



CHEAP STREET CHURCH

To know the love of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and with Jesus as our teacher to show and share our faith.

Minister:

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NEWSLETTER

10th December 2020

Many of you receive the newsletter by email, some copies are delivered by a group of volunteers, many thanks, and a few are posted out. There'll be no post on Christmas Day or Boxing Day, so the plan is to publish the Christmas newsletter on Tuesday 22nd. Contributions by Monday evening will be welcome, the more seasonal the better.

If you are reading this on Wednesday there are just 16 sleeps to Christmas (and 30 to my birthday). **George Faris**

Duncan's Message

Lectionary Readings for Sunday 13th December Advent 3

Psalm 126, Isaiah 61:1-4 & 8-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, John 1:6-8 & 19-28.



I remember once hearing a minister giving a talk on religious paintings; unfortunately I cannot remember who painted the pictures but the focal point of the picture was the infant Jesus being held by Mary and surrounded by people; in a lower corner of the picture was an infant John the Baptist. It was clear to me from the composition of the picture that John the Baptist had been carefully placed so that as your eye wandered out the picture and away from its main focal point of Jesus, you came to John and your eye was immediately directed back again to look at Jesus. The painter of the picture is one of many to position John the Baptist in this way, as does Leonardo da Vinci in the picture 'The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist,' a way that is consistent with how John the Baptist describes himself in our reading from John's Gospel.

John is an important part of the first coming of Jesus and his ministry and essential for the preparation of people to meet with Jesus. John does not seek to make himself the centre of attention but transfers all the attention to Jesus. The role of the church and our mission is to direct people's attention away from themselves and towards Jesus. We may feel limited in what we can do at the moment and, with masks and social distancing, we certainly can't do what Paul suggests at the end of his letter and greet one another with a holy kiss but what we can do is to pray and be thankful and joyful in the circumstances we currently face.

Hymn: *Singing The Faith 182* On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry ([click for a YouTube version](#))

Pastoral News

The news from Dennis Porter is that Barbara is still in hospital, which she finds frustrating. Barbara is being treated with oxygen and antibiotics. However, she is able to get out of bed. We send our love and prayers to Barbara, Dennis and the family.

Happy birthday to Paul Wilkins (Monday 14th) and Shirley Taylor (Wednesday 16th).

Fellowship of Prayer

Whenever and wherever we pray in the silence of our hearts, we are part of a rich and powerful fellowship, which serves to sustain everyone in our Church Family. Anyone can join the prayer group by just praying.

We hold in special prayer Barbara and Dennis Porter; Eileen Higgins's son Robert and his wife Dawn; Clive and Jill Turner and Ellie and Sophie.

We continue to pray for Sheila Green and her family; Yve and Ken Ackroyd and all the family; John Hunt and his family; Carol Hooper and her family; Janet Baker; Martin Heal; Phyllis Batchelor; Duncan's mother; Kathy Crew; Janet Dolling and her family; Judith Hayward and her family; Eileen Higgins; Alex Palmer; Peter and Marjorie Kett; Christina Le Moignan.

The Prayer Ring is available for an urgent need or situation.

Call any of these numbers and the circle of prayer will begin:

Eirwen Cox 01935 815960, Penny Gardner 01935 389153, Janet Le Moignan 01935 389662.

Don Farquharson's Thought for the Day

Choices

My thoughts are not original because I often find that other people have insights or reminders that had passed me by. Every day is full of choices because God has created us as "free" beings. Many are trivial such as what shall I eat today but others are more profound such as what shall my attitude be or how shall I spend my time today. Time once spent is gone. It cannot be retrieved.

Firstly, from Mother Teresa:

*People are often unreasonable. Illogical and self-centred
Forgive them anyway
If you are kind, people may accuse you of having ulterior motives
Be kind anyway
If you are honest and frank people may cheat you.
Be honest anyway
What you spend years building someone may destroy overnight.
Build anyway
The good you do today, people will often forget by tomorrow
Do good anyway
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough
Give the world the best you have anyway
You see in the final analysis. it is between you and God
It never was between you and them*

Next from a Penny pew sheet by Roy T Bennett:

*Attitude is a choice
Happiness is a choice
Optimism is a choice
Kindness is a choice
Giving is a choice
Respect is a choice
Whatever choice you make makes you
Choose wisely*

We are all influenced by our upbringing and background experiences and feel we are who we are and that is it but God is always in the renewal business. Sometimes that means the choice of allowing the old roots to be dragged out so that His new growth can flourish.

From the Church Secretary

It was good that we were able to gather in church last Sunday and to see a few people who were coming back for the first time I think. Although we are still limited in some ways, we greeted each other 'with our eyes' at the start of the service and then joined together to worship God. As it was the second Sunday in Advent we lit two candles on the Advent ring, one for God's people and one for the prophets. The church was beautifully decorated with a Christmas tree, poinsettias and more candles and there is now a Christmas tree with lights just outside the front doors. Thank you very much to everyone who spent time to make it look so lovely.

Down on the street, No 54 has the first of the Advent window displays and Ada and Elsie have been very busy creating a whole host of angels for a scene with some shepherds, so a big 'Thank you' to them too. I recommend you have a good look if you are passing by.

At our Carol Service on 20th December at 10.30 am, there will be Christmas Bible readings and carols which we hope will be sung by a choir, not of angels, but of six members of our congregation. This is the maximum number we can have at present, but we can all sing inside.

That is looking forward. Looking back, minutes of the last two Church meetings have gone to all who attended. Copies will be there for you to read in the welcome area and in the hall later, but if you would like a copy now, please let me know.

And for those of you who are not yet able to be out and about, we do think about you and I hope that this little picture of Church life will make you feel involved. **Janet Le Moignan**

Prayers for the persecuted church

Bangladesh

Until recently, Bangladesh was mostly free of Islamic extremism, but the government is now struggling to counter the growing strength of radical Islamic groups. Persecution also comes from closer to home. Christian converts from other faiths - Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism - often suffer at the hands of their families and communities. The violence of these attacks has particularly accelerated.

Let us pray that God will frustrate the plans of Islamic extremists and protect the people of Bangladesh; for joy and strength for those who've converted to Christianity from other faiths, and for wisdom for Open Doors workers helping vulnerable Bangladeshi believers. Amen.

Cheap Street Services

Duncan will be leading these services:

13 December	Third Sunday of Advent	10.30 am
20 December	Fourth Sunday of Advent - Carol Service	10.30 am
24 December	Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion	6 pm
25 December	Christmas Day Service	10.30 am
3 January	Covenant Service with Holy Communion	10.30 am
10 January	Sunday Worship	10.30 am

There will no service at Cheap Street on the 27th but there will be a circuit service on Zoom. Details will be circulated in good time.

Ways of worshipping on Sunday

Radio 4: 8.10 am – *Cities of Promise - A place in the heart* – with the chapel choir of Methodist College, Belfast.

Methodist resources: [click here](#). URC resources: [click here](#).

URC: [daily devotions and a Sunday service \(click here to subscribe\)](#).

Contributions to future newsletters

Please send contributions by midday Wednesday to:

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