

**MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH
MESSENGER
JANUARY 2020**



**THE LORD HIMSELF GOES BEFORE YOU AND
WILL BE WITH YOU; HE WILL NEVER LEAVE
YOU OR FORSAKE YOU
DEUTERONOMY 31 VERSE 8**



FACING BOTH WAYS - A NEW YEAR

January gets its name from the Roman god Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, of gates and doorways. Traditionally Janus had two faces, one looking to the past and one to the future.

As we start a new year we can look back to the past with gratitude and to the future with expectation.

In his hymn, *'How good is the God we adore'*, Joseph Hart (1712-1768) speaks about God as our faithful, unchangeable friend and finishes with this beautiful thought: 'We'll praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.' This seems to be a good posture to take as we enter 2020.

First, we can look back on the year that is gone and give thanks for all the blessings that we have experienced. Thankfulness is really a choice. None of us will have had a perfect year, and many of us will have had some dark days indeed, but if we look carefully, we will see that there were many wonderful days and golden moments. Let's choose to focus on those and to acknowledge the work of God in our lives. *For what are you grateful as you look back to 2019?*

Second, we can put our faith in God for all that is to come. None of us know the future. We will have our hopes and our dreams, and have made our plans for the year ahead, but no-one can guarantee they will come to pass. There will be surprises for sure, both good (we never expected that!) and bad (I didn't see that coming!). How wonderful then to have a God who knows the future and in whose hands we are safe, no matter what comes to pass. Let's choose to place our trust in Him as 2020 unfolds. *What are you most looking forward to as you peer ahead of you this year?*

Tony Horsfall





NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

We are all familiar with the Queen's New Year honours list, which celebrates peoples' significant contributions in life. But what would God's New Year honours list look like? Who are the people He chooses to honour?

Psalm 1 gives us an answer to these questions. The person who is blessed by God is compared to a tree: *'he is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers'*. They are strong and well-nourished, able to cope with drought and storms, while being fruitful.



Will this be true of us during 2020? By contrast, we can be more like bonsai trees, whose growth has been stunted. They are starved of nutrients to ensure that they are perfectly formed, but miniature in size.

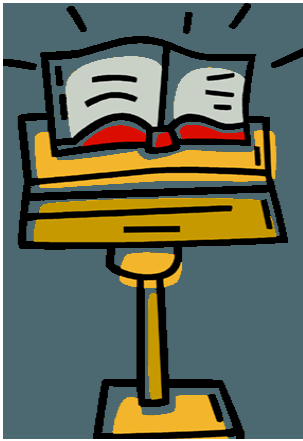


So often the church today resembles a bonsai nursery rather than a forest of mighty trees! Like the bonsai, we are starved of nutrition. Instead, consider the alternative: *'his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night'*.



Here is the challenge for us during this coming year: to push our roots deeply down into His Word, meditating on it day and night. As we read and reflect on God's Word, we are constantly reminding ourselves of God's promises, character and acts.

There will be times when our Bible reading doesn't seem to delight us, when it feels like a real slog! At such times turn back to Psalm 1 and remind yourself what the goal is: to grow into maturity, deeply rooted, drought resistant and fruitful. We will never get there unless our roots are deep in God's Word.



DIARY OF CHURCH SERVICE PREACHERS JANUARY 2020

Sunday 5th January at 10.30am - Messy Church:
Maureen Spinks
Messy Church is preceded by breakfast

Sunday 12th January at 10.30am - Maggie Ayres

Sunday 19th January at 10.30am - Joan Mayes

Sunday 26th January at 10.30am - David Ball



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Good Companions

Tuesday 14th January at 10.30am

All Sorts Craft Group

Tuesday 28th January at 10.30am to
12.00md

Community Lunch

Every Wednesday at 12.30pm

Saturday Youth Club

Every Saturday from 7-10pm for 9-14 year olds.

FOR YOUR DIARY: The next Church Council meeting will be on
Thursday 6th February at 7.30pm in the church.

(CHURCH COUNCIL?) Regardless of how many items there are on
the Church Council agenda, a meeting will take the same amount of
time! Anon.)

