



The 3 Kings by
Princess Ogagauwobia



A Christmas Blessing

During this Christmas season
May you be blessed
With the spirit of the season
Which is peace
The gladness of the season
Which is hope
And the heart of the season
Which is love



A big "thank you" to all contributors this month. To continue monthly we need YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, or phone Sharon Joddrell or Susan Bye and dictate, or by post, to arrive by **15th January** for the February edition.

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MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—DECEMBER 2020/JANUARY 2021



Jesus in the Manger by Patricia Luntrararu

Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for December/January from our Minister

John 17:24-26 (The Message)

*Father, I want those you gave me
To be with me, right where I am,
So they can see my glory, the splendour you gave me,
Having loved me
Long before there ever was a world.
Righteous Father, the world has never known you,
But I have known you, and these disciples know
That you sent me on this mission.
I have made your very being known to them—
Who you are and what you do—
And continue to make it known,
So that your love for me
Might be in them
Exactly as I am in them.*



Here we are as God's people looking ahead to our celebrations of Christmas and also into the New Year of 2021. This year is one that has brought more changes into our individual lives and corporate life than we could have ever anticipated or even been able to implement through our own expression of decision making.

Christmas will be very different for all of us this year, but the Christmas story and the message unchanging. In Jesus' birth we have God's meeting with us in our humanity. Immanuel means "God with us" and Jesus' name itself means to rescue and save, the activity of salvation.

The Bible reading is part of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane before His arrest immediately before crucifixion. He is praying for all believers and we hear it at this time of closing 2020 and the opening of 2021. Jesus' words are to encourage and bring us confidence as we journey forward.

"I have made your very being known to them— Who you are and what you do— And continue to make it known"

We go in to the New Year and what will be changed experiences of church, changed ministries and changed lives knowing that Jesus is present continuing to make the things of God real in our midst. As we look to the months ahead, this activity of salvation is lifegiving for each and every one of us and for the world in which we live. Let us catch this together.

With prayers and asking God's blessing this Christmas and into 2021,

Andy Wilson

A Reflection from Ceinwen

Like everyone, these past few months have been very challenging for us. At the outset I felt like so many others that my life had been taken away from me, unable to worship together, helping with Toddlers, and sharing fellowship in the housegroup. I asked myself how can I live out my Christian life in this desert? (How can I sing in a strange land?)

I am finding that one of the plusses has been time for reflection and finding God in the unexpected. On my walk to the nature reserve in Arnold one day I was touched by the sun shining on the silver birches, stripped of all their foliage, just the way I felt! But they stood tall, seeking the light, resting in God's presence until winter over they will burst forth into new life. May we see that reflected in our lives as we move into the future.

PS I also wondered why the oak tree hangs on to their dead leaves for so long – another pause for thought!



CHRISTMAS RECOLLECTIONS

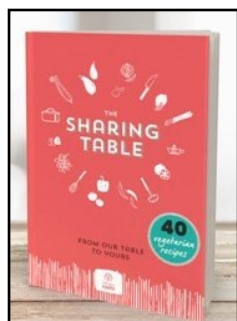
Muriel Briley has sent some thoughts on past Christmases at MRBC:

- * Things to send to less fortunate children—I've knitted woolly hats, tiny teddy bears, packed shoe boxes
- * Then there were the toys given as part of a city wide collection—so good to see our children marching up to the front of church to give
- * Advent candles
- * Coin collection
- * The Nativity play
- * The joyous service on Christmas morning
- * Carols
- * And lovely Denis MacGregor with his large box of sweets!



The Sharing Table

Refugee Roots (formerly The Rainbow Project) provides a place of welcome, support and friendship to people seeking asylum and refugees in



Nottingham. A 'Cooking and Eating Together' project took place over a period of one year where people brought their recipes, their cooking skills and their stories of home and life in Nottingham. This has all been brought together in a book, 'The Sharing Table'. It contains 40 delicious vegetarian recipes from around the world but it is much more than a recipe book. It speaks of food and hospitality and how much they mean to us in our lives. It would make a great Christmas present!

You can order a copy by going to <https://www.refugeeroots.org.uk> and scrolling to The Sharing Table crowdfunding page (until 5/12/2020) or the shop (click menu then shop). The cost is £15. Funds raised will go towards the cost of publication of the book and the future work of Refugee Roots. Alternatively, contact Lesley by email lesleysusancohen@outlook.com
(Thank you, Anne Davies, for sharing this)

Awareness

I was watching 2-year old Finn jumping around on the bouncy area of the play-centre.

After a while he started to deliberately let himself fall from the soft raised rim backwards into the centre - and was, though not conscious of doing so, trusting totally the invisible support beneath, trusting the breath inside.

He was, unknowingly, learning fast a secret of the Kingdom.

Maybe we have to be like Finn and learn to fall trustfully backwards into the unseen - into the arms of the Holy Spirit.

For there – there, we remember is safety.

