



December 2016-
JANUARY 2017

For
Unto
us a
CHILD
is born
Unto us a Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Isaiah 9:6

Outlook

Beckenham United Reformed Church

www.beckenhamurc.com

SUNDAY WORSHIP - DECEMBER 2016

4th December Mrs. Gill Ross & Mr. Julien Ball-Holy Communion
11th December Mrs. Marion Bayley - Nativity Service
18th December Mrs. Marion Bayley - Lessons & Carols
24th December Mrs. Marion Bayley - Christmas Eve
Communion Service - 11.45pm
25th December Mrs. Marion Bayley - Christmas Day at 10am

OTHER DIARY EVENTS

Wed 7th December 2.30pm Bible Study at Elma's
(54 Hayes Way) followed by visit to Hayes Christmas Tree Festival
Tues 13th December 7.00pm Elders
Wed 21st December 12.30pm Luncheon Club with Crescent Club
& Christmas Miscellany

OUR VISION

Our vision is to glorify God and to serve God throughout our lives, always open to God working through us. We seek to share the good news of love, forgiveness and grace with all in our local community through our actions and our prayers.



	Donors	Arrangers
4th	Peter Bevan	Pat Power
11th	available	Monica Duncan
18th	available	Muriel Aldcroft
25th	CHRISTMAS	Marion Bayley

He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree.
Roy L. Smith

SUNDAY WORSHIP - January 2017

1st Jan	Mrs. Marion Bayley - Holy Communion
8th Jan	Mr. John Morley
15 th Jan	Mrs. Marion Bayley - Songs of Praise & Church Meeting
22 nd Jan	CTiB - Pulpit Exchange
29 th Jan	Rev. Margaret Tremeer

OTHER DIARY EVENTS

Wed 4th January	2.30pm	Bible Study
Tues 10th January	2.30pm	Crescent Club
Tues 10th January	8.00pm	Elders
Wed 18th January	12.30pm	Luncheon Club & Songs of Praise



	Donors	Arrangers
1 st	available	Pat Power
8 th	Monica Duncan	Monica Duncan
15 th	available	Marion Bayley
22 nd	available	Jane Ball
29 th	Muriel Aldcroft	Muriel Aldcroft

CHRISTMAS POST BOX 2016

The Christmas Post Box will be at the back of the Church on the 4th and 11th December. The cards will be distributed on Sunday 18th December. Please post cards ONLY for people who attend church regularly. There will be a plate in lieu of postage for CRISIS.

Thank you.

Gill

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

Charles Dickens

Dear Friends,

Whilst writing this in the middle of November I am busy preparing for our Christmas Fair so it must be nearly Christmas! What a busy time of year it is. There is so much going on – presents to buy, visits to family to organise, food for Christmas to arrange, children /grandchildren in school plays to go to see, Christmas decorations to organise, Christmas Tree to buy, the list seems endless! But why are we doing all these things? Some people just don't know or have conveniently forgotten. We know though, don't we! We are celebrating the birth of a baby more than 2000 years ago in Bethlehem who went on to change the world.

An American religious leader wrote -

The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love and of generosity and of goodness. It illuminates the picture window of the soul, and we look out upon the world's busy life and become more interested in people than in things.

Christmas is not really about presents and parties and decorations but it is certainly a time for people, particularly perhaps family. It is a chance to make contact with friends as well as family who we don't see or talk to during the rest of the year. It may just be a Christmas Card with a few words of greeting. Loneliness is one of the great curses of modern life and Christmas is the time, above all others, when we can make a difference. Just that simple card or a brief chat on the phone could make all the difference to someone's life.

The great novelist Leo Tolstoy wrote

Where there is faith, there is love;
Where there is love, there is peace;
Where there is peace, there is God;
And where there is God; there is no need.

Have a wonderful Christmas wherever you are and whoever you are spending it with.

Anthony

FROM THE SECRETARY

Where does the time go - 2016 is nearly at an end!

