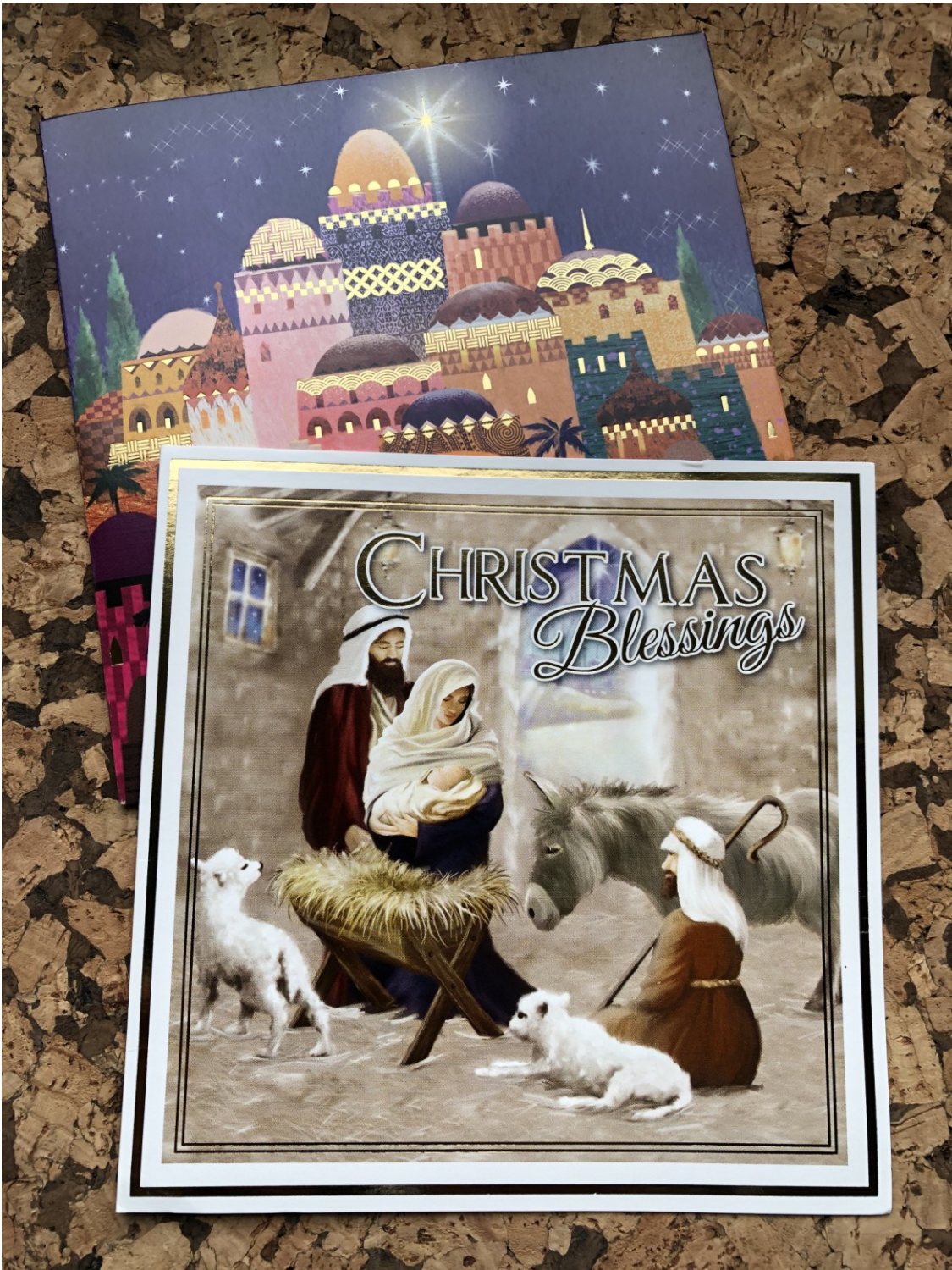


**MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH  
MESSENGER  
DECEMBER 2019**





## **GOD KEEPS PROMISES!**

*'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called **Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**' (Isaiah 9 verse 6)*

