison to find more.

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Thank you to our amazing youth and children's work team for all your hard work over the past year. You have been amazing!

Have a wonderful, and peaceful Christmas ©

Alison Burgess



Date for your diary

- •Sunday 28th February Lindsay Caplen, President of the British Law Society
- Sunday 17th April Bishop Martin

Both services will be followed by a Bring and Share Lunch

Christian Aid Advent Calender 2015

Don't forget to get your Christian Aid footprint Advent calendar from Christine Dutton.

All money raised will go towards Mosquito nets and child welfare in Nigeria.



The Candles on the Advent Ring

Advent is a journey through the Christmas story. We use the Advent candles to celebrate the period with one lit every Sunday so that during the last week before Christmas all four candles are lit. As the candles burn down they turn into a staircase to Jesus. The last central white candle is lit on Christmas Day. The candles symbolise the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son, Jesus Christ. They are like a light shining in a dark place.

The four traditional Advent themes for the four Sundays are:

- 1. The Candle of **Hope** As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ.
- 2. The Candle of **Peace** As we look at this candle we celebrate the peace we find in Jesus.

3. The Candle of **Love** – As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the love we have in Christ.

4. The Candle of **Joy** – As we look at this candle we celebrate the joy we find in Jesus. The fifth candle represents the **birth of Christ**. The flame of this candle reminds us that He is the light of the world and that if we follow Him, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

The 2015 Real Advent Calendar

The Meaningful Chocolate Company is hoping to fund a baby clinic in Kenya and support overseas farmers by donating £15,000 from sales of its 2015 Real Advent Calendar. However, it is not just the charitable donation that makes The Real Advent Calendar unique. This year it includes a 32-page Christmas story/activity booklet illustrated by Sophie Allsopp and designed to be used every day in Advent. The booklet includes the traditional nativity characters, gives more detail about the Christmas story, and has seven Advent challenges. The calendar also comes with 24 Fairtrade Belgian chocolates and a line of the Christmas story behind each of the foiled windows.

David Marshall, from The Meaningful Chocolate Company, said: "Recent surveys show that knowledge of the Christmas story is fading. The Real Advent Calendar



is part of a campaign which hopes to reverse this trend by finding new ways to share the story. By buying this Advent calendar children, parents and Godparents can share the Christmas story throughout December."

How to buy? The Real Advent Calendar costs £3.99.

Churches, schools and groups can buy directly from The Meaningful Chocolate Company by visiting our special website at www.realadvent.co.uk. Delivery is free! Retailers stocking the calendar include larger Tescos, Traidcraft, Eden.co.uk, Shared Earth, CLC Bookshops and some cathedrals.

Reflection on Our Troubled World

During Advent we prepare for the celebrations of the birth of Jesus and we are witnessing a terrible escalation of troubles in the world following the savage attacks in Paris, Mali, Egypt, Tunisia and the ongoing devastating wars especially in the Middle East. David Winter reflects on this troubled area.

"It's astonishing how the epicentre of world news has always seemed to be what we call the 'Middle East'. Ever since history was first recorded, these lands have been its backdrop: great civilisations and powers, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and Persia occupied the world's centre stage, sometimes for centuries. When they were replaced, it was usually by another one of that short list.

The world's two greatest religions, Christianity and Islam, were born here, offspring of a smaller but even older one, Judaism. These very lands were the site of the Garden of Eden, the poetic source and beginning of the whole human story. Sadly, these lands have also been marked out as battle-fields – and the apocalyptic message warns that they will be the site of the final great conflict, Armageddon. Today our TV screens are full of images of devastated towns and cities, destroyed by bombing and shelling. Is this not only the history but also the fate of the Middle East?