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH

-  **1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am:**
Messy Church - This is preceded by breakfast
-  **1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7.30pm**
Prayer Meeting at Eddie and Dallas's home
-  **2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10.30am**
Good Companions
-  **4TH TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 10.30 - 12.00md**
All sorts craft group
-  **EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 12.30pm**
Community Lunch
-  **EVERY SATURDAY FROM 7 - 10pm**
Saturday Youth Club - for 9 - 14 year olds

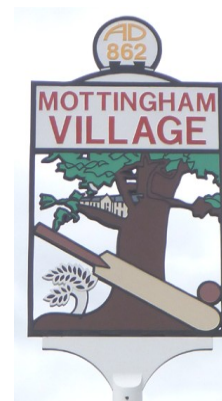
IN AND AROUND MOTTINGHAM AND BROMLEY

MOTTINGHAM LIBRARY IN MARCH

Bromley and Greenwich Councillors' Surgeries:

Bromley: 6.45-8.00pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

Greenwich: 7-8pm on the last Friday of the month.



Coffee Morning

Wednesday 8th January. 10.30-12 noon

Topic to be announced!



Armchair Walk

Friday 24th January

6.15-7.30

Fleeces, Fell-Mongers & Philanthropists- join Chris on her walk along Bermondsey Street



A PRAYER FOR OUR TIMES

This prayer from Billy Graham, written in 2008, is just as relevant more than a decade later.

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love.

In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need.

In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost.

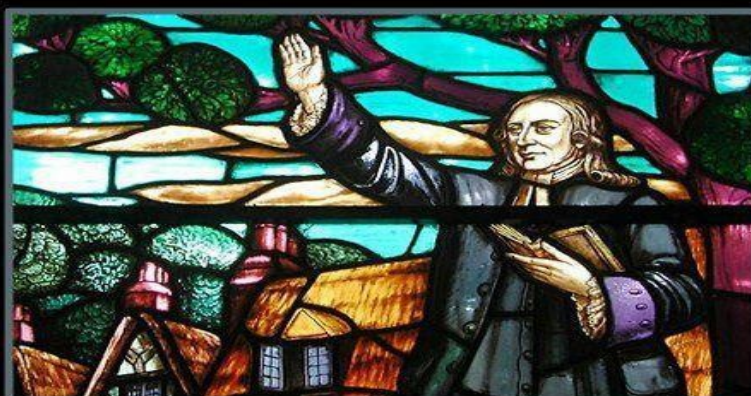
And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of

Your love and concern for them. Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and centre of our lives this year.

And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come....Amen.



"I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them, 1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy: 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against: And, 3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

— John Wesley, October 6, 1774

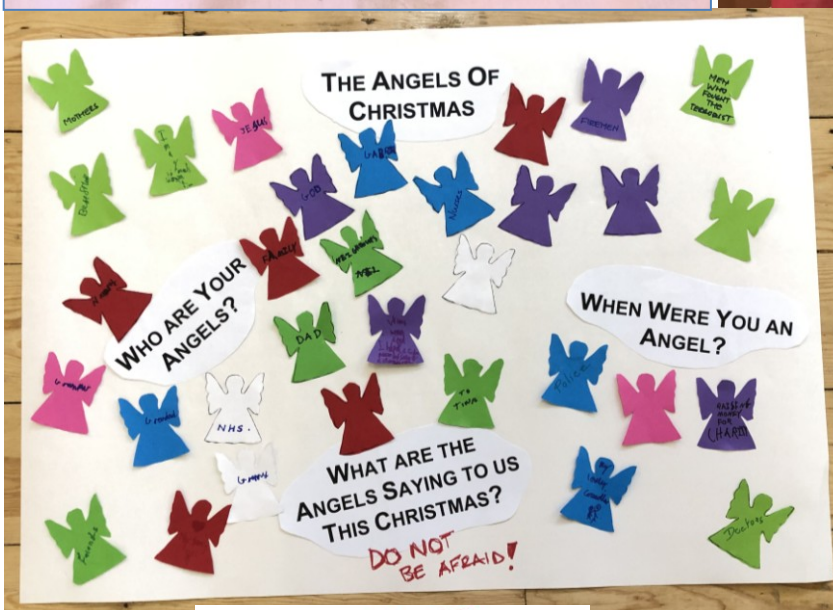
PRAYER REQUESTS

There is a note book at the rear of the Church for your use if you or someone you know would like to be remembered in prayer by the Church whether anonymously or by name.