Approaching Christmas we are very aware of the political and economic uncertainties that face us. The prophet Isaiah also lived in such uncertain times, as the Assyrians had just conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (734-732 BC). This fulfilled Isaiah's warnings to the people, who had turned their back on God and His ways. However, Isaiah is able to bring a word of hope, promising a Messiah who would come like a great light: *'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'* (Isaiah 9 verse 2). These words are fulfilled in the birth of Jesus 700 years later and describe the person of Jesus:

**Wonderful Counsellor:** He will give us the wisdom we need, especially when we have difficult decisions to make at work or home, or in dealing with our finances or future direction.

**Mighty God:** He will provide the help and strength to face a difficult diagnosis, family crisis or relationships breakdown, as we trust His plan and purpose for our lives.

**Everlasting Father:** He cares for us as a father cares for his children, so that we can come to Him when we feel alone or we are really struggling, knowing that He hears and will answer our prayers.

**Prince of Peace:** He has secured peace by His cross and resurrection, and so we can find in Him true acceptance, forgiveness and peace for our lives, relationships and future.

Christmas is the time to celebrate a God who is faithful to all His promises, *'the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this'* (v 7)

Paul Hardingham

## WHY WAS JESUS BORN IN A BARN?



Our pretty Christmas cards do not do it justice – the stable that Jesus was born in would have been smelly, dirty, and full of mess. So why did God not provide something better for His beloved Son? Why let Joseph and Mary scrounge around until they ended up in a smelly stable?

Perhaps because the King of Kings being born in a foul stable is a perfect picture of redemption. Jesus came from glory into a world filled with the dirt, filth and darkness of sin. And Jesus was not put off by darkness in the least – instead, He came to be the Light of the World. Thank God for His unspeakable gift. No wonder the angels sang “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2 verse 14)

## WHY WAS THE WORLD READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

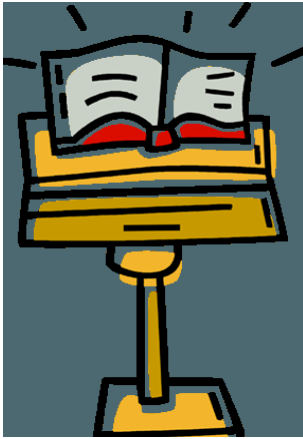


Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that “when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son...” The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the ‘time had fully come’ for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire’s sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into ‘enemy territory’ or needing a ‘passport’.

For the first time ever, it was possible for ‘common’ people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So, the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19<sup>th</sup> century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed ‘fully come’.



## DIARY OF CHURCH SERVICE PREACHERS

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> at 10.30am** - Messy Church: *Maureen Spinks*

Messy Church is preceded by breakfast

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am** - *David Ball*

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Holy Communion at 10.30am** - *Gillian*

*Walsh*

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am** - *Circuit Service at Chislehurst Methodist Church.*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Messy Church**

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 10.30am: Theme - Angels

This is preceded by breakfast

### **Prayer meeting**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm: At the house of Eddie and Dallas Green

### **Good Companions**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am: followed by Christmas lunch

### **All Sorts Craft Group**

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December **Cancelled**

### **Community Lunch**

**Cancelled** after the Christmas Lunch and resumes on the 8<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Saturday Youth Club**

Every Saturday from 7-10pm for 9-14 year olds



**SATURDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

From 11am to 3pm St Edwards Christmas fair.

**SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Carols for Crisis outside the Co-op from 10.30-11.30am. Tea and coffee will be available in St Edwards afterwards.

**SUNDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Carols by Candlelight. Mottingham Methodist Church at 4.00pm. Refreshments and mince pies after the service.

**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

The Mottingham Village Concert Band Christmas Concert at 7.30pm in Maryfield Hall - Our Lady Help of Christians Church. This is the band's annual contribution to family, friends and local community.

**THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Ecumenical Carol service at 7.30pm in St Andrews Church, Court Road.

**SUNDAY 22<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

The St Andrews Christingle service will take place at 4pm.

..... **AND**

**TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

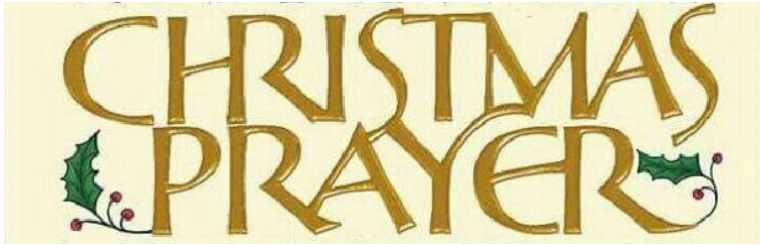
**Good Companions** will celebrate Christmas with a Christmas lunch following their normal get together at 10.30.



**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

**Community Christmas lunch** at 12.30 pm

**SORRY! SOLD OUT!**



## A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Lord, as I enter into the fast-paced season ahead, help me walk slowly and quietly. Let me stop and

listen to the angels sing of the greatest news ever told. Let my heart, mind and soul join the chorus "Glory in the Highest!! The Messiah has been born!"

Among all the bright sparkling lights and cheery holiday tunes, let my spirit travel once again toward Bethlehem to honour and worship Jesus, my King, The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty Counsellor, Son of God, the Lamb. All Your love, mercy and power somehow made flesh in the tiny form of a humble baby born in a manger. Let me worship the only one who is worthy to take our sin away and open the gates of all eternity!

Daphne Kitching

## REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH

-  **1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am:**  
Messy Church - This is preceded by breakfast
-  **1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7.30pm**  
Prayer Meeting at Eddie and Dallas's home
-  **2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am**  
Good Companions
-  **4TH TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 10.30 - 12.00md**  
All sorts craft group
-  **EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 12.30pm**  
Community Lunch
-  **EVERY SATURDAY FROM 7 - 10pm**  
Saturday Youth Club - for 9 - 14 year olds

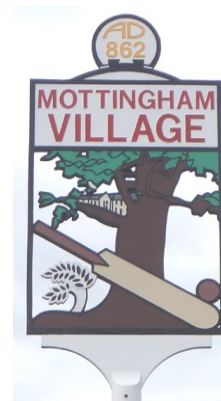
## IN AND AROUND MOTTINGHAM AND BROMLEY

### MOTTINGHAM LIBRARY IN DECEMBER

*Bromley and Greenwich Councillors' Surgeries:*

**Bromley:** 6.45-8.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

**Greenwich:** 7-8pm on the last Friday of the month.



Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December

10.30-12 noon

Join us for our special Christmas coffee morning with songs and entertainment with special guests, Dorset Rd Infants

Armchair Walk

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December

6.15-7.45pm

'A Bath, a Ballroom and a lot of Blue Plaques'

Join Chris on an armchair walk in Mayfair



**THERE WILL BE NO CHURCHES TOGETHER IN MOTTINGHAM BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER MEETING IN DECEMBER**

A weekly lent series is planned for 2020.

**CHRISTMAS SHOPPING? ONE MORE CHANCE TO TRY A CHRISTMAS FARE!**

**St Edwards - Saturday 7 December from 11am to 3pm**

# The Beatitudes



## THINKING ABOUT THE BEATITUDES

Rev Paul Hardingham continues his series.

### 8. 'Blessed are the persecuted'

*'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'* (Matthew 5 verse 10).

Somebody once described a Christian as one who is 'completely fearless, continually cheerful and constantly in trouble.' Living the life that Jesus presents in the Beatitudes will not necessarily make us universally popular. We must be prepared for opposition, insults and ridicule or even worse. Of course, persecution is the daily experience for Christians in many parts of our world today.

