

# Newsletter

Winter 2018

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**BMC**  
Brookhouse Methodist Church



## O Little Town of Bethlehem

Dear Friends,

The Christmas season is a season full of carol singing, singing all the hymns that we wouldn't normally sing during the year. One of the favourites is "O little town of Bethlehem", written before 1868 for the Sunday School children at his Philadelphia parish, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem. Brooks says, "Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds... Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still 'keeping watch over their flocks,' or leading them home to fold."



However, have you ever noticed that Bethlehem is not the first place that is mentioned in the New Testament? You would have thought that Bethlehem, which is key to the birth narrative of Jesus, would have been placed first, but we don't read about it until chapter 2. The first place mentioned, three times (four times in the KJV), is Babylon, the place of exile for seventy years for the children of Israel.

As Matthew brings the message of Christ the King, you would have thought that Jerusalem would have had a prominent place in the birth of the Saviour, as this is the place where the King's ruled from. Jerusalem means "city of peace", and Christ brings a divine peace into the lives of those who trust in Him.

The focus though is on Bethlehem, which means "House of Bread." Babylon is the city of sin, therefore, we need to come first to recognise that we are sinners before a holy God, before we can come and recognise that Christ is the Bread from Heaven, who was broken for us on the cross on that first Good Friday. When we recognise that He was broken for us, then we can acknowledge Him as King of our lives.



This is not the first time that Bethlehem was a place of importance, if we were to turn to Genesis 35 we would read, “So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).” Later, we learn that this was the home of Ruth and Naomi, and Ruth features as one of four women in Matthew 1, and it was here in 1 Samuel 16 that David was anointed king in place of Saul. It is for this reason that Luke calls it, “the city of David.”

We have already seen that Bethlehem has two names, and we have seen that Bethlehem means, “House of Bread”, whereas, Ephrath means, “Fruitfulness”, which was the name of the village in the days of Jacob. It is to Bethlehem that we must go by faith to partake of the nourishing Bread of Heaven, and our own fruitfulness depends on our feasting upon the true Bread.

It was to Bethlehem that the Magi travelled from Babylon via Jerusalem, to witness the birth of the King of Kings. It was here that they brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Before that, shortly after Jesus was born, the shepherds of Luke 2 went with haste to see this momentous event and, went on their way singing His praises.

I pray that at this Christmas time, we too might come in wonder, love and praise, as we gather around the manger, and see again the birth of the Christ child, who came as the Saviour of the world.

With every Christmas blessing,

Roy

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## **Be the light that you are**

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centred - Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish motives - Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies - Succeed anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you - Be honest anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight - Build anyway.

The good you do today, people will quite often forget tomorrow - Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough - Give the world the best you've got anyway.

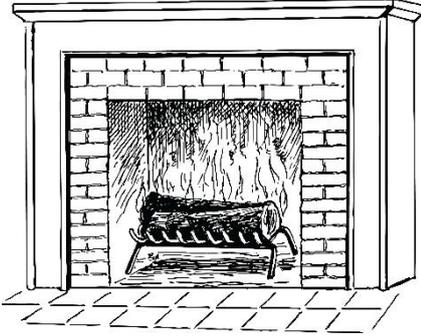
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and 'them' anyway.

**Mother Teresa**

## What a faithful God we serve

1 Thessalonians 5:24 “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

There is something very relaxing and even healing for the group of guests and team as we sit by the fire in the lounge in Blairmore House on a cold, wet and snowy evening.



What is it, I ask myself, about a real fire that is so comforting? I guess there are many reasons: Maybe for me it's because it brings back such good memories of sitting at my grandpa's fireside as a child listening to the stories which he told us. They were adventurous stories full of drama but at the same time they were safe stories which always ended with him closing the book at an exciting moment and saying “Ok it's bedtime, I'll tell you the rest tomorrow.”

Shrieks of “Oh no, just a little bit more please” was to no avail for Grandpa had spoken! We were naturally very disappointed not to hear more but we had no doubt at all that grandpa would be there at the fireside the next night to continue the story. I wondered as I sat by the fireside at Blairmore House: What made us so sure?

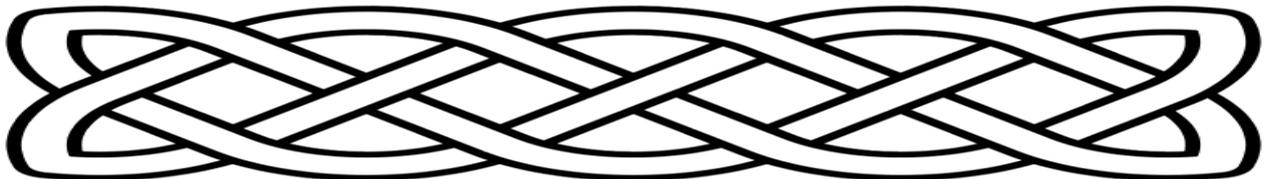
I came to the conclusion that it was simply because Grandpa had given us his word and we knew that if he promised something then he would fulfil it.