We have been without a Minister for nearly a year, but have been ably led by our Interim Moderator - Rev. Dr. Peter

Stevenson. I would like to thank Julien and Sheila Gardner whose help on the Vacancy Committee has been invaluable.

Nearly every month we have all met with Peter (and 3 members from Hayes) and sorted out the process of getting a new Minister. We now hope and pray that someone would like to come to the joint pastorate of Hayes and Beckenham!

Henry had a spell in hospital but is back in his Residential Home and recovering well. We wish him a Happy 95th Birthday this month! At the time of writing this newsletter, Dudley is seriously ill in Lewisham Hospital, though there has been a slight improvement over the past couple of days.

Pat Power and Maureen Pickles have been under the weather but are hopefully now on the mend.

As usual at this time, I would like to thank the Elders (and their spouses) for all the support they have given me during the past year. I feel so fortunate that as a Church we are one big family who tirelessly work together.

Dorothy Nutley (who I know most of you will remember) sends her love and wishes you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I too would like to reiterate that!

Gill Ross

Lectionary

4th Dec Isaiah 11:1-10 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

11th Dec Isaiah 35:1-10 Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10 Matthew 11:2-11

18th Dec Isaiah 7:10-16 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

24th – 25th Dec Isaiah 9:2-7 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 97 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20

1st Jan	Isaiah 63:7-9 Matthew 2:13-23	Psalm 148	Hebrews 2:10-18
8th Jan	Isaiah 42:1-9 3:13-17	Psalm 29	Acts 10:34-43 Matthew
15th Jan	Isaiah 49:1-7 John 1:29-42	Psalm 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9
22nd Jan	Isaiah 9:1-4 Matthew 4:12-23	Psalm 27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18
29th Jan	Micah 6:1-8 Matthew 5:1-12	Psalm 15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31



CHRISTMAS LETTER FROM THE MODERATOR

Dear Friends,

Last Christmas I was given a Fitbit in the vain hope that I might walk more. Walking is not only good for your health I was told but it has a biblical imperative! The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, so says the prophet Isaiah. The truth is that the people of God did an awful lot of walking. They walked all over ancient Israel sharing the good news of God's love, offering hope to those who suffer, proclaiming freedom and liberation to all who are oppressed. But the trouble is that often it is hard to walk well when you have a rock in your shoe.

When there is a rock in your shoe, it digs into your foot and makes every step a bit painful. It can cause you to limp; it brings frustration. And so, on a long journey, when you realise that you have a rock in your shoe, what should you do? You need to take that stone out of your shoe. And once it is gone, then you can continue on your way - then you can walk forward free from the stone that causes you pain, and slows down your progress.

The problem is, we often carry stones in our shoes, as it makes it harder to follow Jesus. We are supposed to be on a journey of faith. We are supposed to walk forward in love. We are supposed to stand on our own two feet and travel along the paths of faithfulness. But there are these stones in our shoes, and they cause us to stop. To sit down. To give up. The stones in our shoes made it hard for us to fully follow Jesus.

And, as we approach Advent and Christmas, we are reminded that, in the Incarnation, Jesus, the Christchild, the Light of the world, came to liberate us from the stones in our shoes so that we can work for the liberation of the world. We need to be freed from the stones in shoes so that we can bring freedom and hope and love and peace into a troubled world. We need to find God's liberation, God's freedom in our lives so that we can be messengers of that liberation in God's world. Perhaps, this year, in 2016, we need to hear that especially this Christmas after the year we have had: wars, earthquakes, elections and exits to name but a few.

This Christmas, we will once again sing with yearning hope, for we live in dark and fearful times. Nation invades nation, leaving terror and destruction in their wake. Our hearts go out to the people of Syria. Angry mobs attack each other on streets and give birth to still more bitterness and fear. Parents run themselves ragged trying ensure that it is not them and their families who fall through the cracks into redundancy, poverty and despair. The dark, dark world is constantly divided into winners and losers, and the losers are sacrificed for the security and glorification of the winners. And anyone who shines a challenging light onto the dark violence of it all is denounced as a threat and a loser and is destroyed.

