



Link Up!

**‘But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.’
Jeremiah 17:7**

Coming up in January

We are starting a new series for Sunday morning services on parables

On Sunday 5th January we will be starting the year looking at 1 Corinthians ch 13 ‘Faith, Hope, Love.’ That service will also include our monthly communion service.

Then on Sunday 12th January we will be looking at Luke’s gospel chapter 16 verses 19-31, The Parable of the Shrewd Manager, with the title ‘Beg’

On Sunday 19th January we will be looking at Matthew 18: 21 – 35, The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, with the title ‘Borrow’.

And on Sunday 26th January we will be looking at John 10: 1 – 21, The Parable of the Good Shepherd, with the title ‘Steal’.

Bible Study Groups: Our Monday Bible Study group will start back on Monday 13th January at 6.15pm, and our ‘Wednesday Night In’ group on Zoom will meet again on Wednesday 15th January starting at 7.30pm. New members always welcome at both. Please speak to Ken or Janet to get more details including the code to use Zoom.

Believe it or not, if you’re reading this in the first week of January, then it’s still officially Christmastime. In fact, depending on which tradition you follow, the twelve days of Christmas end on the fifth of January which is when you are supposed to take your decorations down (although as British Baptists our history and heritage is not to follow the Christian calendar of events at all).

The sixth of January is Epiphany, which marks the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem to worship the new-born Jesus - although if you were paying attention at our Carol Service, you’ll know that it’s doubtful that they visited on the night he was born. More likely it was several weeks or even months later, by which time some kind soul had taken pity on Mary and Joseph, and they were staying in a house (Mt2:11)

Some Christians around the world don’t open their Christmas presents until Epiphany, although I think there may well have been tears in the manse if we’d had to wait that long!

Whilst we don’t know much about the Magi at all, there are some things we can glean from the few verses in Matthew 2 which describe their visit.

Other events in January

January is always the month when the events for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity take place.

This year we will be meeting with our two nearest church neighbours, St Mary's RC Church and St George's C of E, at **St George's Church in Darbys Lane, on Sunday 19th January for a service starting at 4pm** for around an hour with refreshments to follow the service. Ken will be preaching and others from each of the three churches will be taking part in the service. Last year, when we hosted this event, the other churches brought a good number of their folk along. So, please can we try and do the same this year.

Then, on Tuesday 21st January, Churches Together in Poole are holding an event at St Edwards School starting at 7pm. They have two speakers coming to address that meeting. The first, Mr Michael Antram, is the headteacher at St Edwards. The second speaker is Mr Andy DeFeu who is the Principal of Moorlands Bible College. He will be speaking on 'Winning and Equipping the Church in the 21st Century. There will also be an opportunity to meet others from different churches over refreshments which will be served before the main event. Details of how to book a place for that (just so they have an idea of how many are planning to come!) can be seen on the poster in the church entrance foyer.

Firstly: they were **Curious**. They watched the skies in their homeland for clues as to what God was doing in the world, and somehow they interpreted a star they saw in the east as a sign that the King of the Jews had been born. They were so curious that they were prepared to travel hundreds, if not thousands of miles from home, to come and discover the Messiah. When he was an adult, Jesus said that his followers should become like little children (Mt18:3). I've said it before, children are constantly asking, constantly learning, constantly curious.

Secondly: they were **Committed**. Despite having to leave home and loved ones, despite the difficulties and perils of such a long journey in the Ancient East, despite the setback of not finding Jesus where they expected him to be, they pressed on with their mission to find and to worship the Messiah. The Apostle Paul, encourages us to 'strain towards what is ahead, and press on towards the goal' (Phil 3:13&14)

Thirdly: the Magi were **Courageous**. Not only were they willing to risk the danger of travelling so far from home, once they arrived in Jerusalem they had no hesitation to approach Herod the Great, despite his fearsome reputation, and ask where the King of the Jews had been born. And once they had found and worshipped Jesus, they obeyed the Angel's instructions and instead of telling Herod, they headed home by a different route. Herod, Matthew tells us, was furious.

I don't know about you, but I generally don't make New Year's resolutions. But if you're looking for a suggestion, then how about starting 2025 like those Wise Men? Curious. Committed. Courageous.

Rev Ken Adolphe