Sitting by the fire last night I realised that that is also true about our Heavenly Father. We are in the middle of His story at the moment and we can be confident that One day He will finish the story simply because He is a God who keeps His Word.

### Prayer

*Heavenly Father we Thank you for your great love and faithfulness to us your children. Teach us what it means to sit at your feet and to learn from you. Help us to remember that you are a faithful God who keeps His promises and that one day Jesus will come in all His glory and He will reveal to us the end of your magnificent story. Amen*

Ruth Hawkey



## Brookhouse Preaching Plan 2019

I have been asked to explain how I have come up with this Preaching Plan for 2019. Recently, I watched a sermon by Stuart Briscoe focussing on the book of Daniel, in which he said that the world today requires men and women of character. He looked briefly at John 17, Jesus' great prayer for His disciples, and reminded those who were listening to him that Jesus, in His prayer, spoke of the fact that the world had been hostile to Him. In His prayer, He spoke of the fact that the disciples were going to be left in a world that would be hostile to them, and we live in a world that is hostile to the claims of Christ. In his thoughts from John 17, Stuart Briscoe said that the disciples and we ourselves are called to be:

- Left in the world
- Not of the world
- Sent to the world
- Be agents of change in it.

Now, if we are to be agents of change in the world today, and we are to be people of character, then we need to ensure that we are secure in our most holy faith. I am well aware that many of us are secure, but are we all? The question that Stuart Briscoe asked, and one that I reflect to you, "Are we secure enough in our faith, to withstand the situation that we find ourselves in?" One final thought from the message from Stuart Briscoe, "God has called men and women to be His servants, and the Church is supposed to be training people of conviction and character. Why? Because we march to a different drummer, much different to the world in which we live."

I hope that this year we will become more secure in our most holy faith.

Roy

Date	Subject	Focus
January 6	Covenant Sunday	Jer 31:31-33
<b>One Church</b>		
January 13	Family Service	
January 20	I believe in the Church	Matt 28:19
January 27	Salt and Saints	Matt 5:13
February 3	The Effective Evangelistic Church	Acts 5:42
February 10	Family Service	

February 17	When a Church Cares	Phil 4:14
February 24	The Goal of the Church	Eph 4:7-16
March 3	The Peace of the Church	1 Thes 5:13
March 10	Church Anniversary Paul & his revolutionary ideas of the Church	
<b>Lent Series</b>		
March 17	Behold the Lamb of God	John 1:29
March 24	The Joy of the Cross	Heb 12:2
March 31	Behold Your King	John 19:19
April 7	The Living Lord Draws Near	Luke 24:15
April 14	Family Service	
April 21	Easter Sunday	
<b>One Lord</b>		
April 28	Mission Sunday	
May 5	Abiding in Christ	John 15:5
May 12	Family Service	
May 19	The Joy of Knowing Christ	Eph 2:8-9
May 26	Christ the Only Hope	Col 1:5
June 2	Sportsreach	
June 9	Family Service	
June 16	The Greatness of Christ	John 1:14
June 23	Where is Jesus?	Mark 16:19
June 30	Big Weekend	
<b>Bible Month – Colossians</b>		
July 7	Colossians 1	
July 14	Colossians 2	
July 21	Colossians 3	
July 28	Colossians 4	

<b>One Faith</b>		
August 4	Mission Sunday	
August 11	What is Faith?	Heb 11:1-3
August 18	Abel - Worshipping Faith	Heb 11:4
August 25	Enoch - Walking Faith	Heb 11:5-6
September 1	Noah - Witnessing Faith	Heb 11:7
September 8	Harvest Festival	
September 15	Abraham - Obedient Faith	Heb 11:8-10
September 22	Sarah - Powerful Faith	Heb 11:11-12
September 29	Isaac - Willing Faith	Heb 11:17-18
October 6	Isaac & Jacob - Future of Faith	Heb 11:19-21
October 13	Family Service	
October 20	Joshua - Foolishness of Faith	Heb 11:30
October 27	Rahab - Unlikely Place of Faith	Heb 11:31
November 3	Gideon - Faith in Action	Heb 11:32
November 10	Remembrance Sunday	
November 17	Shoebox Sunday	
November 24	Samson - Faith in Action	Heb 11:32
<b>Advent Series</b>		
December 1	Why was Jesus born?	Heb 2:9-18
December 8	Family Service	
December 15	Gifts for the King	Matt 2:11
December 22	The Song of the Angels	Luke 2:14
December 29	Christ the Lord	Luke 2:11

