



# Link Up!

**‘Devote yourselves to prayer,  
being watchful and thankful.’  
Colossians 4 v 2**

## **Coming up for the rest of the month**

On Sunday 22nd January, Martin Poole, will be leading and preaching from Luke 3: 1 – 23

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January we will once again be worshipping with our friends from Parkstone Baptist Church at their church on Ashley Road. The speaker will be John Good who we all know. Anyone needing a lift to get there should talk to Janet Matterface about that. Their service starts at 10.30am.

Sally Spinney's funeral will take place on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January at 11am at The Barn, Harbour View Crematorium. This will be conducted by Sally's son-in-law, Rev Martyn Travers. This will be followed by refreshments. If you plan to stay for these, can you let Janet know for catering numbers.

## **Looking forward to February**

On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February we will be holding another of our Prayer Services which will be led by Barbara Goose and will include Communion. Part of the service will focus on the work of Prama Life and Chris Beale from Prama will be telling us about this.

Then on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> we will have Stephen Ashby returning to lead our worship again and he will be continuing our series in Luke with chapter 4:1 – 13.

On Sundays 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February we will have Rev Derek Stringer, who worships at Christchurch Baptist Church. He will be bringing us a short mini-series of his own choosing.



## **God - A long distance relative?**

You may wonder why a picture of Santa's grotto is featuring in a mid January newsletter. Taking Liza to see Father Christmas last month was something I was very much looking forward to, and it was quite memorable... in more ways than one. Of course, her wonder on seeing the lights and her reaction to Santa's gift of a soft reindeer was lovely to see. In fact, I think that Rudolph was her favourite Christmas present of all. She had it with her all the time she spent with us – it even came to Church with her Christmas morning.

#### Ideas from the November Church Meeting

The Deacons have talked over the last couple of months about some of the ideas that were suggested and discussed at the Prayerful Conversation discussion in November and want to move some of those forward if there is enough interest.

So, some people said that they missed the In-Person Housegroups we used to run before the Pandemic. Although some of us are enjoying the Wednesday Night In Zoom Bible Studies, not everyone can access these. In order for us to hold an In-Person group we would need, at the least, someone to lead the group and someone who would be willing to host it in their home (that may be the same person). Then ideally about six people in total wishing to attend a group. It wouldn't necessarily need to meet every week if those who were part of it wanted it to meet less often and it could be arranged at a time to suit those willing to attend. If you are seriously interested in being part of a Housegroup then please see Janet or give her a ring at home.

Another suggestion that came up in the meeting was that we hold a Day of Prayer where the church can come together to pray about the future of Longfleet. Having talked about a suitable time for that to take place, we have decided to hold one on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, which is the first day of Lent. We will hold two sessions when the Church will be open for prayer, one in the morning between 10am & 12noon, and the second in the evening between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. These sessions will not be formally led but suggestions for prayer topics will be available in the Prayer Area in the Church Sanctuary. You can come at any time between those hours and leave whenever you need to. We will also send out the prayer topics with the newsletter on 1<sup>st</sup> February so that anyone unable to get to the church can join in with the prayer at home sometime during the day.

Finally, not mentioned at the Church Meeting, was our plans for Easter. The leadership wondered whether there is enough interest in holding a Maundy Thursday event this year. This could either be a Meal followed by Communion like we used to do before COVID, or it could be just a simple informal Communion held at the Church on the evening of Maundy Thursday. We plan to have a short meeting after the Sunday service for all the congregation on 12<sup>th</sup> February to gauge the amount of interest in this before proceeding. So, can you please give this some thought before then and see if you want to come along to either of those alternatives.

However, while Santa's elves were giving Liza her present, Father Christmas and I struck up a conversation. He sympathised with the fact that my granddaughter lived several hours away. I agreed it was difficult but explained that Sophie and I worked hard to ensure we meet up regularly. I told Santa that it generally works well despite the fact that there are several months in the year when we don't get to see each other.

Later on that day I began to think that sometimes being a Christian can seem just like that. How often does God feel like the long distance relative we don't see very often? When is the last time we really invested in spending time with Him? If we have asked Jesus into our lives we can enjoy quality time with Him whenever we want. He is not at the other end of the country, or the other side of the world or even in some vague heavenly realm we can't understand or access. He is our friend who we can turn to every single day.

So, let us be thankful that God is ready to invest His time with us... if we will only let Him.

*Carri Hall*

For those who remember Deborah, Bronwen Blake's daughter there is a Celebration Event of her life at the school where Deborah taught. Barbara Goose has details of this if anyone is interested in attending.