Dark and fearful times. But the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in the land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.

So here we are - living in light or darkness or to use the metaphor of stones in our shoes – living where the sins and lies hold us back from walking in the light. First of all, we need to tell the truth. There is violence and pain in our world. Power is being used in abusive and terrible ways. We are living in systems of injustice and oppression. We need to acknowledge the truth.

Secondly, we need to look at ourselves. Where are the stones in our shoes? Do we have a fear of people who are different than us? Do we allow fear to control interactions with other human beings? Do we allow prejudice, racism, judgement to stop us from offering the Love which came down at Christmas?

Or is it a desire to be liked? We are so afraid of hurting people's feelings that we do not speak truth about injustice, racism and violence. We want everyone to like us, so we refuse to do the radical work of following Jesus. Or is it selfishness with money and time? We don't want to truly

invest in the kingdom of God. We don't want to fully offer our time and money to changing the world. Or is it something else? What other stones, keep you from finding the Christ-child?

The story we celebrate this Christmas is not a safe one. From the very beginning there were few who could accept it. Every version of the story attests to this. John says he came to his own but his own people did not accept him. Luke says that even as he was being born, no room could be found for him. Matthew says the very mention of him threw the king into a murderous fit, and the child and his family had to flee.

Perhaps we have stood still in darkness for so long that we need to move out into the light to which Isaiah attests. We need to walk towards those who are oppressed and hurting. We need to walk towards those who are excluded and shunned. We need to walk towards those who are hungry and thirsty. We need to walk towards those who are different from us. And in order to do this walking, we need to get rid of some stones. Then we will find ourselves born anew, born of God, as children of God, full of grace and truth. And if we begin to do that, if we begin to approach the world with the same humility and the same astonishing refusal to meet violence with anything but outrageous mercy and resilient love, then the light will grow brighter and the darkness will retreat a little further. And as we continue to walk in hope on unhindered by the stones in our shoes, we will indeed be hastening the long awaited day when the child born for us will rule in endless peace, with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Be born in us this Christmas.

With Advent and Christmas blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola', written in a cursive style.

Synod Moderator

The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith

PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

ADVENT PRAISE

Shout for joy the whole earth and everything within Rejoice
for Light is coming into the world!
The mountains sing, the seas resound
to the praise of your name, O God
for Salvation once promised is at hand.
The angels' song rings in the air
For a child will be born.
Hallelujah! The Saviour of the world comes near!

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION

O God, you search us out and know us
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned.
In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.
When we make no room for Christ Jesus
and fail to welcome him into our lives -
when we follow shooting stars
and squander our gifts in the modern courts of King Herod
in your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.
When we seek to cut down those who might rise above us –
when we sanitise your birth place
and erase from memory the poor and displaced
in your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.
When we sing sweet sentiments over the birth of Christ Jesus
and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence
in your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.
We turn to you, Christ Jesus
perfect union of Spirit and flesh.
Forgive us as we renounce evil.
Fill us with your love
for we choose to be made whole.

CRISIS

The story of Mark, which follows, gives us a clearer understanding of how well our Christmas Charity money will be spent.

Mark worked all his life in Oxford. He made his living as a postman, a factory worker and in various other jobs, but when he found himself unemployed at the age of 42, Mark struggled to find a new job. His applications were met with rejection letters in the post. Without an income Mark spent many years living off his savings. When the money ran dry Mark had nothing left and nowhere to turn.

“My first night, I spent in a field. I had fifteen quid with me. I didn’t know what was going to happen. It was the coldest snap ever.”

For the next ten months, Mark tried to survive while sleeping rough, first in the countryside, and then under some stairs in a car park. One day he picked up the local newspaper and read about Crisis. Just before Christmas and fearing another cold winter on the streets, Mark came to Crisis.

