



## A word from the Editors

If there's one thing that unites the nation, brings light in the darkness, gives people hope, its CHRISTMAS. There's no doubt that Christmas is going to be different this year. However, for Christians and non-Christians alike, Christmas this year is going to give us all much needed hope.

Lights and decorations have popped up far earlier this year, as people need something to celebrate and look forward to after a difficult year. Many would agree that 2020 has been particularly 'dark' but the birth of Jesus gives us light in the darkness and hope for the future, whatever it may bring.

Malcolm explores the hope of the Christmas story in his word from the Ministers Vestry this month and there is also an article on the hope that the birth of Jesus will bring to our COVID Christmas in 2020.

There is a programme of online Christmas services throughout advent, including a very special Christmas Day service. We suggest you make sure that this is in your diary as, although you may not know it, you're all involved. As usual, these services will be posted to the church website and our Facebook page.

Included this month are some Christmas quizzes for a bit of fun and the weekly devotionals for the festive season. Also, the 'Virtual' Christmas Fayre has been a success, given the current situation, and the total amount raised will be announced in the New Year.

We pray that celebrating the birth of Jesus this Christmas will bring you much needed hope, light and joy at the end of what has been a strangely dark, difficult and challenging year.



God bless, take care and Merry Christmas. Brian, Mike and Jo xxx

### **WATCH OUR CHURCH SERVICES**

Although the church building is still closed, we will still be holding our usual Sunday services and our Christmas services digitally:

[www.christchurchhaydock.co.uk](http://www.christchurchhaydock.co.uk)

Facebook: Christ Church Haydock URC

For those of you who don't use the internet, the service is also available on dvd which will be delivered to your own front door. If you would like one of these dvds, please contact Brian on 01744 608826 or 07840 173990.

### **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

Sunday 13th December—Christingle Service (available from 10:45 a.m)

Sunday 13th December—Folkus Gallery Band Carol Service (from 6:30 p.m.)

Sunday 20th December— Traditional Christmas Carol Service

Thursday 24th December— Christmas Eve Service

Friday 25th December—Christmas Day Service

### **CHRISTINGLE SERVICE INFORMATION**

Neil and Sandra will be delivering Christingle packs out to those families who have children. These will include all the parts needed to make their own Christingle as David leads them through putting it together during the service. These will be delivered the weekend of the Christingle service.



## **NOTICES**

### **THE SAD PASSING OF A DEAR FRIENDS**

It is with great sadness that our very dear friends and sisters in Christ, Edna Swift and Annie Brighouse passed away earlier this month.

Edna's funeral will be held at church on the Monday 7th December at 12:45 p.m. followed by a service at Green Acres at 2:00 p.m.

Annie's funeral will be held on Tuesday 8th December: 1:00 p.m. at Christ Church followed by a service at Green Acres at 2:00 p.m.

### **FLOWER MINISTRY**

These were the people who received flowers from the church over the last month:

Neil and Andrew Brighouse

### **IN LOVING MEMORY OF LES CHADWICK**

Lesley and Lyndsey wish to thank you all for your prayers, cards, flowers and of course all the generous donations received in the recent loss of Les. We handed in £160 to the British Heart Foundation and £200 to church.

Thank you all once again. God Bless x

### **CHRISTMAS CARDS**

A special thank you to those of you who ordered packs of Christmas Cards from me. The money raised was £100+ which will go towards our Virtual Christmas Fayre. God Bless, Lesley x

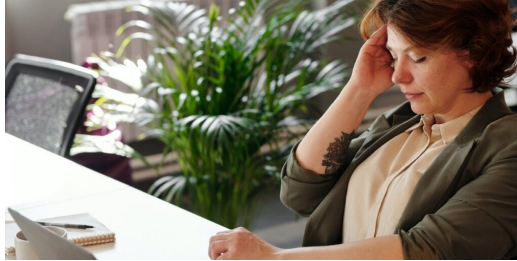
### **LEPROSY MISSION & BARNARDO'S**

After 20 years of collecting the boxes and distributing information for these worthy causes, we feel it's time for us to retire and give others the opportunity to take over. We will be in touch, in the coming weeks to arrange collection of boxes in December. Many thanks. M & S

### **CLOTHING COLLECTION**

If you have any old or unwanted clothes that you no longer use, please consider donating them to the church's clothing collection. All money raised will go towards Church funds. If you would like any picking up, please call Neil Fairhurst on 01744 635163.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Defeating the Devil in Your Life



The pews of churches are filled with people bravely putting up a front that everything is good, and they have it all together while privately they are sinking into despair. They are struggling with secret sin and are fearful that it be exposed. They want victory over their struggle but are not sure how. Defeating the devil in your life begins with surrendering our lives to the Lord and letting Him do the work.

