

# ChristChurch Wrexham



December 2019

## Relay



Welcome to the December edition of the  
ChristChurch Relay magazine

### Scripture Focus for December

Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV) - <sup>4</sup> But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

Matthew 1:20-23 (NIV) - <sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"



### Key Dates

1<sup>st</sup> Early  
Celebration,  
Discovery Church,  
The Meeting place,  
Walk this Way,  
#Sundaze

7<sup>th</sup> Discovery  
Funday at ACRC

8<sup>th</sup> Leaders  
Meeting

19<sup>th</sup> Leaders  
Huddle

22<sup>nd</sup> Junior Church  
Nativity  
Carol Service

25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day  
Celebration

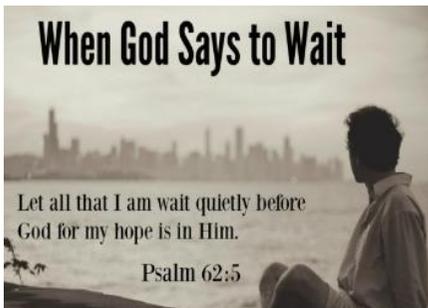
Family Christmas Carol  
Celebration - Sunday  
December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5-6pm,  
ACRC. A short informal  
celebration intended for  
the ChristChurch  
congregation to invite  
friends, family and  
neighbours along to, so  
please think about who  
you will be inviting. If  
you'd like to be involved  
in any way then please  
speak to John and Sally  
Ellinson.

## The Power of Waiting

As we head into the Advent season, we embrace a time of waiting as our thoughts and hopes focus upon Christmas Day and the great celebration of our Saviour coming to this world. The wait fuels hope and expectation as we anticipate the joy that lies ahead. Mary is one of the biblical characters who can inspire us in our waiting. She was the recipient of a great, mighty and weighty promise from God. Its fulfilment required an initial wait and then a further much longer wait. Mary was perplexed at the initial promise and struggled in the longer waiting at times. The same is so, so true for us as well. Waiting is not easy.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." LUKE 1:30-33

It was only as she embraced the necessary wait that the initial seed of promise bore fruit in and through her. Changes in her body rhythms, an increasingly swelling belly and then the unmistakable movements within her womb, all preceded the birth of the promised Saviour. Mary's initial waiting was for nine months but it was a further thirty years before she saw Jesus take up the mantle of the Messiah, Israel's long-awaited King. Waiting on God carries its inherent rewards, even when it seems an eternity. Mary's wait was full of joys and sorrows. Ours will be too. That is the call and cost of Christian discipleship.



Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David are all further examples of those who waited patiently and over many years for the fulfilment of God's promise. We who live in such an instant and fast paced world with its NOW expectation are not so ready, or willing, to wait at times. Whilst waiting is incredibly difficult at times there are definite benefits to the waiting that the Lord desires from us. BIBLICAL waiting builds anticipation and expectation even when it is done in the cloud of unknowing and at times even utter darkness. Waiting will mean embracing mystery as we are called to work with what we are given for today (our daily bread) and not always what we will need for tomorrow or next week. God so often only reveals the next step and doesn't outline precise details of the exact and entire journey. Waiting on the Lord builds

character and gives time and space for relationship to develop and deepen. It also counters impulsiveness and flies in the face of the instant gratification of our age. Counter-cultural Christian living.

Waiting with, and on, God will bring maturity into our lives as it fruits humility and strengthens trust in us. We are called to wait in a perpetual cycle and rhythm of prayerful contemplation allied with faith filled kingdom action. (Pray & Act, Pray & Act. REPEAT)

**KEEP WAITING ON AND NEVER STOP TRUSTING IN THE LORD.**

**MAY YOU BE LAVISHLY BLESSED IN THE WAITING THIS ADVENT.**

Love and prayers,  
Every Blessing

GARETH



Wait on the Lord: be of good courage,  
and he shall strengthen thine heart:  
wait, I say, on the Lord.

**Psalm 27:14**



TRUST IN GOD'S  
TIMING. IT'S BETTER TO  
WAIT A WHILE AND HAVE  
THINGS FALL INTO  
PLACE, THAN TO RUSH  
AND HAVE THINGS  
FALL APART.