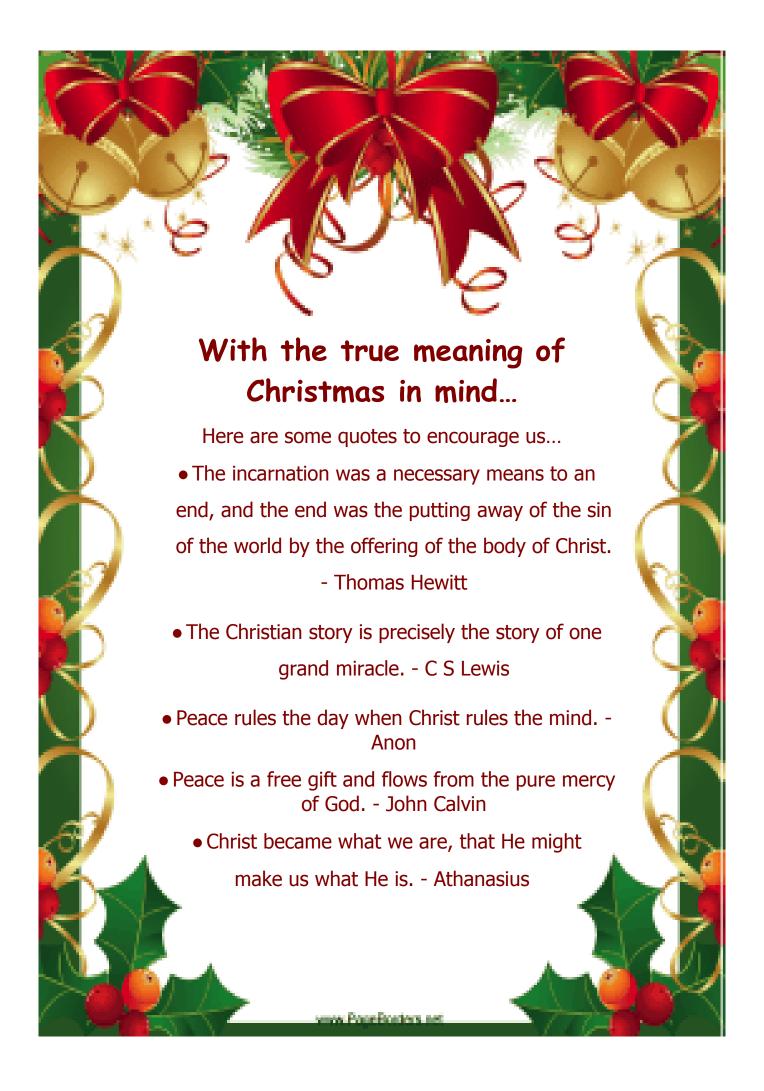
But now comes Christmas, and we hear a different message echoing from the same region. It was first heard in a field outside Bethlehem:

'Peace, goodwill among people'. The child who was born in a stable in the Middle East nearly 2000 years ago was to be known as the 'Prince of Peace'. He came, the Bible says, to 'preach peace to those who are near, and peace to those who are far off'.

This is the great paradox. In the midst of conflict, in a land that had suffered enemy occupation for 300 years, there came a message of peace. Hard to hear over the noise of battle, but insistent, it will surely prove in the end to be the greatest gift that these much-abused lands have offered to the world."

David Winter

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."



Update on Malawi

Sometimes I am asked how the clothing we send and how money for projects gets through and used. .

When our boxes are received in Blantyre, the team transfer all the boxes into a static container and when going down to The Plains and into the villages where our churches are situated, they take as many as possible with them for distribution.

The government insist on our giving clothing outside in the open so all is seen to be fair. The village chief will have a list of his villagers names and a mark would be placed against their name when an item is given out to them. By the way, each item has been beautifly packed by our packing group and a Christian message placed on the sealed package.

When we send money to finance any project, we ask for a report and a photo from Blantyre so we can verify how your gifts have been used. Although we are only a small Charity, we want you to know not only the need but the support you give. As well as this, we have a Newssheet which we produce when appropriate detailing the project. Recently, because of the tragic flooding we are keeping projects limited to Wells, Mosquito nets, Bicycle Ambulances and Wind pumps ,which have been so much a blessing in providing water to help the growth of 2-3 harvests a year.

For, spiritual needs, we provide Bibles and Bible studies, not only for the churches but for Army Barracks and Prisons.