**James 4:7**

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Asking with the Right Motives



When I was young, I heard a Sunday School lesson on, “Ask, and it will be given to you.” The teacher added to that lesson, “If you believe with all of your heart, God will answer it.” I went home and proceeded to ask God for a new bike. I didn’t get one even though I asked Him for weeks. It wasn’t until I got older that I realised I had the wrong motives. Asking with the right motives behind your prayers will ensure that God hears them and increase the likelihood of Him answering.

**James 4:3**

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
In Midst of the Fire



Fire can be a powerful tool when it is under control. It's when it turns into a wildfire that houses can get destroyed and lives harmed. When life gets difficult, it can feel like we are in the midst of the fire, and everything around us is crashing down. Scripture shows us that Jesus is right there with us in the midst of the fire.

**Daniel 3:25**

“He said, “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Enter His Presence with Praise and Thanksgiving



For those in the United States, we celebrate Thanksgiving. It is a national holiday where we remember how thankful we are for the founding of our country. The early settlers dedicated a feast after surviving their first winters and for a good harvest. Most of us in the USA will be feasting as well. God lets us know that He is our creator, and we should enter His presence with praise and thanksgiving.

**Psalms 100:3-4**

“Know that the LORD, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name!”

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

Use Your Talents



One thing that gets me down as a pastor is watching extremely talented people waste those talents by letting them sit idle. God has uniquely gifted everyone to serve Him, and we are expected to use those talents for His glory. When we do, there is a promised reward. When we don't, it disappoints God, but it will also bring with it a consequence. Use your talents.

**Luke 19:26**

“I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Practice What You Preach



No one likes someone who is all talk but no action. It's true in the workplace and on the playing field. You either put up or shut up. The same can be said for those who follow Christ. There are some who want to give the impression they are wise when, in reality, they say it, but they don't show it. James says to practice what you preach.

**James 3:17**

“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Held to a Higher Standard



Teaching is one of the most honourable positions in society. Millions of teachers across the world go to their classrooms every day without fanfare and pour into their students. They will give much more than just the information in a book. They will give their time and resources to see their students thrive. One day they will be rewarded for their selfless effort. What makes these teachers so successful? They know they are held to a higher standard.

**James 3:1**

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Your Attitude Matters



This world would be a better place if people were more humble. There is so much pride and arrogance out there. Your attitude matters, and it can make a big difference in how your life turns out. Jesus tells us that if we exalt ourselves, we will be humbled, but we will be exalted if we humble ourselves.

**Luke 18:13-14**

“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021  
The Good Works We are Called to Do



There is a lot of talk about cloning humans. Without a doubt, numerous laboratories around the world are working towards that. I understand the challenge that scientists see but what concerns me is that they will produce a whole new human race without any spirit in them. The spirit within every human is God-given, and it is by that spirit we can possess faith. Through faith come the good works we are called to do.

**James 2:26**

“For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

**Out of Gratitude**

While you cannot get saved by doing good works, living for Christ without doing them is a dead faith. We worship, obey, and serve God out of our hearts' gratitude for what He has done for us. We don't do it out of obligation or to repay God. Our best work is "as filthy rags" to the righteousness of Christ. James was still adamant that doing the work of the church was essential for every believer.

**Serve and Share**

We are a light to this world by the good works that we do. By serving others, we share the love of Christ to a world that is lost and hurting. If we are faithful in our walk with Jesus, He will give us divine appointments with people searching for Him. It is our job to serve them and share the Gospel. When we do that, we become part of the sowing and reaping cycle. Sometimes God may use us to sow seeds, and other times He will use us to lead people to Christ. Our job is to be faithful.

**The Good Works We are Called to Do**

Don't wander through life with a dead faith. Don't proclaim to know Jesus but manifest very little fruit. A vibrant faith is alive because we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to do the work God has called us to accomplish. If you are sensing little life in your heart, ask God to revive it and lead you into those good works.



