



Link Up!

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' John 8:12

For the rest of January:

On Sunday 25th January we will be looking at chapter 2 of the book of Daniel.

Sunday 25th January is also the occasion of our Annual service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with St George's C of E and St Mary's R C Churches. This will be held at St Mary's R C this year at 3pm.

Coming up in February:

On Sunday 1st February we will be looking at the prophesies of Anna & Simeon in Luke chapter 2. This service will also include our monthly communion service.

Then on Sunday 8th February we will be looking at New Testament prophecy with the messages to the 7 Churches in the book of Revelation.

On Sunday 15th February, Ken will be on leave and Stephen Chaloner will be leading our service and looking at the Old Testament prophet Amos.

Finally on Sunday 22nd February, which is the first Sunday in Lent, we will be looking at Jesus temptation.

January 2nd was a cold, and very dark morning. It was just after 7.00am and I was walking my usual route of 2 miles around the housing where Stan and I have lived for over 47 years. The roads are familiar to me, and some are well lit, but others not so, particularly the park area behind Springdale First School. There, the swings, roundabouts and slide are fenced off overnight, and the path under the trees, is not lit at all. Today, it was the darkest morning yet. I saw a dog walker but only knew they were there because of the little red light on the dog's collar. I had my torch, to shine on the path in front of me but that was all. As I emerged at the other end of the path and started to walk along a lit road, I noticed that many people had already taken down their festive lights. It saddened me to think that just a few days later, I too would be packing mine away.

I was born in December, and I often wonder if that explains my excitement as November turns to December and all the trappings of Christmas come out of hibernation in the loft. Every year, I pack them carefully away, mark the boxes as to what is inside each one, and get them ready for Stan to take up the ladder and stack them, I hope, safely away. As I do this task, I find that I get sadder with each ornament and all the memories that are attached to them. Who gave it to me, where did I buy it. This past Christmas, there was a new star to place at the top of the tree. My little angel, which I was given when I was about 8 years old, has finally had to be replaced. Two years ago, one of her legs fell off, and this year her head came away as the rubber bands holding her together had finally perished. Sentiment over some of these items lingers with me.

Other Notices:

Ken will be on Annual Leave from Sunday 15th February to Tuesday 17th February.

Alissa Ford is starting her own cake making business and her price list and a selection of cakes she can offer are on the noticeboard in the lobby at church. Please complete the Order Form next to her list of cakes on the board including when you want your cakes by.

Don't forget that we are now recording the Sunday sermons and putting these onto our website. So, if you are missing from church on a Sunday you can catch up online during the week. The web address is

www.longfleetbaptistchurch.co.uk

Also, you can go to our YouTube channel to listen to a series of podcasts where Ken discusses one or two of the bible study questions that the Monday and Wednesday Bible Studies look at with some of the folk who attend these groups. You can hear these by going to www.youtube.com and searching for Longfleet Baptist Church.

I continued my walk not seeing anyone else, Broadstone and Corfe Mullen seemed asleep still. It was so dark, not like some of the brighter mornings of a week or two earlier when the sun was already breaking, rich and red and streaking the sky with pink and gold touches. But I was nearing the turning point of my walk, at the highest point where I can see the Purbeck Hills behind Poole harbour. As I turned I could see that the dawn was now breaking, just a thin pale gold line through the remaining night clouds.

It made me think again about the sadness of packing Christmas away in a box. When all seems over there is a spark of light which breaks through. Christmas doesn't end in a cardboard box, or a manger for that matter. The baby we celebrated a few weeks ago didn't end there because **the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it**. The light that came into the world is still there for each one of us every day and we can look ahead to Easter, the devastation of the cross and the glory of the empty tomb. As the former Arsenal Head Coach, Arsene Wenger once said on viewing the team's league position, "Christmas is important, but Easter is Crucial"

Is the light of Christ shining into your heart as we step into the coming months or did it get packed away with the decorations?

Barbara Goose