“It was non-judgemental – just help and advice. I was shown dignity and respect.”

With Crisis’ help, Mark started getting help with his mental health, learnt how to use computers, and gained new qualifications. Crisis told Mark how to get a place in a hostel and he hopes to find a permanent home with Crisis’ help soon.

A.M.B.

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSOCIATION

Following the raising of some funds for the Association we received a letter of which the following is an extract.

“Thank you so much for your recent kind donation of £70.30 which was raised through your after service coffee collections. We are sincerely grateful for your generosity and support. Your gift will help us to improve care and support for people with MND, their families and carers, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It will also help us fund and promote research, and to campaign and raise awareness so the needs of those affected by the disease are addressed by wider society. We are so determined to achieve our vision of a world free from MND and your support helps us to make a real difference. Thank you once again for being part of our fight for a world free from MND.

AMB

A WINTER CONCERT

'Winter Concert – A December Diversion' presented by St Paul's Community Choir and Friends, on Friday 2nd December, 7.30 – 9.15pm in St Paul's Church, Brackley Road, Beckenham, BR3 1RB. This will be a light-hearted programme with a Christmas flavour and will include items for solo guitar, a piano duet and a wind quintet. Entry is free and there will be a retiring collection for church funds. Refreshments will be served during the interval. Further details from David Storey (020 8663 9441).

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

To your enemy . . .forgiveness,
To your opponent . . .tolerance.
To a friend . . . your heart.
To a customer . . . service.
To all men . . .charity.
To every child . . . a good example
To yourself . . .respect
-Author Unknown

OFFERINGS

The offerings during October were as follows:-

October 2 £158.00

October 9 £147.00

October 16 £168.00

October 23 £163.00

October 30 £203.50



The after service coffee collections during October were in aid of Living Well and totalled £56.17.

Anthony Bayley

CHRISTMAS FAIR

This edition of the Outlook went to press before the Christmas Fair took place so there will be a full report in the next edition.

Anthony Bayley

CRESCENT CLUB

Walking towards the church hall on a crisp dry November afternoon through the fallen colourful leaves made one wonder at the joy of the autumn season. A well-attended meeting with apologies from Maureen and Sylvia, who were both unwell and we pray that they will be better soon. Muriel said prayers and then Mary read a poem "Magic of Music". She also had the pleasure of wishing our birthday 'girl' congratulations on Hilda's 102nd birthday. She looks well and thank goodness she keeps active within reason! Then Muriel introduced our speaker, Esme Meads, a lay preacher from our local Baptist Church. Esme kept us amused with her monologues and witty verses. She did remind us of the late Joyce Grenfell, who told similar funny stories. We hope she will return and entertain us again. Then it was tea time. Hilda had brought a big iced cake and Elma presented her with a lovely floral arrangement in a wicker basket. A great afternoon for all of us. Thinking of Hilda we must remember that she was born during the Great War and thank the Good Lord she is still with us. Her sharp mind and her strong faith is what makes her seize the day and enjoy her life : she is our special girl in church and wish her many good years to come.

Patricia Power

Stocking fillers!

It was the day of the big pre-Christmas Sale. Rumours of the sale of cheap booze, with some advertising in the local paper, were the main reason for the long line that formed by 8:30am, the store's opening time, in the store car park.

A small man pushed his way to the front of the line, only to be pushed back, amid loud and colourful and bawdy curses. On the man's second attempt, he was punched square in the jaw, knocked around a bit, and then thrown to the end of the line again. As he got up the second time, he shouted to the people at the end of the line.

'That does it! If they hit me one more time, I won't open the store!'

Christmas is just plain weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree in your living room eating candy and snacks out of your socks?