# Christian Carols Challenge

Begin each question with "according to the lyrics of..." and fill in the answer.

## Merry Christmas!

### According to the Lyrics of...

- A. Go Tell It On The Mountain: Throughout the heavens shone what? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Joy To The World: What should prepare Him room? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Do You Hear What I Hear: What is the star doing in the night? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Angels We Have Heard On High: Who is echoing the Angels joyous strains?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- E. Silent Night: What two words describe the Holy Infant? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Angels From the Realms of Glory: Angels should wing their what over all the earth?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- G. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen: Christ was born to save us from what?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- H. Good King Wenceslas: Who came into sight gathering winter fuel?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I. It Came Upon A Midnight Clear: Who was bending near the earth? \_\_\_\_\_
- J. O Come O Come Emmanuel: Who is captive that needs ransom? \_\_\_\_\_
- K. The First Noel: The angel found the shepherds in fields doing what?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- L. We Three Kings: The star of wonder has what kind of beauty? \_\_\_\_\_
- M. Hark The Herald Angels Sing: What should all ye nations rise and do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- N. Away in a Manger: The cattle are what? \_\_\_\_\_
- O. Mary Did You Know: Mary's baby boy will one day walk on what? \_\_\_\_\_

Christian



Legend

Legend has it that the "Twelve Days of Christmas" was a secret code, written to help Christians learn and share the tenets of their faith while avoiding persecution. Can you match up the 12 Christmas gifts with their symbolic Christian meanings?

- |   |       |                            |
|---|-------|----------------------------|
| A. Days of Creation                     | _____ | A Partridge in a Pear Tree |
| B. The Gospels and/or Evangelists       | _____ | Two Turtle Doves           |
| C. The Beatitudes                       | _____ | Three French Hens          |
| D. The Faithful Apostles                | _____ | Four Calling Birds         |
| E. Old and New Testaments               | _____ | Five Golden Rings          |
| F. The Commandments                     | _____ | Six Geese A-Laying         |
| G. The Fruits of the Holy Spirit        | _____ | Seven Swans A-Swimming     |
| H. The Doctrines in the Apostle's Creed | _____ | Eight Maids A-Milking      |
| I. Jesus                                | _____ | Nine Ladies Dancing        |
| J. The Pentateuch                       | _____ | Ten Lords A-Leaping        |
| K. The Theological Virtues              | _____ | Eleven Pipers Piping       |
| L. Gifts of the Holy Spirit             | _____ | Twelve Drummers Drumming   |

## From the Ministers Vestry

Christmas is very definitely on its way here in the Manse at Haydock. At the weekend I went up into the loft and brought down several boxes containing the well-used decorations that reside there.

It does take a lot of time and effort to decorate my tree. Many of the decorations have been part of my display for some years and of course many hold memories. Some are home made which I have collected over the years whilst others are special for other reasons.

The road that I live on is beginning to be festooned with light displays and I am sure in the end it will be visible from space as there are so many lights out there.

This year the decorations have appeared much sooner than normal in many houses as the occupants have decided that this year has been so dark that there is a need for some light in their darkness.

How apt that is. Without being preached at, without any hints, people are realizing that the heart of the Christmas story is HOPE.

When we think about that story it was born out of a difficult situation. A young girl, still a virgin was visited by an angel who told her the news that she would bear a son, that son would be the most important person that this world would ever know. As she was only yet engaged to be married this could prove very difficult as being with child out of wedlock was seen to be a sin punishable by death.

Joseph too was visited by the angel and agreed to marry her. Then came the news that they were to make the difficult journey to Bethlehem with Mary very heavily pregnant. No comfortable cars or trains just a long trek carrying with them all that they would need for an extended journey.

Arriving at their destination no room was available and so they were given shelter in the area that the beast were kept. On the birth the baby was laid in the trough from which the animals were fed.

To me this isn't the nice happy story that it has been made out to be but a wonderful ending to a difficult time.

This year has been difficult for many reasons but top of the list is COVID 19. The pandemic has changed life beyond recognition. Many have been trapped in their homes shielding. Everyone has been affected in some way as the darkness spread over the world.

Isn't it amazing then that the thought of Advent and Christmas has brought light into this dark time? Once again the baby laid in a manger has brought light into the lives of the whole world.