We were hoping to load the next clothing container mid November but it looks as though we will have to delay this as we do not have enough quite enough to fill it. Please ask me for a Newssheet if you do not already have one.

Frank Rumball



Message from Paul Heffer

We are looking forward to putting this event on and we want to encourage as many people as possible to come from different churches.

There will be something for everyone and we have a wonderful line up of musicians and artists in the worship team. Three of them are professional Christian musicians. (Dave Fitzgerald will be playing with Graham Kendrick next week at the Apex)

We will also be featuring a range of readings from the Bible and some performance items.

We believe that there is no better way to start a new year. We will also be taking up an offering and promoting the work of Christian charity "Aid To The Balkans" (A2B) who work with the poor in Albania. www.a2balbania.org

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.-01359 271802

Reflections for Christmas

Christmas Prayer 2015

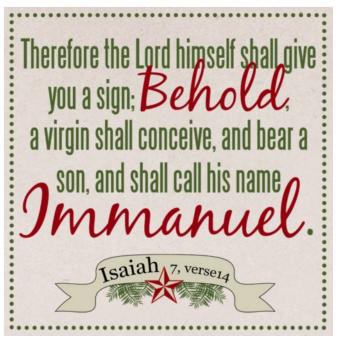
Loving, giving Father,

Thank you for Jesus, Emmanuel. Thank you that he came at Christmas and is alive and just as relevant today as he was all those years ago, and will be forever. As many of us celebrate your coming to us, with our families, in warm, safe homes, in a democratic country, we pray for everyone who has left their homeland because of persecution, for everyone who is without shelter, or food, or family. Give us compassionate hearts, like yours, Lord. Help us, as Christ's body here on earth, to love and serve and make room for each other this Christmas.

In Jesus' name. Amen

By Daphne Kitching





An Evening with Jonathan Viera

Saturday 27th February - At Southgate Church.

Tickets are available from Jackie Tooley in the Church Office at the price of £10. For a limited period only, there is a 'Buy one get One Free' offer on up to four tickets, on the understanding that you bring some non-churchgoing friends with you!

Children's Page



HOLLY

We sing about the 'Holly and the lvy' and prickly green leaves and red berries are everywhere in Christmas decorations.

In Scandinavian countries the holly is even known as the 'Christ-thorn' and it seems that the name of the holly actually came from the word 'holy'.

The holly reminds us of the death of Jesus – the sharp prickles on the leaves are like the crown on thorns that Jesus was forced to wear on the cross. The red berries remind us of the drops of blood that came where the thorns hurt his head.



Holly is an evergreen, which means that it does not lose its leaves in the autumn, but keeps them all year round. And because its leaves are always green it is a symbol of eternal life.

SHARP PRESENTS

A quick way to make little presents for all your class and friends.

You will need nice pencils, glue (spray glue is best) and Christmas wrapping paper with a small pattern on it. Choose round pencils rather than the hexagonal type.

Cut a strip of wrapping paper wide enough to wrap around the pencil and as long as the pencil. Put glue on the back of the paper and wrap it around the pencil. When the glue has dried; trim away any excess paper with small scissors.



HHHHHHHHHH HH

What did the werewolf write on his Christmas cards?
Best vicious of the season.

What do elves sing to Santa? Freeze a Jolly Good Fellow!



Paul Hardingham unwraps Christmas...

Christmas in a Nutshell

We're at that time of year again! But is Christmas just about the shopping, tree or presents? In a nutshell, it's all about a God who has showed up on earth. The creator of the universe, who hands flung stars into space, cared enough to come to earth as a tiny baby. 'The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.' (John 1:14, The Message).

Every year we sing carols and retell the same story of the donkey, innkeeper, stable, angels, shepherds, star, wise men, gifts and Mary and Joseph with baby! It's interesting, because when we celebrate other birthdays, we don't recall the details of the pregnancy or birth.

