

PORTON BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Showing Love, Showing Christ, Showing His Way

Special Edition
December 2020



**And is it true? And is it true,
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained glass windows hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?**

John Betjeman

A Message from our Moderator

Hello everyone,

Isn't it great that we can meet at church this weekend? Sundays at home just don't feel right.

Like so many people, we have had sadness this year, losing 2 cousins, Cliff Lodge and Anthony Foster, but saddest of all, Paul, John's brother died leaving a great big gap in our lives. All 3 of them are now with God in Heaven.

We have been very busy during this last Lockdown, clearing the shop ready for John's retirement, that was planned for this Christmas, after 50 years. However, the person taking the shop has pulled out because of Covid-19, so John will continue to work a few hours each week. Secretly I think he was pleased!!!

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas, however quiet and different it might be. Won't it be super when we can have all the children back at church!

God bless you all,

Love John and Jean xx

Musings from Longhedge

I do believe you should be able to choose who you want to hug. It is not my fault – when I was a child we moved from London when I was 7 and returned twice a year to visit “pretend relatives”. This was fine until it was time to say good bye I had an uncle who had a large black beard and I really did NOT want a hug before we left. He even bribed my brother and I with 2/6d each and of course we had to comply but it put me off hugs.

BUT, this year has been so tough, we have had close family bereavements and known friends who are still grieving after family and friends have died. My impulse is to want to hug them and assure them of our love and support but of course that has not been possible. Such a difficult time.

Now we look forward to Christmas, everyone seems to be concerned with meeting together to party and share family time together, don't get me wrong John and I would love to see our families and of course our PBC family, but what is Christmas really about, it's time to celebrate the birth of our Saviour who came into the world that first Christmas to give us the gift of everlasting life.

So, if we end up opening Christmas presents on our grandchildren's doorsteps and spending the day just the two of us then so be it, but we will celebrate the birth of our Saviour and want to send Christmas greetings to all our family and friends.

(Watch out though, I will have lots of hugs to catch up on when we get back to normal)

Luv John and Wendy

Years May Come

The old and the bold might remember a group from the 1960s called Herman's Hermits. One of their songs included the line "Years may come, years may go". This year seems to have hardly started and here we are almost gone. During the years that have come and gone, I spent several Christmases in Germany. I was fortunate to be near two of my brothers and spent happy times with them. Over the Festive period, we would celebrate in the traditional English manner. Plenty of parties, lots of family time; attending Midnight Mass and celebrating Christmas Day. In Germany Christmas seemed a magical time. For the Germans however, Christmas time (Weihnachts Zeit) was completely different, and yet the same. I remember particularly the German celebrations on Christmas Eve (Weihnachts Abend) where the family celebrations took place and gifts were exchanged, with Christmas Day (Weihnachts Tag) being reserved for church services, family and celebrating the birth of Christ. I still remember those times with great fondness and I enjoy listening to my CDs of German Weihnachtslieder (Christmas Carols) which, when I hear them brings back so many happy memories of those times.

For some, this year has not been a happy one and I hope that this Christmas will a happy one. In years that go, we remember those we have loved and those we have lost. Christmas is about Christ and it is about family. My memories of many Christmases, past and present are precious and I hope they are for you as well

During this Christmas Season, may we all enjoy ourselves. Please spare a prayer for those in peril of their lives because they are Christians in an unforgiving land. Please pray for our Servicemen and women who give of themselves to keep us safe and for Service families separated by duty.

May each of you have peaceful and blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

David

Postage Stamps

Don't forget to save your postage stamps, especially with Christmas arriving soon. Any you give me will be passed on to a local Durrington Church who will send them on to the Baptist Missionary Society., to be sold.

Thank you in advance,

Mercia

Thoughts from Winterbourne Gunner

Christmas is coming, a time of Celebration.
But sadly this year won't have quite the same elation.
We have shown resilience at Porton Baptist Church,
The true meaning of Christmas is what we will search.

Whether we can meet face to face,
With masks and sanitiser firmly in place.
Or whether we stay safely at home,
As a family at Porton, we are never alone.
So as we rejoice in this season of Joy,
We thank God for sending his Special Boy.

With our love and wishes for a Happy and Healthy Christmas,
Roger, Michelle, Ben and Harry

News from Field View Barn

Hi all. we are missing you all very much, Joey especially out of the boys is missing being in church and seeing you all. Things have been quite hectic here! Summer was lovely being surrounded by fields to go on bike rides etc but now with the colder wetter weather everything is very muddy! What school must think of us when the boys turn up every day with mud covered shoes!

