

Wednesday 26th November 2025

Dear Friends

I'm more than a little puzzled by this time of year.

Christmas seems to begin on 1st September when the adverts start to flow - with the arrival of mince pies hot on their heels. Pretty soon it seems we are inundated by the promise of a perfect Christmas - as long as we follow the instructions of certain shops or (bizarrely) a carrot! But it's the ideas for the perfect gift that continue to amaze me.

Above our oven in the Manse, we have a photo frame full of various shots taken of our family over the years. There are photos of us all together (a rare event nowadays) and one of me and Karen next to our eldest daughter dressed as a polar bear. The collection is dated by the dogs included in the collection - these being Mable, our Bassett Hound, and Lola, famed for being the first Earlsfield Baptist Church dog. In her photo, Lola is not happy not happy at all. She is not happy because the kids had dressed her up in an outfit which they thought was cute and she thought was ridiculous. Lola, this feisty, tough little terrier is being forced to wear a Santa outfit.

I'd love to know when this all began - dressing up beloved family pets in seasonal appropriate costumes. I really can't picture Mary and Joseph walking into the stable at the first Christmas and deciding to stick fake reindeer horns on the donkey and a sheep's fleece on the, er, sheep! And, yes, I know there wasn't a donkey in the Bethlehem stable.

And can you imagine the meeting when they were first pitched? Sometime in the spring of whatever year they first came out. some young marketer pitched the idea of dressing up cats as elves. Imagine the puzzled faces...the laughter from older marketing managers until a company took a risk on the costumes and. all of a sudden, a multi-million-dollar industry was launched. \$860 million to be exact, and that's just in America.

They do miss the point though...although I can hear my children shouting 'lighten up old man they're just a bit of fun' - **they still miss the point.** As do the adverts, the excess, the ridiculous notion of a perfect Christmas - **they ALL miss the point.**

Church Treasurer

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treasurer@earlsfieldbaptist.org.uk

Minister

Rev Keith Parr BSc MA (Theo)
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The first Christmas was far from perfect it was messy and unplanned - painful and undoubtedly confusing for the mother and father involved.

Yet this is the true Christmas, not the one found on our TVs or even the somewhat silly things we do to celebrate it.

However you celebrate and whatever your family traditions, may they all point toward the baby born in the stable whose birth gives the whole season its reason.

Happy Christmas!

Every blessing

Keith

Rev Keith Parr BSc MA (theo)

PASTORAL CARE AND VISITS

If you would like to have a chat with our Minister, Rev Keith Parr, or would like him to visit you, please speak to him after the Sunday service, call him on 07999 027803 or email him at Minister@earlsfieldbaptist.org.uk.

TWO AMAZING SUNDAYS



The Band

Sunday 16th November was the first time the band played in the service. Unfortunately, those on zoom couldn't hear them very well. Julie asked if they could play again but they had already left the building. (No, they weren't asked to leave!)

They sounded good and after only one short rehearsal I'd say very good. Keith did mention a name but I'm not sure I heard it correctly, so I won't try. Keith and Harrison played on guitars, Dylan on drums and Louise on base. Yes, you heard it right - Dylan had injured his foot so was unable to use the foot pedal so Louise sat on a box and used it to beat the tune. Of course, being in the Girls Brigade band in the past you never lose the beat, (I'm sure I'm not alone when I say, I bet I'm not the only one that stands in the pew and taps to the beat of most choruses). Grace was standing at the side looking on, I wonder if she would take up an instrument at a later date, maybe a tambourine?

Three Baptisms



There wasn't a dry eye in the Church or a heart that wasn't full of love and joy on Sunday 23rd November when we saw Sophie, Dejan and Stef go through the waters of Baptism. It was all very emotional for both participants and witnesses, and good to see so many loved ones supporting for them all.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

They each gave their testimonies about all they had been through and how they had felt God's hand on their lives. Please keep Sophie, Dejan and Stef in your prayers as they start this new phase in their walk with our Lord.

