



INSPIRE

DECEMBER 2022/JANUARY 2023



“Live as children of light ... and find out what pleases the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8b, 10, NIV)

Editor: Jenny Lesley - inspire@belperbaptist.org

Distribution: Church Secretary – secretary@belperbaptist.org

Mary Had a Baby

Dear friends,

When I wrote my article for September's Inspire, I said that that one of the four passages I had quoted from the Bible in my ministerial profile would be the focus of what I would write in the next few months. Now that I find myself writing this article for December and January, I only have one more passage left; if you read my article in September's edition, you will already know what my final passage is!

Whether you read the September edition or not, perhaps you'll not be surprised that I chose John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." I left this passage until last because it is a reminder that we are celebrating the birth of a very special baby on Christmas Day – Jesus Christ, the saviour through whom, by faith, we are able to have an eternal relationship with God.

Perhaps those of you who are parents have sometimes asked yourselves what happened to your tiny babies that they should, so quickly, have become the people they are. Our children soon become very different to when they were born and, as parents, we also change as we respond to our children's changing tastes, capabilities and preferred activities over time. Parents may naturally worry about their children at whatever age they may be, but it can be a real joy to see children growing up and a real privilege to be able to share a range of experiences with them as they do.

A lot of what the world hears and knows about Jesus may be to do with when he was a tiny baby, with the focus of much of what we sing in our Christmas carols being on the "silent night" on which the baby Jesus was born and the various visitors who came to see Jesus lying in a manger. Mary had a baby, but we know that was not the end of the story; this was no ordinary baby so, as we journey on through Advent towards Christmas Day, our Sunday morning services will remind us that Mary's baby boy was God's promised Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the adult ministry of Jesus we see wisdom, compassion, closeness to God the Father and a desire to see all people relate to God authentically each and every day. In Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, we also glimpse the depth of the love that God has for all people – a depth of love that we may struggle to comprehend as we realise that Jesus died that even we, with all our faults and failings, may experience life with God in all its fullness.

As this issue of Inspire covers both December and January, this is a good opportunity to introduce our guiding theme for 2023, which will be "Live as children of light ... and find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8b, 10, NIV) Our Sunday morning services during January and February will help us to reflect on how we can live as children of light as part of God's church in today's world and especially as members of the congregation of Belper Baptist Church. After a service on 1st January with a focus on our recommitment to following Christ in the new year, our preachers and worship leaders will be asked to help us to explore a series of themes related to the ways in which our faith can shape our being and living as part of this particular church family. With such a range of life experiences and faith experiences in our congregation, I hope that you will find this new series helpful as we continue to grow together as part of the body of Christ in Belper.

God bless,

Robert

A Warm Space at Belper Baptist Church ... Team Meeting

Thank you to everyone who has offered to get involved with offering a warm space drop-in on Wednesday lunchtimes / afternoons. The aim of the project will be to open the church building to people who are concerned about the cost of heating their own homes. We would offer simple lunches like soup, hot drinks and biscuits, places to sit comfortably to chat, read, or do whatever else people might like to do while they were in the building, as well as perhaps running a range of activities for people to join in like games, quizzes, etc.

What we would be doing should hopefully complement what will be offered in other church and community buildings across the town, as well as fitting alongside what Hope for Belper already do through their Community Hub on Tuesdays and Fridays.

If you are interested in being on the team of people who will enable this to happen, please try to come to a meeting at **12.30pm on Wednesday 7th December** in the church, where we will talk through the practicalities of getting this up and running as soon as possible. We have already had ideas for catering and activities, so if you can't come to the meeting, but may still be able to help, do please let me know your thoughts. Many thanks, Rev. Robert.

Dates for your Diary from the Joint Public Issues Team

There is much here to focus our prayers on ...