# Nativity Word Search

C A N O I T A V L A S D N S H S  
Q S H E P H E R D S R F A L L U  
R A T S A M T S I R H C T E J S  
N E M E S I W S H E E P I G O E  
J G N I K M A R Y G I U V N S J  
M O S Y I H X Q U R Q W I A E T  
D O N K E Y R E G N A M T D P M  
Z I L I N N K E E P E R Y O H F



angels  
Christmas  
donkey  
innkeeper  
Jesus  
Joseph    manger  
king        Mary  
              nativity  
              salvation  
              sheep  
              shepherds  
              star  
              wisemen

## Samaritans Purse Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2018

Once again this year we participated in The Samaritans Purse Christmas Shoebox Appeal (also known as Operation Christmas Child).



We packed an amazing 411 boxes on our community packing day with people from all around the local area and beyond coming to take part. These made up part of 1721 boxes which were checked, sealed, cartoned up and despatched from Brookhouse on November 25th. The destination this year was Ukraine.

A couple called Dave and Jill Cooke began the shoebox project in 1990 which three years later, merged with Samaritan's Purse. We are so blessed to be able to play a part in providing gift-filled shoeboxes to children all around the world who are in desperate situations. These gifts are unconditional and are given regardless of race, gender or religion. Only after the boxes have been given to the children and only where culturally appropriate, copies of a book entitled The Greatest Gift, (with 130 different language versions) and a 12-lesson Bible study course are offered to children, which introduces those interested, to Jesus.



Since 2009, The Greatest Journey has grown from 270,000 enrolled children in 18 countries to approximately 1.4 million children in over 80 countries in 2013. Local teachers are trained to lead children through the 12-lesson course of The Greatest Journey and equipped with the knowledge to continue children's ministry once the programme is complete. A graduation ceremony and certificate is offered to children who complete all 12 lessons.

It costs £5 to provide a child the opportunity to participate in The Greatest Journey, to receive discipleship materials (including a certificate) and New Testament in their language. However, because we at BMC subsidise the

satellite warehouse operation, we have been given permission to donate £3 per shoebox this year. Through generous donations, and fundraising through Sausage and Bacon Bun Cafe and Table Top Sales we exceeded our target and raised £1454.50 transportation donation to the Samaritan's Purse.



### Our Packing Day, Our Community:

Over the years our Packing Day has grown with more and more churches, organisations, shops, and individuals getting involved to bring donations of items for us to include and take part in the day. These range from the local tennis club donating tennis balls to our craft

sessions which have grown to not only produce hats, scarves and gloves but also gifts such as cards, sewing kits, drawstring bags, bracelets and chalkboards for us to include in the boxes.

Once again volunteers from BMC and Caton St Pauls churches used their own cars to pick up and bring back over 1700 boxes from locations around the area, going as far south as Bamber Bridge. Items left over from our packing day are used to 'top up' other shoeboxes we receive from elsewhere, which may sometimes be a bit sparse.

For a third year we also hosted a packing morning for the children of Caton St Pauls. They came in 3 groups of around 30 children to pack boxes with items which they had bought with money that they had raised from a non-uniform day at school. Once again this was a huge success.



Although this year's truck has only just left we are already thinking about next year. January is a great time to pick up bargains in the sales and adding a packet of soap to your weekly supermarket shop is a great way to make an early start!



Every year I am amazed at the number of knitted hats and cuddly toys we receive and still we always use them all up!

This activity gives us the opportunity to welcome people in from other churches, schools, and organisations to share with us the joy of making up these shoeboxes and which in turn opens up an opportunity for a child to learn about Jesus.

If you would like to donate personally, to enable a child to participate, equip a church, or even sponsor a country, more information can be found at <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/the-greatest-journey/donate-to-the-greatest-journey/>

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, NKJV).*

Sara

## Diary

### DECEMBER

7	Caton Christmas Lights switch-on, 4.30pm
9	Christmas Breakfast Fundraiser, 9-10am, for Meg Ward's YWAM Discipleship Year
14	Meet to Eat Christmas Lunch, 12.15pm
16	BMC Nativity
16	Carol Service, St Pauls 6.30pm
23	Youth Service
30	Meg Ward's Last Sunday before YWAM Discipleship Year

### JANUARY

6	Covenant Service
20	Messy Church
26	Saturday Soccer and Netball starts – 10.00am Caton Community School
27	Youth Service

### FEBRUARY

9	No Saturday Soccer – SportsReach Away Weekend
17	Messy Church
24	Youth Service

See Notice Sheet or notice boards in the foyer for more details.



**Situations vacant** – volunteers needed for Welcoming, Creche, Refreshments, Junior and Youth church, Messy Church, Men's Night coordinators, Treasurer, administrator. If you think you could help with any of these jobs, then please speak to someone – don't wait to be asked!