



# Link Up!

**“I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”  
Ecclesiastes 3 v 10-11**

## Coming up for the rest of the month

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>, in a slight change of plan, Paul Hatchard will be coming to preach and continuing our series in Luke with chapter 4:1 – 13. Stephen Ashby is hoping to move into his new home during that week so asked to put off coming to preach again.

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.

## Family News

Please do remember Delia Lothian, her mum Joyce and brother Kelvin and all their family as they mourn the loss of Delia's father, Gordan, who passed away unexpectedly last week. Also remember in prayer Wendy Hall and her two sons and their families as they mourn the loss of Tony, Wendy's husband who passed away last week after a long illness.

## New Starts and New Beginnings

Since the turn of the year, I've been thinking a lot about new starts and new beginnings. Just before Christmas I was offered a new role at work which will see me move on from my current team. Earlier this month Orla turned 5 and I am consistently astounded by the pace at which she is growing up and developing. Most recently, Lauren has also been successful in an application for a new job; and we will both start in our new roles on 20 February.

This last month has been a time of excitement and anticipation but also tinged with sadness as my time working with colleagues who I have worked with for over 5 years comes to an end.

As the remembrance hymn says; "Time, like an every rolling stream bares all it's sons away". The relentless passage of time can be anxiety inducing and can leave us pining for the halcyon days of the past when things were better. Recently I've found myself, when a piece of cheesy 90s pop music comes on the radio, yearning for the 'simpler times' of the 1990s! However, I realise I'm looking back with very rose-tinted glasses and remembering a very select version of reality. When I remember this I think of a much older song than the cheesy 90s music, Turn! Turn! Turn! by the Byrds. For those who don't know the song its lyrics were taken from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, making it the song with the oldest lyrics to reach number 1 in the US charts.

## Ideas from the November Church Meeting

We would still be interested in hearing from anyone who is interested in joining and in-person housegroup. So far only two people have expressed an interest neither of whom can lead or host a group.

Please make a note of our Day of Prayer date 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 15<sup>th</sup> February so that anyone unable to get to the church can join in with the prayer at home sometime during the day.

We also talked at the November meeting about holding a Coronation Event to celebrate King Charles III coronation. The Deacons think we might be able to do a Messy Church style event, similar to the ones we have done before, on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May with lunch afterwards. This would be an event we can invite families who attend the Tiddlers Toddler Group, Smile Coffee morning and other adults who attend Speakability etc. Like everything else of this nature, it will need a team of folk who are prepared to plan it and help out before, during and after the event. Janet is prepared to put together a 'working party' (emphasis on the working!) so if you are 'up for this', let Janet know.

Also, a quick reminder that we are going to have a quick chat after the service on 12<sup>th</sup> February to try and gauge interest in a Maundy Thursday event. Please do stay after the service just for a few minutes while you have a cup of coffee/tea.

Tradition tells us that the book of Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon toward the end of his reign in 10th century BC. Contained in one of the Poetry and Wisdom books of the Bible, this particular passage lists 14 "opposites," a common element in Hebrew poetry indicating completion. While each time and season may seem random, the underlying significance in the poem denotes a divinely chosen purpose for everything we experience in our lives. The familiar lines offer a comforting reminder of God's sovereignty.

The message in this passage of poetry centres on God's ultimate authority in heaven and on earth. Humans have mastered many things in this world, but some elements of our existence are beyond our control. We cannot conquer time. God is the one who appoints each moment.

Our lives contain a mixture of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, harmony and struggle, and life and death. Each season has its appropriate time in the cycle of life. Nothing stays the same, and we, as God's children, must learn to accept and adjust to the ebb and flow of God's design. Some seasons are difficult, and we may not understand what God is doing. In those times, we must humbly submit to the Lord's plans and trust that he is working out his good purposes.

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