Jesus didn't tell us to seek persecution, but He did say that when it comes, we should regard it as a blessing:

Firstly, because we are identifying with Jesus: If we identify as fully as we can with Jesus, then we will experience suffering like Him. It is 'because of me' (verse 11) we are opposed or criticized.

Secondly, it shows our faith is genuine: To suffer for our faith is typical of God's people, 'for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you' (verse 12).

Thirdly, because of our reward in heaven: we will not lose out in the future, as Jesus reminds us that 'great is your reward in heaven' (verse 12).

To what extent do we suffer for being a Christian at work, with our friends or family? Although we don't seek it, Jesus describes suffering as authentic Christian experience. We might like to ask these questions as we reflect on this:

- How many people with whom we have contact know that we are a Christian?



- How far are we helping to give them a true picture of what Christianity is about?
- How far do we demonstrate the presence of Jesus in our daily lives?
- If we were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us?



## PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN PAKISTAN

UK-based Release International has made Pakistan its focus for prayer this year, and continues to be deeply concerned for Christians in that country.

As a spokesman for Release International explains, "Most Christians in Pakistan are poor, illiterate and vulnerable to abuse, especially young women and girls. Believers face discrimination in education, employment and the law. Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been used to make false allegations against Christians, often to settle personal vendettas."

Release has helped Christians who have been falsely accused of blasphemy and given support to families of prisoners like Asia Bibi, a mother who spent 10 years in jail on charges that were later thrown out by the Supreme Court.

Speaking recently from Canada, the 54-year old called on Christians everywhere to remember others behind bars.

In a YouTube video, she says: "I, Asia Bibi, believe in Jesus. My belief is strong. I never let my belief weaken." And Asia gave this message to the world: "Stay true to your beliefs. Even if you have to face the sword, please hold firm to your faith; even if you have to sacrifice everything."

## IN HONOUR OF REMEMBRANCE DAY



On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2019 Churches Together in Nottingham held its annual memorial service for those who died in the first and second world wars. The service was held at Warrs motorbike shop near the War Memorial. The Nottingham Concert Band provided music for the service.

The turnout for the service was amazing. It felt like the whole of

Mottinham Village had attended. Half way through the service representatives from each church went over to the memorial to lay a poppy wreath down. Eddie Green from Nottingham Methodist Church went over to the Memorial to lay down a wreath

The service was led by Rev Ian Walch from St Andrews Church and Deacon Maureen Spinks from the Methodist Church. The service ended with the National Anthem.

Emma Aldengard



### PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a note book at the rear of the Church for your use if you or someone you know would like to be remembered in prayer by the Church whether anonymously or by name.

If it's easier to leave a note please do leave it in an envelope in the Church.



ONCE A MONTH CONGREGATION CALLED MESSY  
CHURCH  
NOVEMBER IN PICTURES.  
THEME: REMEMBERING



## THE CHRISTMAS CATERPILLAR



Sometimes, upon a  
Christmas day  
I wonder if there's any way  
That Christmas might be  
quite a treat  
For those who have a few  
more feet!

I really love my Christmas socks  
That fill, each year, my Christmas box.  
O Santa, festive stocking filler,  
I wish I were a caterpillar!

Nigel Beeton

### MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

#### CONTACTS:

**The Minister:** Rev Duncan MacBean. Tel: 07432 093353  
Please Note: The minister's normal day off is Friday

**The Deacon:** Maureen Spinks. Tel: 01689 821956  
Please note: The deacon's normal day off is Tuesday

**The Senior Steward:** Dallas Green. Tel: 020 8617 0076

**ADDRESS:** 62 Mottingham Road, Mottingham, SE9 4QR

**THE CHURCH WEB SITE:** Log in to:

<http://www.mottinghammethodistchurch.org.uk>.

**THE CHURCH AND CHURCH HALL FOR HIRE**

Mobile Contact: 07757 717399



We are members of Parish Pump and The Association of Church Editors, two groups which provide material for Church Magazines.