



Link Up!

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’ (John 3:16 (NIV))

Just a reminder

On Sunday 24th December starting at 11am as usual, 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.

The final Sunday in December (31st) we will be joining our friends at Parkstone Baptist Church for their service at 10.30am. The service will be a reflective one and there will be opportunity for people to share testimonies of anything they feel the Lord has been doing in their lives during the past year and also any hopes that you have for 2024. Do have a chat with Janet if you have something you would like to share then. There will also be an open time for prayer as well (no obligation to anyone to pray but be prepared if you are happy to do that). Anyone needing a lift to get there should talk to Janet or one of the other deacons.

It’s been very noticeable at work recently; how much pressure people feel they are under to come up with the perfect gift for their loved ones. There is much talk about jewellery, expensive hair dryers, holidays and outings, and toys and dolls of all varieties, shapes, and sizes. And it seems to me no one can agree on what makes the perfect gift – only that everything costs far too much!

I’ve been blessed over the years to receive many good gifts from friends and family. I was excited to get my first adult snooker cue from my grandparents when I was about 13, and equally excited to get Simpson’s Lego a few years ago from Kim. But I’ve probably had enough socks now, thank you...

But let me introduce you to the present I’ve had for the longest time and is still the first thing I would rescue if the house burnt down (assuming Kim can make her own way out!) – this is Rupert.



I’ve had him since the day I was born and although he’s been through plenty of changes of outfits over the years (thanks to Mum’s skilful needlework), he will always be the same Rupert the Bear to me. He has been everywhere with me – family holidays in France, weekends away with the Boys’ Brigade,

school outings... (Although I had to draw a line at the honeymoon which seems unfair – I’ve known Rupert far longer than I’ve known Kim...!)

Looking forward to January

On Sunday 7th January Stephen Chaloner will be leading our first service of 2024.

Then on Sunday 14th we will be returning to our series in Luke's gospel looking at chapter 14: 1 – 24 with Stephen Ashby.

On Sunday 21st, Andrew Chadwick from Wimborne Baptist will be preaching from Luke 16: 1 – 15.

And on Sunday 28th our Moderator, Colin Pavitt, will be preaching from Luke 16: 19 – 31.

Events for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

January brings the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with two events for us to take part in.

On Sunday 21st January from 4pm – 5pm, we will be hosting the Unity Service bringing together congregations from St George's C of E in Oakdale, St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Wimborne Road and ourselves. As we are the hosts, I will need helpers to act as Stewards welcoming people, Serving refreshments, and some readers. We will also need offers of cake maybe three large cakes to cut into 12 slices each. If you can help with any of these tasks, then please let Janet know.

Then on the following Tuesday, 23rd January, between 7 – 9pm there will be a unity event at St Edwards RC/ C of E School in Dale Valley Road, organised by Churches Together in Poole, where Christians from churches across Poole will gather to hear about among other things the work of PACE the schools work charity and Routes to Roots, working among the homeless. The main speaker will be Alistair Doxat-Purser from Faithworks. This is an event well worth attending if you are able to.

Rupert has been with me through life's ups and downs. I treasure him above all other possessions (sorry Kim!). And in these times of expensive 'things' seemingly being the order of the day, and people getting further and further into debt just so they can have 'stuff', I'm very happy to say my favourite possession is a well-aged, much-loved, and slightly straggly stuffed bear!

But the greatest gift I ever received was the love of Christ one evening at Parkstone Baptist Church when I was 17 during an outreach event. I knew from that moment onwards my life was no longer my own as I committed myself to His service and followed Him ever since. And it was, and has been ever since, and will be forever more, the greatest gift I receive from anyone.

I'm sure each of us has their own 'Rupert' – a treasured possession which has travelled life's roads with us. But as you celebrate Christmas this year, however you do it, give thanks for THE greatest gift ever. The gift of Jesus, God's own son, come to earth as a tiny, helpless, newborn infant who would become the final step in God's plan to reconcile us to Him when he was sacrificed on the cross, only to be brought back to life three days later. Jesus is the greatest gift of all and is worthy of all our love, adoration, and praise because He brings love, forgiveness, redemption, and hope for our future.

You can keep your socks – I'll stick with Jesus thank you. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of where the Christmas festival came from, and whatever it has turned into over the years, as far as I am concerned there is no Christmas without Christ!

Kim and I wish you all a Happy Christmas, and we look forward to 2024 with you all.

Stephen Chaloner



"I can see you've been working out"