So why do we do all this? In a nutshell, it's about God, who has seen the mess of this world and stepped down to meet our deepest need of relationship with Himself:

'When the time came, He set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, He stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, He lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death.' (Philippians 2, The Message)

Reflecting on Jesus in the manger is a great place to start, but there's so much more than a cute baby lying in the bed of straw:

If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator;
If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist;
If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist;
If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer;
But our greatest need was forgiveness,
so God sent us a Saviour



Big Bake Off

The Liquid Sunday group worked hard one Saturday afternoon in October baking cakes. They brought them to church on Sunday and people gave donations to support their efforts.

Thank you for giving donations - £137.54.

This has gone to Tearfund, who is working with churches to help stop what is the fastest growing industry – child trafficking. Children are being taken from poor families who are told their children will have a better life if they give them to these people. They are promised an education, food and shelter. The reality is imprisonment in factories, working 20 hours a day and being fed very little. It is modern day slavery. Tearfund helps villagers to set up anti trafficking vigilance committees, supports them in training and helps them to discover new skills to start small family businesses and also teaches them to farm better so that their agricultural yields improve.

The age of the children taken is the same as our "Liquid Sunday group" age, or a little younger. They worked as a team and made a difference. You also were part of that difference.

A drop in the ocean you may say – yes, but a bucket is filled 'drop by drop' if under a dripping tap!

Thank you. Liz Huddlestone





Congratulations...

to William Burgess, Callum Ewing, Holly Silcock and Lauren Boothroyd who were all finalists in this year's Town Council Young Citizen of the Year Awards. William, Holly and Lauren were all nominated by Southgate Church for the brilliant work they do volunteering in the church's youth groups and Callum

was nominated for being instrumental in raising over £1000 for Cancer Research following the sudden death of his friend.

Southgate Church Toddler Group had a great time dressing up in spots for Children

In Need this year. They also raised £44 on a cake stall.
Well done everyone!

Want to spread some Christmas cheer? Join Southgate Church as



they sing carols around the Nowton Estate? Meet at the Church Centre at 6.45pm on Thursday 17th December. Everyone welcome.



Burgers & Bibles!

This a great time for under 18's to talk about all sorts of issues, and ask speak to Alison Burgess for more

Burgers & Bibles!

Speak to Alison Burgess for more



Youth Club celebrated St Edmunds Day recently by making their own amazing wolf! The wolf was outside the Community Centre over the St Edmunds Day weekend attracting lots of attention from surprised local people! He even had pride of place at the town's St Edmunds dinner! Well done Youth Club for decorating him so fantastically and to Kelvin for all his hard work with the project. (See the Southgate Wolf Facebook page.)

OUR FINANCIAL POSITION HALF WAY THROUGH THE YEAR

@ 30 SEPTEMBER 2015						
Expenditure		Income				
Ministry	17,595	Regular Giving	26,836			
Family & Comm Work	11,058	Gift Aid Recovered	7,443			
Fellowship Activities	6,965	Fellowship Activities	6,808			
Administration	6,305	Other Collections	3,960			
Premises	5,834	Church Groups	1,843			
Tithes	4,300	Restricted Gifts	1,279			
Depreciation	2,957	Other	415			
Church Groups	1,834	Total	48,584			
Restricted Gifts	1,355		-,			
Total	58,203	Net Expenditure	9,619			

Hence we spent $\mathbf{£9,619}$ more than we received in the first six months. We expect that by the end of the financial year in March 2016 this will be around £25,000, as there is always more expenditure in the second half of the year. Restricted gifts refer to amounts given to the church to be passed to other organisations.

Currently we have around £74,000 in cash and investments so at this rate of expenditure we can theoretically keep the Church running at its current level until around September 2018. However as a charity we are required to keep a prudent reserve so difficult decisions will have to be made long before that date. If you have any questions, please talk to one of us.

Church Finance Team
Peter Maddock, Terry Ball, Liz and Bob Huddlestone & Bob Jones

FREE MONEY FROM THE CHANCELLOR!

This year, Southgate Church should receive around £15000 from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs as part of the Gift Aid scheme. A sum of this magnitude makes a huge difference to the Church's finances, around 70% of the cost of our work with families and young people, as an example. Many many people in our fellowship gift aid their giving: so a big thank-you to you all. This article is directed to those who have been thinking about it or those who have never thought about it.