1st December is **World Aids Day**, which is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day. Find out more at <https://www.worldaidsday.org/>

10th December is **Human Rights Day**, which is observed every year on the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR is a milestone document, which proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Available in more than 500 languages, it is the most translated document in the world. Find out more at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

18th December is **International Migrants' Day**. A broad range of factors continue to determine the movement of people. They are either voluntary or forced movements as a result of the increased magnitude and frequency of disasters, economic challenges and extreme poverty or conflict. Approximately 281 million people were international migrants in 2020, representing 3.6 per cent of the global population. All these will significantly affect the characteristics and scale of migration in the future and determine the strategies and policies countries must develop in order to harness the potential of migration while ensuring the fundamental human rights of migrants are protected. Find out more at <https://www.un.org/en/observances/migrants-day>

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church. The purpose of JPIT is to help the Churches to work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking and acting on public policy issues. Find out more at <https://jpit.uk>

Advent Prayer and Candle Wreaths

The Wednesday craft and chat group have made a fantastic prayer wreath for us all to write our prayers of “thanks, please or wow!”. The wreath has been put out with pens on a table near the lovely advent candle wreath made by Moira – a big thank you to you all.



Angels.

Mary and Joseph felt so blessed
As they took a well-earned rest,
In the stable dark and bare,
After their long journey there.
Mary bore a boy child where
She wrapped him up with lots of care.
She laid him in a bed of straw,
In a manger near the door.
Angels sang in the heavens above,
About the new child filled with love,
Born in the stable late that night,
Lit by a large star's silvery light.
Shepherds watching over sheep,
Felt love in their hearts so deep,
Then angels appeared in the sky,
And told them where the Christ child lie.
They visited the stable where
They saw the baby lying there.
They stayed a while then left with joy,
After they'd seen the baby boy.
Angels sang in the heavens above,
About the new child filled with love.

Linda Knight



Photo by [Inbal Malca](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The Magi by Malcolm Guite

*It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.*

At the Name of Jesus

Every year when we put the Christmas tree up, I hang the ornaments on the tree and think about what has changed in our lives since the previous Christmas. And when I take them down in January I wonder what will have happened by the following December. For the first time ever, this year we'll be decorating our tree as empty nesters and that carries its own emotions. Joy that the kids are making their own way... and a pang for how quickly time flies. January is named after a Roman god Janus who was often depicted as looking forward and back, it seems to have been something humans have been doing for a long time.

I'm going to be using a set of Advent reflection cards this year which have one of the names of Jesus on each one and a prayer to go with them. I haven't looked at them yet as I want to come to each one fresh each day but I've been musing over which ones I expect to find in the pack. Counsellor is one that has been so appropriate for this year. NB not Wonderful Counsellor, they should be two separate words, according to my latest read which has fuelled my obsession with bible mistranslations. Although He is a wonderful counsellor so maybe I should have an Advent resolution to just let that one go.... Anyway, a long time ago when I was doing some counselling training, we looked at a principle of counselling practice which demanded that a counsellor should treat every client with Unconditional Positive Regard. Always remember your UPR we were told. It's so important to remember that Jesus always looks on us that way - and he's a lot better at UPR than we are! We are called as Christians to treat our fellow humans with the same unconditional love- that goodwill to all men that the angels sang about. It's a tough gig sometimes, particularly at Christmas with all our human capacity for difficult relationships and our incomplete control of ourselves. Yet it is what He both asks of us and what He gives to us every day.

Shepherd is the other name that I'm expecting to come out of the box that really resonates with me this year. We've spent a lot of time in a different flock this year due to being in Scotland so much. I have been led, pursued, surrounded by Psalm 23 all year. From looking out of the window onto the hills in my brother's village and hearing a voice whispering "He restores my soul" to hearing Psalm 23 sung, quoted and preached on everywhere I've been or in everything I've read or with everyone I've talked to. I'm a terrible butterfly reader, endlessly fluttering from one bit of the Bible to another; a reading programme generally gets abandoned each year so it's been strange to spend so much time in just one Psalm but it's brought me so much peace, joy and hope and I've got to know Him better as my shepherd.

We enter each new year, each day, each minute not knowing what it will bring but I pray that this year each one of us will truly know Christ as Saviour and feel confident to put our hand into His and walk into a future that He walks with us, every step of the way. Which brings me to the name of Jesus that I love the most - Emmanuel, God with us.