Building wise we are nearly at a point where we can fit the stairs. hurrah! We have two bedrooms we hope to finish plastering very soon so that we can get in the warm as the caravan doesn't hold its heat well overnight. The kitchen is all fitted and floor going down in the next couple of weeks. That will probably be it until new year but it's enough to give us much needed space to be in. Very much looking forward to one day having a house warming party so we can show you all.

Love to you all x

The Larkhams



News from Firsdawn

Thank God for the dog! Walking Rio has kept a routine in our lives during this strangest of years and provided us with so much tactile love and company. We are pleased to report that the Lane household are, in the big scheme of things, keeping well both physically and mentally.

The second English shutdown meant that Lilian could not work at the shop so she spent November working on her art focussing on a 3D challenge that involves stripping the facial art off a doll then reinventing it with new sculpting and fantastic illustration. This involved many new techniques and the results are very impressive. Her use of online buying/selling platforms has enabled her entrepreneurial skills to develop too. She sources the dolls and funds her new hobby that way; she had a few really successful sales whilst decluttering her room so it's a win win situation. A real boost during lockdown was when a surprise envelope arrived which contained her certificate for BTEC Diploma in Forensic Investigation with Merit. She danced around the house for days saying "I can't believe it".

G and T have been so busy since September, grateful to be able to work in lockdown and keeping busy installing new underground surface water drains followed by landscaping the front garden. Most of this has been DIY, working together, which has been very rewarding. It has been a great distraction from the isolation of lockdown and it seems the whole village are interested asking what we are doing. As a result we have met many new neighbours who have stopped to chat. We are now approaching the planting stage which we have looked forward to. Some are on order others are still just ideas which will come to fruition in time.

With the start of Advent we need to ease up on the outdoor work to concentrate on preparing for Christmas. Ours will be really simple this year with Dilys hopefully joining us for a small celebration. The hope is we will be able to use the difference of this year's circumstances to change our Christmas to improve our focus on the real reason for the season plus in some way provide support for those struggling this year.

We miss our brothers and sisters at PBC, Christmas blessings to you and yours.

Tammy, George and Lilian.

The Last Word:

Thank you to all my contributors. A very Happy and Blessed Christmas to all our friends, near and far.

Love,

Douglas

I WAS GLAD

by Pam Pointer

I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the Lord's house.' And now we are here, standing inside the gates of Jerusalem! Psalm 122 v 1

This year Christians have been to 'the Lord's house' in person from time to time and on Zoom much of the time. Whichever way we've been able to worship, has it made you glad or sad? Possibly a bit of both. We may - or may not - be able to go to church physically this Advent and Christmas season. I rejoice that so many more people have been touched by the good news of Jesus through modern technology! And there's been so much choice of 'where' we worship. Sometimes I've had three services on the go at the same time on my screen!

It was a celebratory time for King David and his people when they were able to go up to Jerusalem. Let's make sure that this Christmas we demonstrate our joy to the world. It may be through lights in your window, a message of hope on your front door, letters or cards or emails with the promise of strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. For many of us, this year has been very challenging and there has been great sadness. Peter wrote, 'My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed.' We can practise doing joy, knowing that nothing can ever separate us from God's love in Jesus. We have good news to share with the hurting world that God, through Jesus, came to save, so let's be glad. Happy Advent and Christmas!

A Message from Andover

We have enjoyed our past services; so thankful for everyone who took them and how much we are missing everyone now. How great it was to see Douglas and Harry for Remembrance Day. Life is very mundane and although we have all day long we don't seem to have achieved much!! Take care of yourselves; stay safe and hopefully we will meet again before Christmas!!

Love

Valerie and Clive xx

For Prayer

Small Baptist

6-12	Drayton Parslow, Nr. Milton Keynes	All Churches
13-21	Zion, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts	Barton-in-the-Beans, Leics
22-28	Braybrooke, Market Harborough, Leics	Abertillery (King Street), Gwent

Bible A Month

The country highlighted in this month's "Bible A Month" is China. We are asked to pray for pastors in the mountainous regions where a pastor may have many churches spread over a wide region, separated by high mountains. One such is Pu, who oversees eight churches with 8000 believers in total.

Worldwide

The many trouble spots around the world: Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia and many more. Pray for those seeking to bring peace and reconciliation: for the Aid agencies bringing relief to refugees.

Mission

For missionaries away from home at Christmas; for the Salvation Army and other charities as they bring help to the homeless this Christmastide; for the Trussel Trust and Alabare.

National

The Queen; the Royal Family; Government, both National and Local.

Local

Our local schools as they celebrate Christmas, may the children learn its true meaning.

Ourselves

Our services this month; those of the Fellowship with continuing health problems; our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; our visiting preachers.

Birthdays

16 Bethan, 22nd David, 28th Clive

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