@adamcappa

## Resident Pastors Andrew and Liz

Please note our new phone number  
**01978 358954**

As many of you will know, we recently took on the role of Resident Pastor. The main aspect of this is to coordinate the pastoral work in ChristChurch. Pastoral care is a body ministry and we are all responsible for looking after each other.

Liz and I want to help coordinate this to try to make sure no one slips through the net – or that no one gets more care than they want!

If you are already involved in pastoral care, or are interested in being part of a pastoral care team then we would like to meet with you. We have 3 dates, please let us know if you are interested and which date suits you.

Possible dates. Please phone to confirm.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December

All at 7.30pm at 40 East Avenue.

## A safe house By Mary Birch



The Summer's gone, the hedgehog house is dry and clean ready for him.

In the summer there was a spouse and small prickles much like Spike.

It's Winter and he is alone to sleep all through the long dark days until Spring-sunshine wakens him.

My life should be filled with thankful praise to the One who made each living thing.

I live in hope of a Safe House,  
in Heaven where the Angels sing.



If you want prayer resources for the General Election prayer resources see: [eauk.org/resources/general-election-2019](http://eauk.org/resources/general-election-2019)

**Don't forget to let people know about the Discovery Funday on 7<sup>th</sup> December at Acton Community Resource Centre**

## BIG QUIZ EVENT 2019 and A RUBBISH CAMPAIGN



On Saturday November 16<sup>th</sup> ChristChurch was one of 537 churches from across the UK to host the 2019 Tearfund Big Quiz and our 33 participants were part of the massive 25,010 people who took part all at the same time!

A huge thanks to everyone who supported the event either by competing, serving drinks, clearing up afterwards or by donating the wonderful selection of cakes. A total of £146.25 was raised on the night and by selling the leftover cakes on the Sunday morning.

The money will be used to underpin the work of Tearfund in Nigeria where civil war has ravaged the country with millions displaced from their homes.

It is also not too late to support the Tearfund Campaign to promote action from Coca Cola to address the problem caused by the millions of plastic bottles they produce each year. The company produces 3 million tonnes of plastic packaging a year - the equivalent of 108 billion bottles. That's 200,000 bottles a minute. Please log on to [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org) and search for Coca Cola to find out how you can respond or speak to us.

Glenys and Campbell

## Naturally Supernatural Part 2 – Summer 2019 Sally Ellinson

**The Holy Spirit** - Have you received the Holy Spirit? If you are a Christian then you have! But there is always more. Have you grown satisfied? Are you still hungry? Ephesians 5:18 means to be continuously filled. When did you last have a big drink of the Spirit?

**Worship** - Sometimes we can be sceptical about other styles of worship, maybe those that seem more like a rock show, but look at this picture of worship from Revelation 4 & 5: Thrones, jewels, rainbow, white robes, gold crowns, lightning, thunder, blazing lamps, sea of glass reflecting and magnifying = a colourful light and sound show! Then four living creatures and 24 elders repeating worship, diving on the ground and taking their crowns off, singing a new song, thousands of angels and everyone on heaven and earth singing = loud, boisterous, creative and organised! And all of that is just the 'support act' before the main event when the scroll is opened by the Lion of Judah – the Lamb. All of the sound and lights are OK as long as they point to Jesus. True worship leads us into the presence of God. Worship isn't about what I like but what God loves.



**Friendship** - Mother Theresa said that the biggest poverty she saw was in the West – loneliness. The first 'not good' of the bible is in Genesis 2:18 when God saw it was not good for us to be alone. Loneliness is not just about being alone, it's about that feeling that no one really knows me and a feeling of not being connected. God's solution is quality not quantity. Depth of friendship not numbers. We will probably only have this deep friendship with a few people in life. The story of Ruth and Naomi is a great example, we are called to be a Ruth, our job is to stay, it is not our job to fix. True friends walk in when everyone else walks out.

Your few great friendships will cost you – in time, finance and energy. Champion and promote them. Forgive them. In John 13:34 we are told to love as Jesus loves us - not how our friends love us.

**Distraction** - In Luke 10 we are told that although Martha had opened up her home to Jesus she then had lots to do and 'was distracted'. Are you distracted from what God wants you to focus on? We need to be present and available. Mary had chosen to sit at Jesus' feet like a disciple, only men were allowed to do that. Jesus loved her brave and radical choice and refused to send her back to the kitchen. If we choose not to be distracted it will be brave and radical too. Jesus stopped lots on his way to Jerusalem to preach, heal or talk. He had focus, he wasn't distracted but he had freedom. He was open to interruptions but didn't get distracted.