WATER AID

I have been able to send a cheque for £900.06 to WaterAid representing the total we have been able to raise for them this year. This includes £31.18 raised through the coin jar. The following is an extract from the letter of thanks I have received from the organisation.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your wonderful generosity. I'm writing to thank you and your church so much for your gift of £900.06 to our Harvest Appeal. We're so grateful that your congregation are helping to provide the missing ingredient of safe water to make sure that families around the world can take the first steps out of poverty. Churches like yours helped deliver safe water to Morarano, Madagascar. Last year Françoise was struggling to feed her family without safe water. "Before, we used to eat just rice or cassava, sometimes we didn't even eat as there was nothing. But when water came to our village, I started growing green leafy vegetables. Now we always have something to eat – we can have rice with a variety of vegetables. It's really changing our lives, so I would like to thank God and to those people who funded the project. Be blessed all"

I don't feel I can add anything to this. It makes it all worthwhile!

Anthony

THE FOODBANK

As a Church we support the LIVING WELL FOODBANK. This run through Holy Trinity Church, Lennard Road, and does valiant work both in running the Foodbank for those in need in Penge and Beckenham, but also provides a community lunch every Friday throughout the year. In order to meet their ongoing requirements we have asked what are the food items most regularly needed and the following is the list :-

Milk (UHT or powdered)	Sugar (500g)
Instant Mash Potato or Tinned Potatoes	Tomatoes (Tinned)
Tinned Meat – corned beef, spam, ham, mince, meat stew	
Tinned Vegetables (No Pulses please)	
Rice (smaller bags)	Coffee (100g)



COFFEE December coffee money goes to CRISIS
January money goes to Demelza House

Here are ten useful phrases for responding to Christmas presents you would rather not have received:

1. Thanks a lot!
2. My word! What a gift.
3. If I hadn't put on so much weight recently it would have fitted me perfectly.
4. Gosh, I hope I never lose this. We're always losing things around here.
5. It's great; but I'm worried about the envy it may create.
6. Just my luck to get this on the very Christmas I promised to give all my gifts to charity.
7. Frankly, I don't deserve this.
8. Really, you shouldn't have.

Why does Santa's sled get such good mileage?
Because it has long-distance runners on each side

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas." Calvin Coolidge

Why did Santa's helper see the doctor?
Because he had a low 'elf' esteem!

Who sings "Blue Christmas" and makes toy guitars? Elfis!

**Copy for the February Outlook
by 22nd January 2017 please.**

BECKENHAM UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Oakhill Road (off Crescent Road)

Interim Moderator	Rev. Dr. Peter Stevenson	
Secretary	Mrs G Ross	020 8650 2959
Treasurer	Mr. A. Bayley	07983 334946
Outlook Editor	Mr J Ball	020 8659 5337
Asst. Editor	Mr A Bayley	07983 334946

Church organisations

Crescent Club	Mrs. M Aldcroft	020 8650 9518
Luncheon Club	Mrs M Duncan	020 8658 3309
Brownies	Miss L Minett	3rdbeckbrownies@gmail.com
Rainbows	Mrs M Sloper	martine.sloper@btinternet.com
Pilates	Monday	19.30 – 20.45
	Tuesday	09.30 – 13.15
	Thursday	09.30 – 12.00
U3A Arts Class	Monday	14.00 – 16.00
Janie Harris Ballet School	Monday	15.15 – 19.30
	Tuesday	16.00 – 21.00
	Thursday	16.00 – 17.45
	Friday	16.45 – 19.30
	Saturday	08.00 – 17.00
Montessori	Mon - Fri	08.30 – 12.30
Jazz Dance	Monday	17.00 – 18.00
Tai Chi Chuan	Monday	20.00 – 22.00
Spanish Dancing	Tuesday	20.00 – 22.00
	Saturday	14.30 – 16.30
U3A Guitars(2 nd & 4 th)	Wednesday	14.00 – 16.30
Brownies	Wednesday	18.30 – 20.00
Rainbows	Wednesday	17.00 – 18.00

For lettings apply to Mr. Anthony Bayley 07983 334946