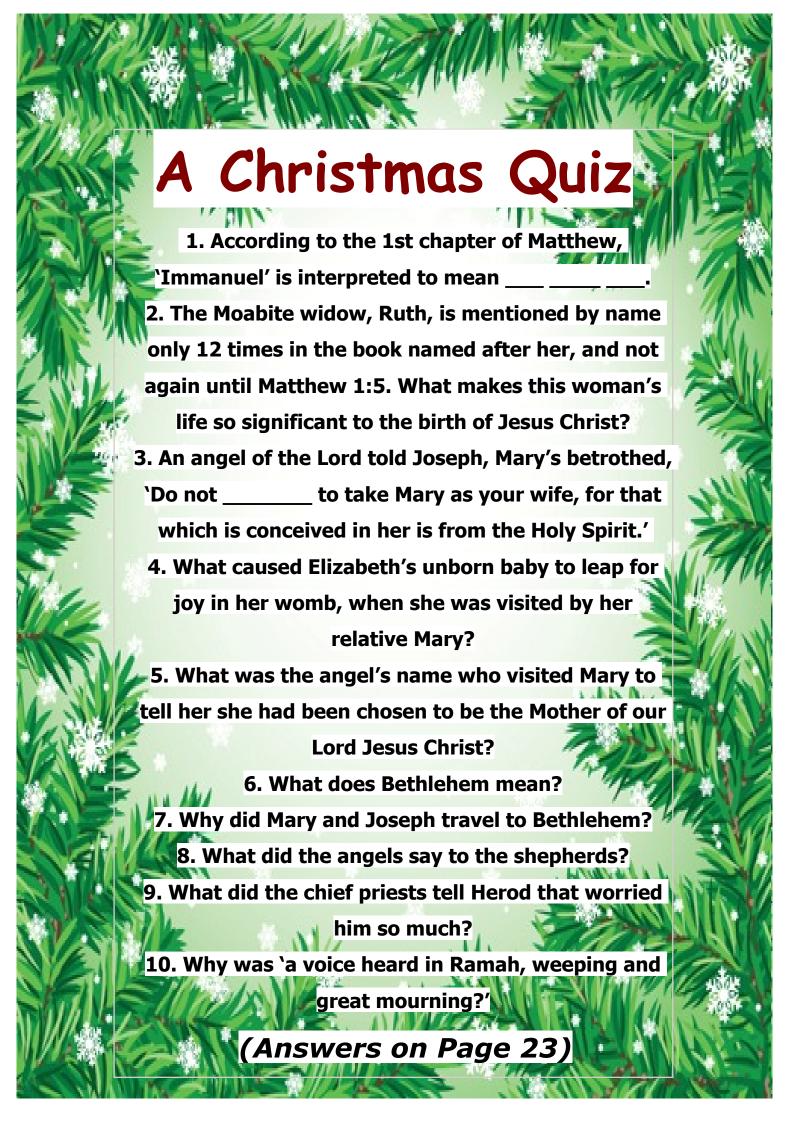
To qualify you must pay tax either on your income or your savings. For every £ you give, we can claim back 25p. You will need to sign a gift aid declaration which is a very simple form we keep. If you change your mind or your circumstances alter, you can withdraw this at any time. We do however need to be able to identify your donation(s). This can be achieved by your being part of a regular giving scheme – our weekly envelopes, or a standing order through your bank. Alternatively you can use one of the yellow gift aid envelopes if you give from time to time.

If you would like to talk about this further, please see Liz Huddlestone or any other member of the Church's finance team: Peter Maddock, Terry Ball and Bob Huddlestone.

Thank you for reading this.

Bob Jones





Aspects of that first Christmas night.

First, the star that shone over Bethlehem. Many stars shone in that night sky, but none like this one! It was as though God had taken his lamp from the ceiling of heaven and hung it in the dark sky over a troubled world.

Second – a new song was in the air: the angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' (Luke 2:14) The world which had lost any reason for singing was being given the chance to sing again. Glory – peace – goodwill.... with the coming of Jesus, it was time to rejoice.