How can we live with freedom and focus?

- Jesus knew what he was called to. Do we know our purpose? (Generally and specifically)
- Jesus looked to his father for the day-to-day details. Interruptions were part of God's plan. If we listen to God he'll show us what the one or few things are for today.
- Jesus regularly chose to be alone. That is how he could hear God. He did it more as people needed him more. Choose to be unavailable to those around you in order to be available to God.
- Jesus recognised he had an enemy (Matt 16) who wanted to distract him. We have an enemy who is trying to distract us. Hebrews 12 reminds us to throw off anything that hinders.
- Jesus got his friends involved. Do you have a couple of friends who know what distracts you? Champion and encourage one another.

### **The visit of Bishop George, Madam Vanessa and Pastor Joel....a personal recollection from Sue Allen**

Meeting our three visitors from Africa on that first Friday night was quite an experience. It must have been something an ordeal for them; newly arrived after an exhausting journey to a cold Wales and being met by the quite diverse group which is ChristChurch leadership team. Differences in culture and expectations and the fact that they were conversing in their second, or even third, language could have been problematic but their graciousness and courtesy meant that the meal was a pleasant start to their visit.

I got to know them better over the course of the weekend when they joined us on the Leadership Retreat. Over those few days seeing their deep faith and their commitment to prayer, worship and the Word of God was a humbling experience.

Every morning began with an hour of prayer when the chapel became saturated in worship and the presence of the Spirit of God was tangible. It was a joy and delight to be part of it. Later we had the Conference, generously hosted by The Community Church with worship organised and often led by John. I was disappointed by the numbers who came but uplifted, challenged and blessed by the whole experience. I felt the Bishop George somehow grew into his role and the last evening, for me at least, was a powerful testimony to the way in which God can, does and will use him.

There were times when, perhaps because of the cultural differences or the difficulties of translating accurately from one language to another, I was not quite on the same page, when I questioned what I had heard, or thought I had heard, but overriding all that the sincerity of their love for Jesus and their desire to see the lost come to a saving knowledge of him shone out. I feel that I have made three good, trustworthy and Godly friends and one day maybe I can take them up on their offer of hospitality and go and visit Zambia...but not quite yet.

### **Leader retreat review by Andrew Williams**

For many years we as leaders of ChristChurch have taken a retreat in the Autumn. I really look forward to these times, as times of refreshing; strengthening of relationships with God and with friends; and relaxation. It's great that it's a family time and the children add a dimension that Liz and I really enjoy.

This year's retreat was entitled 'Times of Refreshing' and was led by Mark and Sue Vening. For many years we have been superbly accommodated at the Quinta, but this year we tried out a new venue at 'Fairhaven' in Llanfynydd. For those of you who have met Laurie and Caroline, it is their Centre. They were wonderful hosts. The venue provided more space for meetings, and we were wonderfully catered for. Retreat started on Thursday morning with the monthly meeting of Wrexham Church Leader's Fellowship; and we welcomed Bishop George, Madam Vanessa and Pastor Joel – a morning of retreat, reflection and relaxation. A small group of ChristChurch leaders then met for Thursday and Friday. We were joined by the others on Friday evening, on Saturday by Link Up, and the retreat culminated with celebration at ChristChurch on Sunday morning.

Highlights for me include powerful morning prayer and worship, brilliant worship sessions lead by our team, and Joel's unique style of worship. Through Mark and Sue's leading we met intimately with our Lord. It was a joy to get to know Bishop George and Madam Vanessa and to be encouraged by them in our prayer and worship times.

Fairhaven is situated on a hillside with spectacular views over the valley. We enjoyed good walks, and watching the weather roll across the valley. An additional treat for me was that they needed an extra bedroom, so we were 'forced' to take our caravan! Good food, good company, good accommodation, God's presence. Truly a time of refreshing.

Article published in the Autumn edition of Dispatches Médecins Sans Frontières UK (MSF)

## **'The love for your child is good'**

### **How do you care for people's mental health in the world's largest refugee camp?**

MSF psychologist Alison Fogg shares her experience of treating Rohingya people inside the KutupalongBalukhali megacamp in southeast Bangladesh.