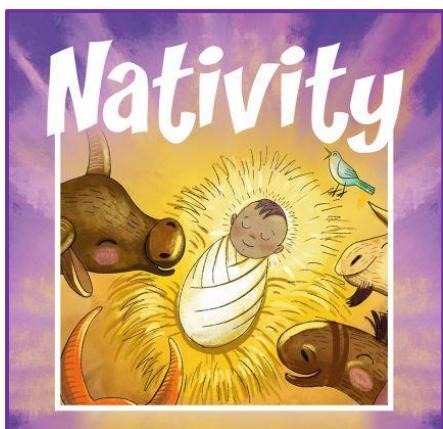
If you want to learn more about being baptized, please speak to our Minister, Keith, or to a member of the Leadership Team.

EBC LEADERSHIP TEAM

At their recent meeting, Church Members were advised that Tunde Adesuyan had resigned as Church Treasurer and that both he and Beatrice Lee were stepping down from the Leadership Team. We give thanks to each of them for serving EBC in so many ways over so many years. They will still be attending EBC and serving God and supporting us even if they are not 'on the Team'!

Our thanks, too, to John Montgomery for taking up the reins as Church Treasurer. John is a qualified accountant and held the position of Church Treasurer at Queen's Road Church for many years before he joined us at EBC. There will be a handover period between Tunde and John. If you have any queries about finances or aspect of the work of the Leadership Team, please don't hesitate to talk to Keith (Minister) or Julie (Church Secretary).

The Leadership Team (Keith Parr, Julie Davis, Doreen Dorman, Louise Gilmartin, John Montgomery, Lili Perez and Ben Williams) will be meeting on Saturday 17th January. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue to serve the Lord and EBC in the months ahead.



LOOK OUT FOR POSTERS, NOTICES AND FLYERS ABOUT OUR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS

To join our services or house groups by Zoom, use the same joining instructions as those used on Sundays.

Sunday 30th November	Advent Sunday	11.00 am
Thursday 4th December	Rendezvous	12 noon - 2.30 pm
Saturday 6th December	Christmas Coffee Morning	10.30 am
Sunday 7th December	Christingle Service	11.00 am
Sunday 7th December	Advent Comfort	6.00 pm
Sunday 14th December	All Age Communion	11.00 am
Sunday 21st December	Scratch Nativity	11.00 am
Sunday 21st December	Live Nativity with Carols	4.00 pm - 6.00 pm
Thursday 25th December	Christmas Day	10.00 am

**Details of
all events
are set
below**

**"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.
And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."**

RENDEZVOUS

NEXT MEETING
THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER
12 NOON TO 2.30 PM

What was meant to be a wet afternoon turned out to be a very warm one, which meant we weren't left wondering how many would turn up because of the weather. There were 21 of us altogether which was very good and this included another new face, a friend of Molly's. Its always good to welcome new guest's, the more the merrier.

Teresa had the afternoon all planned out with a craft activity as we hadn't done one for a while and because Christmas is a coming something Christmassy would be even better. There was a choice between a paper angel or a Christmas tree, or of course if they wanted, both. This seemed to go down well even those who weren't too keen on it managed with a little help to go home with something. So 'thank you', Teresa.

Keith gave his little talk about Remembrance, an ex-serviceman he had met at a Remembrance service and the poppy's that Keith was wearing, the red for Remembrance and a white one for No More Wars.

I thought the white poppy was something new, wrong. It was first produced in 1933 by the Co-operative Women's Guild in the UK, many of whom had lost family members in WW1. A white poppy is a symbol of peace and remembrance for all victims of war, including civilians and military personnel, and represents a commitment to non-violent solutions to conflict. It serves as a challenge to any celebration or glorification of war and a reminder of the "Never again" spirit after conflict.

A good afternoon was had by all.

Our next Rendezvous is 4th December **12 Noon - 2:30 pm** as this will be our Christmas party so we will be meeting an hour earlier as we have lots planned to do.

Dawn and the team



**CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING
AND MORE!
SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER
10.30 AM TO 12 NOON**

Teas, Coffees, Homemade Cakes, Christmas Gifts & Cards, Books, Puzzles, Bric a Brac, Second Hand Soft Toys and so much more!

Please speak to Dawn if you are able to make cakes, serve teas or help on a stall or if you would like to have a table to sell some of your own goodies.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

CHRISTMAS COMFORT

COMFORT

Then, at 6.30 pm, we will begin the service. It will be a mixture of Christmas readings, images, quiet music and space to be still at the start of this joyous but hectic season. It is a perfect service for those who want a quieter type of Christmas service or for those who want to begin Advent in a more mindful way.

