



# Link Up!

**‘A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord” Isaiah 40:3**

## Looking forward to December

Our Advent Services from 3<sup>rd</sup> December until 17<sup>th</sup> December will all be led by Rev Derek Stringer.

On 10<sup>th</sup> December the theme will be ‘The Christmas Blessings’, and on 17<sup>th</sup> December the theme will be ‘Invisible at Christmas’.

Then on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December we will hold our Carol Service which will be led by Stan & Barbara Goose. Do invite family and friends along to that service.

On Christmas Day our service will start, as usual, at 10.30am and will be led by Janet Matterface. The Title will be ‘A Very Special Gift’. If you are coming to our Christmas Day service, then do bring along one of your presents to show us in the service.

**Publicity for our special Christmas Services is available in the entrance for you to use to invite friends, family and neighbours along to join us.**

The final Sunday in December (31<sup>st</sup>) we will be joining our friends at Parkstone Baptist Church for their service at 10.30am. **Anyone needing a lift to get there should talk to Janet or one of the other deacons.**



## Preparing for Jesus coming

How are your Christmas preparations coming along? Anyone who knows me quite well knows that I really like to be well organised and to have a plan for events and things that need to be done. So, this time of year always puts that to the test a bit. There just seems to be such a lot happening and so many different events and jobs that need to be fitted in before the big day. It doesn't help that there are those adverts and items on TV that remind you how much closer the day is and how much shorter the time is to prepare.

I try not to get caught up in the hype and to prioritise things that are important to me. So, obviously there is our own household Christmas to plan. We don't have family who join us so it's just the four of us and, apart from putting up the Christmas decorations, making sure that we each get the modest presents we've asked for and that we get to eat some nice things during the holiday season, well it all pretty easy. (Ho, ho, ho)

#### Christmas Cards for the Church Family

We will, as usual, have our Church post-box out in the entrance lobby of the Church from **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December** for you to use to send Christmas Cards to other members of the Church Congregation. Please make sure that you only use this for people who are either members of the Church or regular attenders of the congregation. Please put both first and surnames on the envelopes (we nearly always have to open some envelopes to try and work out which person they are intended for). We will distribute the cards on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December so that anyone going away for Christmas gets theirs before they go. If you aren't going to be around either on that Sunday or the following one, please come and see John or Janet to collect yours. Likewise, if you are visiting one of our housebound folk before Christmas come and see us to get any cards for the person to take with you.

#### Other events this month

Churches Together in Poole are once again holding their 'Carols round the Crib' in Poole Town Centre. This will be outside The Spire in the High Street on Saturdays 9<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> December between 9am and 2pm. Music will be provided by the leader of the local Operatic Society. For non-singers there are cards publicising the Christmas services in the various churches in Poole, including our own, to give out. It is also an opportunity to engage people who stop in conversation about the Christian faith. They are asking people to sign up for one-hour slots on those Saturdays. If anyone feels they can get involved, then please see Janet to make that offer.

But we do have relatives who live away from Poole. So, a visit has to be planned with them to meet up before Christmas for a meal and to exchange gifts and catch up with them. Ah yes, add their present suggestions to the shopping list and make sure they're bought and wrapped before the date. Don't forget to book somewhere to stay overnight and somewhere to eat as well!

Then there are get togethers with various friends in the run up to Christmas. What on earth can I wear this year? Cards to be written and sent or delivered too!!

Then making sure that Christmas at Church is planned. Advent Services planned and speaker booked (check), Christmas Carol service in capable hands (check), Christmas Day service planned and props for that assembled (check), publicity available for people to invite their friends along (check).

Then there are the events that I want to be part of like helping out with Smile's Christmas Gift wrapping for the families they help, and joining in the Churches Together Carols by the Crib outside the Spire.

If I'm not really careful the real purpose of the Christmas Celebration can get forgotten in even the most Christian of settings.

There is a phrase coined by a secular business motivator Stephen Covey which says, 'The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing.'

The main thing? Why that is that God, who also loves to plan things in advance, had a plan to bring people back into the right relationship with Him by sending His Son into this world as a small human being so that He could die in our place, and we can be forgiven. Let's try and remember that during our Christmas preparations.

*Janet Matterface*