"Following Kamrul, one of the Bangladeshi mental health supervisors, I pause to catch my breath.

Men and boys pass me quickly, deftly negotiating the steep, bamboo-sided steps barefoot while balancing eight-foot bamboo poles on their shoulders, seemingly with ease in the 40-degree heat.



On either side of the narrow stairway, rows and rows of small makeshift plastic and bamboo tents cram the steep, muddy hillsides, providing little protection from the intense afternoon sun.

Reaching a ridge, we can see these precarious shelters spreading for miles in every direction. It feels even more overwhelming when you realise that each of the thousands of abodes represents a family of probably six to 10 people, each with their own story.

### **PLACE OF PEACE**

It's a daily privilege to work with the MSF team at Shanti Khana, or 'place of peace' – the name chosen for the mental health unit here – given the considerable emotional demands of the work.

Under the watchful eye of the senior clinicians, Sharif, Mofizul and Kamrul, the counsellors listen to story after story of trauma, multiple losses and ongoing fear and sadness.

### **THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT**

They support worried parents who bring in their children with an undiagnosed learning disability or autism, reassuring them: 'No, this is not your fault or God's punishment on you. Your care and love for your child is good.'

One of the happiest moments for the team is when they remove the chains binding some patients – often young men – when their concerned parents or siblings bring them in. Living in flimsy and unlockable shelters, when their adult children are agitated and perhaps violent, relatives are often at a loss as to how to protect them from themselves and others.

I've seen how receiving a diagnosis – perhaps of psychosis or severe epilepsy – and appropriate medication, calms and stabilises a person. It provides the family with great relief and the patient with an opportunity for a new life.

### **OUR SHARED HUMANITY**

Spending time in the project, the positive impact of the mental health team's day-to-day efforts becomes clearly evident. Here, there is one particular Rohingya gentleman who is especially grateful for the care provided to his daughter by the team during an inpatient stay.

Following a suspected traumatic event, she starts to trust the counsellor who visits her bedside. She slowly begins to talk and eat again. Her father visits the unit daily. One day, when his daughter's progress is really becoming clear, he shows his gratitude by grasping me tightly around the waist in a side hug – I literally have to catch my breath at this point. Standing in the patient waiting area, I am acutely conscious of the staff guidelines for culturally appropriate conduct, where women should under no circumstances have physical contact with men.

However, this is one of the many times my cultural assumptions are challenged, and a reminder, amid all the supposed differences, of our shared humanity."



Read more of Alison's blog: [blogs.msf.org/bloggers/alison-fogg](https://blogs.msf.org/bloggers/alison-fogg)

	1 <sup>st</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>	29 <sup>th</sup>
		Communion	Offering	Communion	
Setting Up	Gareth	Andrew	Richard	Rob	
IT	Rob	Dan	Dan	Rob	Rob
PA		Adrian Rob	Rhys	Huw	Adrian Rob
Music Group	Natasha	Adam	John	John	Natasha
Celebration Leader	Sue	Liz	Rob	Sarah and Jean	TBC
Speaker	Sue	Andrew	Gareth	Nativity	TBC
Prayer Team	Marilyn, Liz	Alan, Sue	Frank, Val	All team	All Team
Tea	Jennie, Bill	Dorothy, Lucy, Angela	Andrew, Liz, Joe	Campbell Glenys, Natasha	TBC
Mega Quest	<b>No Junior Church</b>	Jean, Lesley, Sarah	Jean, Lesley, Sarah	<b>No Junior Church</b>	<b>No Junior Church</b>
EAT		Kev/Sally	Kev/Sally		

If you have any queries please call  
Gareth Jones – ChristChurch Senior Church Leader on 01978 354805

[www.christchurchwrexham.org.uk](http://www.christchurchwrexham.org.uk)  
[admin@christchurchwrexham.org.uk](mailto:admin@christchurchwrexham.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/christchurchwrexham](https://www.facebook.com/christchurchwrexham)

We meet at the following location

Acton Community resource Centre  
Overton Way  
Acton  
Wrexham LL12 7LB

Our postal address is

ChristChurch C/o 7 Heol Penally, Little Acton, Wrexham LL12 8JT

