

Longfleet Baptist Church

Newsletter No 201
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Link Up!

‘To him who is thirsty I will give… the water of life.’ Revelation 21:6

For the rest of November

Then on Sunday 22nd November Ken will be taking a Sunday off and Stephen Chaloner will be leading our service.

Finally on Sunday 29th November we will be joining Parkstone Baptist Church at their service which starts at 10.30am.

Then in the evening the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Baptist Cluster will be holding a Cluster Advent service at Christchurch Baptist Church at 7pm. Anyone wanting to attend but needing a lift should see one of the leadership and we will see what can be arranged.

When Stan and I were first married we had, a beautiful hydrangea which had large blooms pink, blue and mauve, in our garden. It was a real delight and is background to lots of our photos when the children were small. When we had to move from that house to come down to Poole one of the sad things about moving away was that we had to leave the hydrangea behind.

As we had a few months before actually moving out, I decided to take three cuttings and put them in a flower pot to bring with us. Which, surprisingly, was successful. Those three are the parents of several hydrangeas which are growing in our current garden. Then about four years ago, I thought ‘if and when the time comes for us to leave this house and garden, I shall have to leave these behind’ and so each spring I have taken more cuttings, and they too have been successful. The first years’ cuttings were quite tall and impressive, and the others varied in size depending on their age. That was until Summer 2026! – remember that?

We were going away for three weeks. Relentless sun and weeks without rain – and hydrangeas can’t take strong sun and lack of water. We prepared them for days before leaving and eventually moved them into shaded areas in the garden. They were just coming into full bloom.

On our return, we wasted no time before hurrying into the garden to see what was happening. The sight of those hydrangeas was disheartening. By last year there were 20 in various stages of growth brightening the corner of the patio, now they were just sticks with shrivelled leaves and scorched, drooping flower heads.

Looking forward to December

On Sunday 6th December we start our Advent services led by Ken. This service will include our communion service.

On Sunday 13th December we will continue with our Advent series led by Ken.

Our Family Carol service will be on 20th December at 11.00am and in the evening of we will be holding a more reflective Carol service starting 5pm. Both will be followed by Christmas refreshments.

On Christmas Day our Family Service will start at 10.30am. Bring your family and come along to celebrate Jesus' birth together.

There is publicity to use to invite your friends and family along to our services on the 20th December and Christmas Day in the entrance lobby of the church.

There will be no service on Sunday 27th December.

Ken will be on leave from Boxing Day until Sunday 3rd January. In his absence, please contact one of the leadership team.

We will return to start the New Year on Sunday 3rd January with a Songs of Praise service where you can choose carols, other hymns and worship songs, favourite Scripture verses. If you are choosing a song or verse, then perhaps you can share why it is important to you. The service will also include communion. See Janet with your choices by Sunday 20th December at the latest.

Enter the watering cans! Over the next weeks I regularly watered those pots and watched to see what would happen and to my delight one day I spotted a fresh shoot coming from the base of one plant. The rest of the summer I regularly watered those pots and was so pleased to see a gradual continuation of regrowth on some of them. Finally there has even been regrowth in 6 of the pots I had written off completely, although 6 have failed to be revived.

The joy I got from seeing that new growth coming from the apparently dead plants was lovely. It made me think about our Christian lives and the lives of those we know and love. It can be demoralising sometimes to see flourishing Christians, young and older, beginning to struggle with their faith. People in public positions who profess their faith and then fall away. Faith becoming dry, shrivelled and disappointing after a strong start. Maybe that fits ourselves. Perhaps we are growing weary in the faith. Does God seem a long way away these days? At first just one little hydrangea had managed to survive the devastation of drought and excessive heat even though it was among the others – I had stood it in a container of water!

Jesus said to the woman at the well. (John 4:13) "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst" Our Christian lives need the refreshing water of life which comes from living in Jesus. Perhaps we should look to Jesus and ask for a fresh 'watering' of His Spirit on our lives and those we care about and look expectantly for the signs of new Life in Him.

Barbara Goose