There really is HOPE and I believe that we can see a new dawn coming in our lives away from this dreadful virus. As we are told in Advent we have just to wait.

I wish you all peace in this difficult and challenging time and may God bless you all with the peace of the Christ child laid in the manger of Bethlehem.

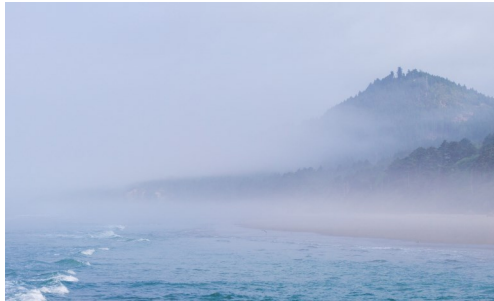
In Christ

Malcolm



## COVID CHRISTMAS 2020

In 1952 a famous swimmer, Florence Chadwick, attempted to swim from an Island to the California coast, 50 km away. Long-distance swimming is not new to her; she is the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. But the water was cold that day and there was a fog. It was so thick that she could hardly see the safety boats nearby. She swam for more than 15 hours before she asked to be taken out of the water. She came to know that she was only one km away from shore. She had already swam 49 km. She said, "I'm not excusing myself, but if I could have seen the land I might have made it."



It wasn't the cold or exhaustion that caused her to give up. It was the fog. She could not see the shore. She felt there was no hope of reaching land.

Two months later she tried again, the same channel and the same distance, but minus the fog. She set a new speed record.



People give up when they cannot see a solution to their problem, a light at the end of the tunnel, or an end to their pain. People give up when they cannot see HOPE. The reality may not be so, there can be an answer to their problem, but they cannot see it.

This is particularly relevant during the current COVID-19 Pandemic, in which many people are unable to see the end of the restrictions, isolation, loneliness, boredom, fear and worry. This can create a feeling of endless hopelessness. The world is longing for hope. Everyone, everywhere is searching for hope. Hope for peace. Hope for a better life. Hope for an end to COVID. Where can we find it? Who can give us HOPE?

The truth is, only God can give us true hope. All our human hopes are just wishful thinking, because only the One who is in control of all things, can give us lasting hope.

Many pray when a disaster strikes, because somehow, they want to believe that God can help. They do not know who He is, but they pray. How can we trust a God who cannot be seen? We can't. That is why Jesus came to earth. God allows us to see Him when Jesus Christ was born.

***John 3:16-17 NLT: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son JESUS, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."***

There is more to life than what we are seeing. God has a plan for us. We are made to have a relationship with God. God did not send Jesus into our world to judge the world. He came to save us.

His coming at Christmas more than 2000 years ago isn't a myth or a legend. It is not accidental and it is not by chance. God planned it. It happened one day in history, in a specific time and place.

The birth of Jesus at Christmas gives us HOPE. HOPE of a future, HOPE of salvation, HOPE of eternal life. God's love brings us HOPE, HOPE brings us purpose and purpose brings us JOY. Let's experience HIS joy this Christmas and forever more.

Have a blessed Christmas, full of HOPE, JOY and LOVE.

## FINANCIAL REPORT— OCTOBER 2020

### BUILDING ACCOUNT

#### **Income**

Building Fund boxes	£25.00
Donation	£50.00

#### **Expenditure**

Annual Synod Building Survey Scheme	£123.00
<b>Balance as of 31/10/20</b>	<b>£9664.88</b>

### GENERAL ACCOUNT

#### **Income**

Offertories	£1675.00
Donations in Loving Remembrance of Stanley Greenhalgh	£100.00
Donations from 'Mobile phone caption of David Leivesley'	£12.00
Other donations	£806.00
Government Grant for caretaker work (October)	£234.81
Government Grant for youth pastor work (October)	£570.76
Youth Pastor Envelopes	£105.00

#### **Expenditure**

Routine items

<b>Overall Income in October 2020</b>	<b>£3505.46</b>
<b>Overall Expenditure in October 2020</b>	<b>£3967.90</b>
<b>Balance as at 31/10/20</b>	<b>£21339.72</b>
<b>(Includes £2408.20 for Youth Pastor &amp; Youth Mission Work)</b>	

### INFORMATION

National Savings Bond still £2000.00  
Savings Account £12471.36

**Ray Clare**