At the end of the service, we will leave in quietness rather than staying to chat.

Our next **Men's Koinonia (or Fellowship)** is at 8.30 am on **Saturday 13th December**. We meet in the **Lockdown Bakehouse** for coffee, bacon butties and lots of Jesus. So, if you are a bloke and fancy joining us we would love to see you.



SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2025 **ALL AGE COMMUNION SERVICE AT 11.00 AM**

Our morning service on the third Sunday of the month will include Communion. This is an opportunity for **all members of our Family – young and old – to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord**. Bread and wine will be served to those in Church. If you are joining by Zoom, please have your bread and wine ready at home.



MISSION FOCUS FOR DECEMBER **“BMS WORLD MISSION”**

EBC has supported the Baptist Missionary Society World Mission for many years and we continue to give £100 per month from our general offerings to the work of BMS World Mission.

BMS World Mission is our “Mission Focus” for December. More details about their work can be found on our Mission Focus Board in the foyer.

Thanks to Zoe Adesuyan and Doreen Dorman who are our representatives for BMS World Mission. They would be happy to talk to you if you would like to know more about how you can support this charity. Info from the BMS World Mission website:

Our vision

Together we are working for a world where all can experience faith in Christ and the abundant life only He provides.

Our mission

BMS World Mission mobilises people, resources and skills across the Global Church to share the good news of Jesus and practical hope where they're needed most.

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.”

We work hand-in-hand with global organisations, mission workers and supporters to:

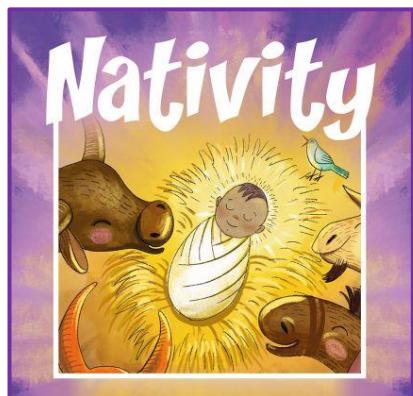
- share Christ and nurture disciples
- alleviate suffering and injustice
- enable all God's people to play their part in his mission

If you would like to make a gift to "BMS World Mission", please use the envelopes provided in church during the month of December. If you give your regular offering to EBC by bank transfer, the reference for your gift should be "Dec Comm – BMS WM".

Sunday 21st December

Scratch Nativity 11 am

Live Nativity with Carols 4 pm – 6 pm



The **SCRATCH NATIVITY** service at 11 am will be full of fun but also full of meaning so that we can understand what happened in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. Last year, everyone (who wanted to) dressed up and re-enacted the journey to Bethlehem by Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and the Wise Men with carols and prayers along the way. There were two donkeys last year and who knows how many shepherds and angels!

Come in costume or come as you are – come ready to take part or come to watch –
JUST COME!

Is it '**LIVE NATIVITY**' OR '**NATIVITY LIVE**'? Does it matter which way around the words are? All that matters is that we all come along and get involved in this **FREE EVENT** and that we spread the word to our families and friends, our neighbours and our community.

We have a 'travelling farm' coming to recreate the nativity in our car park – that's a first for EBC! The schedule for the afternoon:

4.00 pm	Gates open
4.30 pm	Louise narrates the story of the nativity with help from everyone else
4.45 pm	Children visit Father Christmas in his grotto
4.50 pm	Everyone moves through the Rock into the hall picking up refreshments as they do so
5.00 pm	Craft work - everyone will make two identical items, one to take home the other to decorate the Christmas tree in the Church
5.30 pm	Carols in the Church and time to decorate the Christmas tree
6.00 pm	End

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

WE NEED TO WORK TOGETHER AND WE NEED YOUR HELP to make it a safe, successful event. We need people in hi-vis vests to steward, others to provide hot drinks, more to cook food, people to lead in crafts and someone to be Father Christmas. In short, we need **YOU!** Please make sure your name is on the list if you can help. If you can't help, please come along and bring others with you.

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day – 10.00 am

Finally, after all the busy-ness of the weeks leading up the Christmas (or months as Keith says in his introduction to this newsletter), we can come together to celebrate the birth of our Lord. Please come along to join your Church family on this special morning.