If it's easier to leave a note please do leave it in an envelope in the Church.

CHRISTMAS IN MOTTINGHAM IN PICTURES

THEME: ANGELS





**THANKYOU TO
EVERYONE WHO
HELPED MAKE
CHRISTMAS A
TRUE
CELEBRATION
OF THE BIRTH
OF JESUS**

الله اكبر

PRAY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ

New wave of Christians set to flee Iraq

Growing insecurity in Iraq and on its border could lead to a fresh exodus of Christians from the country, warns a partner of Release International, which is supporting refugees in the country.

Only around 300,000 Christians remain in Iraq from a peak of 1.8 million in the year 2000. They've been driven out by conflict and insecurity. But now the Turkish invasion of Syria and growing protests in Baghdad could drive even more Christians out of the country, according to Jamal Liddawi, a partner of Release International.

'The Kurdistan government is preparing for between 100,000 and 200,000 refugees,' says Jamal.

He also says that the Kurdish people in northern Iraq felt betrayed by the American decision to pull their troops out of Syria, which precipitated the Turkish invasion.

Meanwhile, the street protests in Baghdad and Karbala, to the south, are deepening that sense of insecurity. Hundreds have been killed in continuing protests over government corruption, high unemployment and the influence of Iran in the country. As a result, many of Iraq's remaining Christians now want to leave.

Many have already fled to Erbil, where the Kurds have given them safe haven. Some 50,000 others are said to be scattered across the plains of Nineveh, in towns and villages near Mosul, which until recently was occupied by Islamic State.

STOP PRESS!

We pray not only for the Christians but all those who stand to be hated and targeted as a result of the killing of General Qassem.

ANIMALS AND BIRDS AS SEEN IN ART AND SCRIPTURE



**'He gave us eyes to see them': 'The Peaceable Kingdom'
by Edward Hicks**

St Francis' Canticle of the Sun invites all creatures to praise God the Creator. But we live in a world of climate change and global warming. A thousand species are at risk of extinction in the United Kingdom alone. The richness of creation St

Francis knew in his day is no longer. We need to heed the urgent call to care for the biodiversity of our planet and its richness in plant and animal life. This year we shall be looking at animals and birds - their grace and strength, their beauty and wonder - as reflected in art and scripture, and so learn to value the glory of Creation all around us.

Isaiah in chapter 11 had a vision of a special child who would bring paradise to the earth once more. He spoke of a world where the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid. It is the theme of 'The Peaceable Kingdom' by the American Quaker artist, Edward Hicks. This subject occupied all his artistic talent for he painted almost a hundred versions. Sixty still exist and this one is from 1834.

The foreground is occupied by not just one child, but several. They are innocent and free, playing with the animals around - lion, tiger, leopard, bear, wolf, cow and lamb. There is no sign of 'nature red in tooth and claw' here. All is peace and tranquillity. The bear and cow nudge each other in the bottom corner with no fear. That peaceful co-existence is echoed in the distance with William Penn and other Quakers working on a treaty with the Indians. The animals in the foreground symbolise the human traits we see at

work in the background: leadership and power, sensitivity and gentleness.

Edward Hicks as he worked on later versions knew that this peace was not a straightforward achievement. Selfishness, pride and greed got in the way. But the vision remained. Follow the inner light of God's grace, he is saying in his art, and that harmony can be achieved. Cherish the world around and give thanks for its rich variety and colour. Then we can follow Edward Hicks and St Francis in caring for 'all creatures great and small.'

Michael Burgess

MOTTINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH

The Minister: Rev Duncan MacBean. Tel: 07432 093353

Please Note: The minister's normal day off is a Friday

The Deacon: Maureen Spinks. Tel: 01689 821956

Please note: The deacon's normal day off is Tuesday

The Senior Steward: Dallas Green. Tel: 020 8617 0076

JANUARY

Now the work really begins
When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
this is when the work of Christmas begins -
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

(Howard Thurman)