



Link Up!

**“I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you: Do not fear; I will help you.”
Isaiah 41 v 13**

Looking forward to January

Our New Year services start on Sunday 8th January, when our good friend Stephen Ashby will be leading our service including communion. He will be starting our series in Luke’s gospel from chapter 2: 22 – 40

On Sunday 15th January, Andrew Williams will be continuing the series from chapter 2: 41 – 52

Then on Sunday 22nd January another friend of Longfleet, Martin Poole, will be leading and preaching from Luke 3: 1 – 23

On Sunday 29th January we will once again be worshipping with our friends from Parkstone Baptist Church at their church on Ashley Road in Parkstone. Anyone needing a lift to get there should talk to Janet Matterface about that. Their service starts at 10.30am

Family News

Ralph Thomas is settling well into the Dorset House Care Home and was able to join his family for part of Christmas Day. They tell me that although his speech and understanding are still quite muddled, he would welcome visitors. The home has COVID at the moment so there are strict rules about visiting, but if you think you would like to visit Ralph let Janet know.

Happy New Year, everyone!

Well, we’ve arrived. 2023 has begun and we have waved goodbye to 2022 and all the depressing things that went with it. It was a year of disappointment. There was the invasion of Ukraine and the displacement of many people who fled the Russian army who have destroyed homes, hospitals, power stations and facilities. There was the resurgence of Covid from time to time, and the aftermath of the months of lockdown and its effect on the financial situation of the country. We carry with us into 2023 the unrest caused by strikes and the consequences. The cost of living crisis looms over us.

Well, let’s count our blessings. We had a long, hot summer (too hot for many). As individuals we will all have different things to be thankful for. For some, a family celebration, a new job, or a first job, a favourable health check. We may have had lovely holidays, at home or away. It may be that your heart lifts every time you hear the robin or blackbird sing in the trees. It may be the first glimpse of the bulbs poking their heads through the soil, or the leaf buds beginning to open. Perhaps it’s a letter from an old friend, or even a smile from a passing stranger which brightens your day. All these are the things which we take for granted so often and yet are part of our day to day lives.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This annual event, usually held at the end of January, takes place this year from 18th – 25th January.

We would encourage you to support the following events: -

On Sunday 22nd January we will be holding a combined service with our friends from St George's Anglican Church in Oakdale and St Mary's RC Church in Wimborne Road which starts at 4pm. The service has been planned by representatives from the three churches adapting material from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and has a theme of Justice.

Then on Tuesday 24th January, Churches Together in Poole have organised an event at St Edward's School in Dale Valley Road at 7pm. This event will have a keynote speaker, David Wells, and also other contributions from local Christian Organisations such as International Care Network, Poole Foodbank, Youthwork across Poole & a Christian Environmental concern organisation. There will be an opportunity to learn about their work, the challenges they face and then to pray with other Christians from churches in Poole.

Copies of the posters for each of these events are attached with this newsletter.

Perhaps at the beginning of this New Year you are worried about your family, health or finance. Feeling a bit fearful for the unknown that lies ahead of us. What is this year going to bring to each one of us? I am reminded of the words quoted by King George VI during his radio Christmas broadcast to wartime Britain in 1939.

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year. "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied "Go out into the darkness and put your hand in the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way" (Minnie Haskins)

Or what about these words I read one day by Craig Groeschal.

When uncertainty keeps you up at night, then close your eyes and think of something that is certain – God's love.

As Christians we have access to the greatest reassurance of all in God's love. God is with us ALL THE WAY, every day of our lives and each year as it passes. We often read verses from the prophet Isaiah at Christmas, so here is a verse to take with you into a New Year. It is from **Isaiah 41 v 13**.

I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you: Do not fear; I will help you.

May God give you peace and joy this New Year.

Barbara Goose