Jenny Lesley



Dates for your Diary – December and January

- Sunday 4th Morning Service:10.30am - Leading: Jonny White, Preaching: David Harvey
- Weds 7th Craft and Chat 9.30-11.30am
Warm Spaces Meeting 12.30pm
- Sunday 11th All Age Service: 10.30am – Leading and Preaching : Team
- Weds 13th Craft and Chat 9.30 – 11.30am
- Sunday 18th Communion Service :10.30am -Leading: Jenny Lesley, Preaching: Robert Foster
Carol Service: 7.00pm – Leading: David Harvey, Preaching: Robert Foster
- Weds 20th Craft and Chat 9.30 – 11.30am
- Sunday 25th Morning Service: **10.00am** – Leading &Preaching: Robert Foster
- Sunday 1st Morning Service:10.30am - Leading & Preaching: David Harvey
- Sunday 8th Morning Service: 10.30am- Leading : Jonny White, Preaching: Robert Foster
- Weds 11th Craft and Chat: 9.30-11.30am
- Sunday 15th Communion Service: 10.30am Leading & Preaching: Robert Foster
- Weds 18th Craft and Chat: 9.30-11.30am
Church Members Meeting: 7.30pm
- Sunday 22nd Morning Service: 10.30am – Leading : David Harvey, Preaching: Derek Allan
- Weds 25th Craft and Chat: 9.30-11.30am
- Sunday 29th All Age Service: 10.30am – Leading & Preaching: Team



Notices

Sunday Services:

Sunday services have resumed in the building but any who cannot come in person will also be able to join via Zoom using the details below:

You can join by visiting <https://zoom.us/j/3431622013>

... or using the Zoom app and meeting ID 3431622013

... or phone (0330) 0885830 and enter the meeting ID 3431622013 then #

The meeting password is

Please pray during the week for those who are due to lead, preach and cover the technical aspects of the service. Also please pray for all those who lead the online children's work before, during and after the service.

Prayer Meetings

There will be daily prayer meetings at 7.30am every weekday morning and 9am on weekends and bank holidays – using the following Zoom details: Meeting ID: 899 0084 1018 / Password:

Membership and Baptism

If you wish to explore the possibility of believers' baptism or of becoming church members, please contact Robert in the first instance.

Getting to Know You

Robert has met with a number of members of the congregation in the past couple of months to get to know people better and he hopes to continue do this in November and December. He will try to arrange some meetings himself, but he doesn't have contact details for everybody, so if people would like to meet with him, please ask him in person or to contact him via minister@belperbaptist.org or call/text on

House Groups

If you are interested in being part of a house group or can offer to host or feel called to lead a group please contact David Harvey in person or by message or email

Response forms will also be available at the back of the church and will also be distributed electronically.

Church Social

There will be another social event on **Saturday 17th December**, with dinner, at church from 5pm to 7pm. In order that we know hot food to prepare would you please contact Joel or Alison Gilmour with details of how many of your household are coming and whether there are any allergies or vegan/vegetarian needs

Bible Study Notes

Fiona Worrall orders bible study notes for many people in the fellowship. If you would like to place a regular order or discuss which notes might suit you please see Fiona in person or she can be contacted by phone or text and by e-mail .

Food and Community Hub: General Shopping List

We have **many gaps** so if you are shopping in the near future and could donate one of these items we would be very grateful:

Tinned Potatoes and Packets of Mash
Tinned Fruit
Steamed Puddings
Rice pudding
Tinned Meat Meals e.g: curry, chilli
Fray Bentos style pies
Vegetarian Meals
Corned Beef/Cooked Ham, Hotdog
sausages

Toilet Rolls, in smaller packs preferably
Tea, Coffee
Sugar
Shampoo, shower gel, deodorant etc.
Wrapped cake bars and biscuits
UHT Milk
Cat and dog food

Training Day to work with children with additional needs

There is to be a training day called "Working with Young People and Children with Additional Needs", being organized by the children's worker at Broadway Baptists together with Scripture Union on 28th January. The main speaker will be Mark Arnold, from Urban Saints. He is the Additional Needs Director. 'Additional Needs' means any child with ABHD, or any shade of autism etc. YWAM are to provide a lunch to begin the session, and the event will run from 12:30pm - 5pm at the Broadway Baptist church. Derby Kids for Christ are sponsoring the event so there will be no charge.

If you are at all involved with children's work, or have a child in this 'additional needs' area, or know of anyone, this event is for you! There will be more information nearer the time, but I wanted you to get it in your diaries now!

See Greg for more details and to make provisional booking.