And, of course, Keith and Bubbles celebrate their birthdays on the same day (in case you hadn't heard!)

WHEN OUR DOORS ARE OPEN, PEOPLE COME IN!



We continue to open our Church whenever we can at various times during the week for an hour or so. Please drop in for a cuppa and a chat or to spend a quiet time with our Lord. Open to all. If you would like to help, please have a word with Karen or Doreen.

Sunday 28th December – 11.00 am – can you help?

A number of people will be away after Christmas but we would like to open our doors to welcome members of our congregation and others from our community to come in and spend time together – please speak to Keith or one of the Leadership Team if you are available to help. Thank you.

PRAYER TEXTING

Prayer is such an important part of our Christian life. Please join the Prayer Texting Group. Just text **07579 796157** – no name needed – and your number will be added to the distribution list. You can also phone this number from your landline and leave a message for prayer.

PILGRIMAGE FOR SOFTIES – a note from Karen

In the summer, I went away with my Mum for a week and in the afternoons, we settled down and watched every episode of the BBC series, 'Pilgrimage'.

It really got me thinking that I would love, absolutely love, to go on a pilgrimage. Strictly speaking, a pilgrimage is a journey to a special place, usually a holy one. Pilgrimages are nothing new but in recent years, pilgrim routes, like the Camino de Santiago, have gained popularity.

One of my nonreligious river swimming friends makes the pilgrimage nearly every year. So, I have looked into it and realised that this is not an option for me. Too far, too tough on my knees, too expensive and too many people! Back to the drawing board.

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

My Spiritual director then made a radical suggestion. After I see her, for my usual six-weekly session, I then take the rest of the day as a pilgrimage day. I walk somewhere or go somewhere, disconnect from my phone, and spend the day with God, praying as and when stuff comes into my head.

I decided to do the Capital Ring walk. The most beautiful sections seem to have been completed at the start. I have walked, so far, Sections 1-4. Although there were some nice woods and commons, there has also been a lot of pavements, and housing estates. It is definitely not a beautiful, holy, pilgrimage walk.

However, in Hosea 2 v15, there are these words: "There I will give her back her vineyards and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope.". Valley of Achor means valley of trouble. It echoes Psalm 84 v6 which talks about the valley of Bacca becoming a valley of springs.

Putting one foot in front of the other, disconnecting from phones and simply walking and praying is a beautifully simple way to pray God's hope into an area or for a person as they come to mind. You can even turn your walk to church or to the shops or from one room to another in your house into a pilgrimage. You can sit on a bus, the train or the car and do the same thing. There is something powerful about journeying and praying (just don't shut your eyes if you are driving!)

Meanwhile, if you want to try a different take on Pilgrimage, Doreen recommends reading: *Jesus : A Pilgrimage* by James Martin.

SUNDAYS!

SUNDAY SERVICES

Please be encouraged to come to Church on Sunday mornings so that you can physically meet others in our Church Family. Morning services continue to be available on Zoom if you are unable to attend in person. Here are the joining instructions (the same details are used for the Small Group on Monday evenings):

- **Join Zoom Meeting from computer or device**
 - <https://zoom.us/j/98894345143?pwd=eUdkNWJFakI2Q044V1JBZEdrMFh1dz09>
 - Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143
 - Passcode: 769098
- **Dial in from landline phone – standard rates apply**
 - 020 8080 6591 or 020 8080 6592
 - Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143 followed by #
 - Participant number: this can be bypassed with #
 - Passcode: 769098 followed by #

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SUNDAY MORNINGS – 11.15 AM TO NOON

Sunday School for 5-11 yr olds with various activities including craftwork, learning songs and listening to Bible



MONDAYS **EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN THIS ZOOM CALL**

- 7.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Zoom joining details are sent out by email each Monday.
- <https://zoom.us/j/98894345143?pwd=eUdkNWJFakI2Q044V1JBZEdrMFh1dz09>
- Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143
- Passcode: 769098

TUESDAYS

Currently the **Tuesday Morning Bible Study Group** meets at the **Lockdown Bakehouse** at **11.00 am** and choose a coffee shop to go to – please come along to join them for an hour or so.

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