Paul Heppleston

DIARY FOR DECEMBER / JANUARY

Each Sunday there will be a pre-recorded **service** available on the church website. (This will usually be uploaded by the Saturday morning each week)

All Sundays at 3pm but NOT on the 27th December and 03rd January – **Young Disciples**

(This is a Zoom Session with Meeting ID 7032705653 and password mrbc)

Sunday 10th January - 10.30– 11.30am **Morning Service** in the buildings
It will be necessary to book in for this service with the Church Office from Tuesday 5th January, 2021 by phone or email.

Other service times for within the buildings will be announced in January.

Deacons Meetings

Wednesday 2nd December and Wednesday 20th January at 7.30pm

The Church Office is closed from the 22nd December through to 5th January.

Season of Prayer

Advent 2020



Throughout Advent the EMBA is offering an opportunity to pray online each weekday evening. Advent is always a significant time for the Christian community, and never more so than in the midst of a pandemic. It is a season of joyful anticipation, sober assessment, hopeful waiting and expectant longing.

Starting Monday 30th November and concluding Wednesday 23rd December (weekdays only). 30 minutes of guided prayer following a simple liturgy, and using a mix of guided, silent and group prayer, that will immerse us into the themes of Advent.

Please join the Zoom meeting (ID 745 5806 9945 password 7aMUvc) from 8pm (the room will open at 7.50pm, with silent preparation at 7.58pm) and we will conclude our time at 8.30pm. There is no need to book, so come when you can and as often as you can. The liturgy and readings can be found on the EMBA website, but everything you need will be on the screen.

Maintaining good mental wellbeing

As a teacher of health and social care and also a sufferer of depression and anxiety I have always been interested in learning of ways to improve my mental health. I'm going to share 3 which I have found helpful especially during the difficult times we are currently experiencing.

Gratitude diary

This links with something Anne wrote about in the magazine in May about examining your day. I find writing down the things I am grateful for very reassuring. They can be simple things like having clean water to drink or hearing the birds sing whilst out on my walk with the dog. There is always something to be grateful for, as God is good!

Using the senses

When I'm feeling anxious my mind will often spiral into negativity and this can be broken by concentrating on the senses. Look for 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch (please be mindful of Covid here), 2 things you can smell and one thing you can taste. I find in concentrating my mind on doing this it breaks the cycle of negative thinking and helps reduce my anxiety.

Art journalling

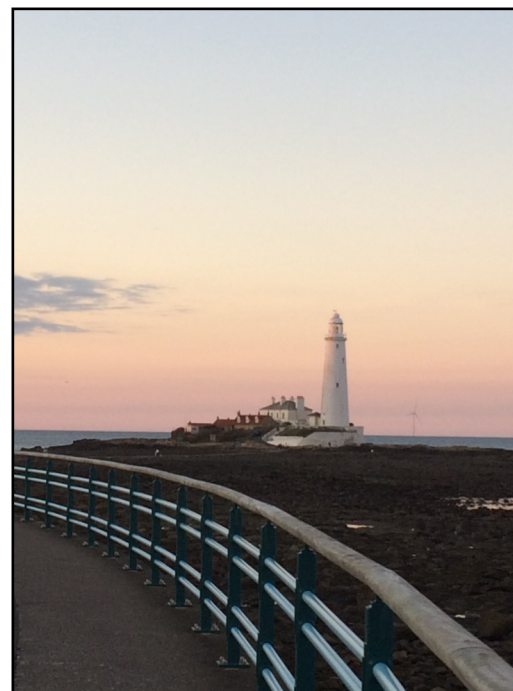
This is a new thing to me, but I tried it recently. I'm no artist and you don't have to be. It allows you to express yourself in any way you want and helps you to work through the way you are feeling. It can be used to provide yourself with some positive affirmations or help you express the way you are feeling at that time. All you need is some paper or the inside of a cardboard carton, some pens, crayons, magazines, glue, or anything else you have to hand. Fabric and stickers also make good additions. It doesn't have to be anything you want to show off, it is just for your benefit. I made an affirmation page in my workshop which I've included a picture of. I hope you find these ideas helpful but never forget God is only a prayer away and He will listen day or night.

Jenny Saunders



A Strong Tower

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.
Proverbs 18:10



This is a picture of St Mary's lighthouse in Whitley Bay. It has become very symbolic to me in recent years as a reminder of God's strong presence in my life, whatever is going on. Northumbria is where I go to feel peaceful. We went there a few years ago when I was going through a difficult time of having to find residential care for my parents, each with different needs, but making sure that they stayed together. I was tired, confused and distressed. And there was the lighthouse, standing tall and steadfast, and I immediately felt the calm of God's presence.

I have pictures of this lighthouse around my desk where I work at home. Standing tall and strong, like God, it is a focal point for travellers who might have lost their way and may be drifting into dangerous situations. In calmer times, it stands there still; benevolently watching over people below, enjoying the beautiful coastal paths and playing on the beaches.

I return to St Mary's whenever I can, both physically and in my thoughts and prayers and I thank God for His faithful presence, lighting my way and guiding my life.

Diane Trusson

Question: Do you have a special place where you feel close to God?

PS: I am pleased to tell you that the right home was found and my parents are happy and healthy in their care home setting.