Third – a baby was born. And what a baby! The Messiah, promised for centuries. The Son of God Himself, our Saviour. The angel who said: "He will save his people from their sins" was touching the very heart of our need.

Most people today would rather not talk about sin. Few of us want to face up to the reality of spiritual disease. We resent anyone mentioning the fact that we might sin! And yet Jesus had a great deal to say about sin. The Christmas message is that God's grace is greater than our sin. Christmas assures us that God wants to deal with our sin through Jesus, who came to redeem us, however damaged and sinful we are.



This Christmas, if you have not already done so, you can accept Jesus Christ for what He came to do for you: to be your Saviour and your Lord. Then your Christmas really will be worth celebrating!

To Make you Smile

The Angel's Point of View (J B Phillips)

A very young angel was being shown round the splendours and glories of the universe by a senior and experienced angel. He had been shown whirling galaxies and blazing suns, infinite distances in the deathly cold of inter-stellar space, and to his mind there seemed to be an awful lot of it all. Finally he was shown the galaxy of which our planetary system is but a small part. As the two of them drew near to the star which we call our sun and to its circling planets, the senior angel pointed to a small and rather insignificant sphere turning very slowly on its axis. It looked as dull as a dirty tennis-ball to the little angel, whose mind was filled with the size and glory of what he had seen.

"I want you to watch that one particularly," said the senior angel, pointing with his finger.

"Well, it looks very small and rather dirty to me," said the little angel. "What's special about that one?"

"That," replied his senior solemnly, "is the Visited Planet."

"Visited?" said the little one. "You don't mean visited by ---?"

"Indeed I do. That ball, which I have no doubt looks to you small and insignificant and not perhaps over-clean, has been visited by our young Prince of Glory." And at these words he bowed his head reverently.

"But how?" queried the younger one. "Do you mean that our great and glorious Prince, with all these wonders and splendours of His Creation, and millions more that I'm sure I haven't seen yet, went down in Person to this fifth-rate little ball? Why should He do a thing like that?"

"It isn't for us," said his senior a little stiffly, "'to question His "why's" except that I must point out to you that He is not impressed by size and numbers, as you seem to be. But that He really went I know - how else do you suppose could He visit them?"

The little angel's face wrinkled in disgust.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that He stooped so low as to become one of those creeping, crawling creatures of that floating ball?"

"I do, and I don't think He would like you to call them 'creeping, crawling creatures` in that tone of voice. For, strange as it may seem to us, He loves them. He went down to visit them to lift them up to become like Him

Communications - Guidance for articles For Connect

If possible please include items by email between 250 - 400 words or less. We would particularly welcome short, personal 'Good News' stories which may help others in their faith journey.



CINEMAS BAN THE LORD'S PRAYER

Cinemas across the UK – including Bury's Cineworld – have refused to show a one-minute advert made by the Church of England featuring a wide range of people reciting the Lord's Prayer. This was intended to be shown in the run-up to Christmas at showings of the latest Star Wars film. (May the Force be with you!) Apparently, they feel that people could be "offended" by the ad! Justin Welby has challenged the move and said that he finds it "extraordinary" that the three major cinema chains have taken this stance.

We can do our bit by spreading the word. If you have not already seen it, click on to www.JustPray.uk and watch the video. Then email all your friends and family to do the same, with the request that they forward your email to their friends. That way we can ensure that the prayer Jesus taught us goes viral!

Answers to the Christmas Quiz

- 1. God with us Matt 1:23
- 2. Her child is in Christ's lineage Matt 1:5
- 3. 'Be afraid/fear' Matt 1:20
- 4. Mary's greeting/ the Holy Spirit
- 5. Gabriel Luke 1:26
- 6. The House of Bread. It was the city of David Luke 2:4
- 7. To be registered in a Roman census Luke 2:1-5
- 8. 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy....' Luke 2:10
- 9. 'But you Bethlehem, in the land of Judea... out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' Matt 2:6
- 10. Massacre of the Innocents by Herod Matt 2:18

