

CONNECT

Christmas 2016



SOUTHGATE CHURCH

Caie Walk, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2PJ Tel: 01284 703705

E:office@southgatechurch.org.uk www.southgatechurch.org.uk

Twitter@SOUTHGATECHURCH (please use a Zero instead of the letter O)

Leadership Team

Minister

Revd Peter Gibson Tel: 01284 725577
peter.gibson@southgatechurch.org.uk

Helen Moore:

helen.moore@southgatechurch.org.uk

Liz Huddlestone:

liz.huddlestone@southgatechurch.org.uk

Family & Community Worker

Alison Burgess Tel: 07940 247038
alison.burgess@southgatechurch.org.uk

Administrator

Jackie Tooley Tel: 01284 703705
office@southgatechurch.org.uk

Treasurer

Peter Maddock Tel: 01284 760085
peter.maddock@southgatechurch.org.uk

Connect Editorial Team

Fay Jones & Linda Lancaster
faycjones@tesco.net
lindalaurel65@gmail.com

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday	9.45am	Prayer Meeting
	10.30am	Family Worship (Creche available)
		Children's Sunday Club
	6.30pm	Evening service (1 st Sunday)
Monday	10.00am	Coffee Stop
	7.00pm	Liquid (13-16s)
Wednesday	9.00am	SPOTS (Parents & Toddlers)
	3.15pm	Wednesday Gang (Primary School children)
	7.30pm	Prayer House (alternating with House Groups)
Thursday	9.15am	Holy Communion Service
	2.30pm	Friendship Club (over 55's 1 st & 3 rd Thursdays)
	6.30pm	Youth Club (Middle School children)
	7.45pm	Thursday Club (Ladies Group 2 nd Thursday)

Children's mid-week groups run during term time only. See weekly notice sheet for details of all services and activities.

Registered Charity No: 115737

CONNECT

The Magazine of
A Message from our Pastor.



In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favoured woman! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name him Jesus. Luke 1:26ff

I am finding that over time I love words, more and more, especially as I dig into the original Bible languages.

Allow me to share a few insights with you. The first word is Favoured. Clearly we are before the birth of Jesus; therefore well before Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. But, there is a sense, I believe, that what Gabriel said to Mary, God wants to say to all of us now.

This is God has been showering you with grace, (*Mary, or add your own name*). He has been for ages, it is happening right now and it will continue to happen. Because it is God's grace, there's nothing you have done to earn it, or merit it. It is a free gift from God. This grace from God, (*Mary, or insert your own name*) is something you can choose to receive or reject. You may not know the full outcome of receiving it, but it's from God so you can trust him. This is God's word for you. You are favoured!

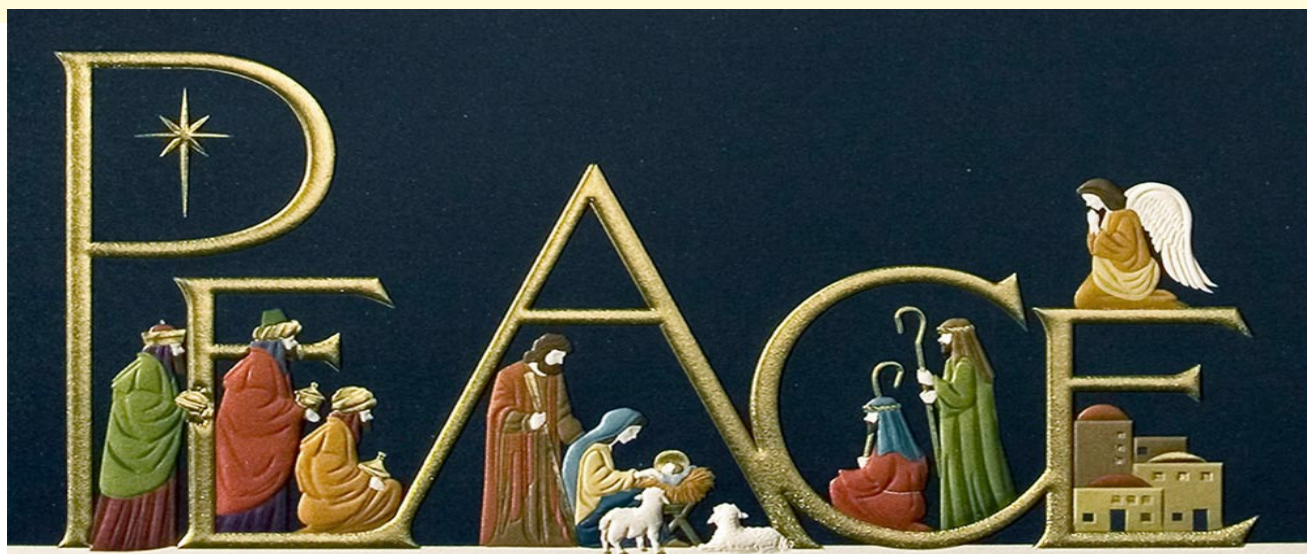
Secondly is the word Bless - we say that when someone sneezes, or as many do these days on seeing a little baby - 'O bless'. In the bible language this word means 'the Kingdom of God is coming through you'. We can see how this applies to Mary and the birth of Jesus, but as the word keeps on being used in the Bible, it refers to our Christian witness as a church family and as individuals.

Just by being you, something of God's kingdom is being released and experienced by those around you.

So as we hurtle into Advent and Christmas, remember, God's grace has, is and will be showered on you. Receive it, and so by living for Jesus every day, something of the wonder of his kingdom will be leaking out, through us, who believe.

May this time of Advent and Christmas be full of God's favour and blessing

Your friend and pastor, Peter



To make you smile

Signs found outside churches:

Church carpark sign...FOR MEMBERS ONLY. Trespassers will be baptised!!

No God - No Peace. Know God - Know Peace.

Free Trip to heaven. Details Inside!

Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!

When the restaurant next to a church put out a big sign with red letters that said,

'Open Sundays', the church reciprocated with its own message:

'We are open on Sundays, too.'

Come in and pray today.

Beat the Christmas rush!

NEWS FROM OUR FAMILY & COMMUNITY WORKER

We're excited about celebrating Christmas with our youth and children's groups this year. We've planned lots of ways to spread Christmas cheer and the joy of Jesus' birth and we hope you'll join in with us too.

On 4th December at 10.30am we'll be meeting for our Together on Sunday service where we'll be bringing gifts of toys for the Ormiston Trust to distribute to children whose dad's are in Highpoint Prison. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring some joy to these children's lives. Thank you in advance for your wonderful generosity.

The SCP are holding a Family Disco on Saturday 10th December from 7-10pm. Get your tickets from Jackie in the office and join in the fun!

The Christingle is a lovely interactive service for children to take part in. Ours is on Sunday 11th December at 4pm. Think about who you might be able to invite and bring them along for a really special afternoon.

And just before the big day, come and bring your little ones to our Christmas Eve Crib Service. It all starts at 4pm and we'll be sharing the magic of the Nativity and starting the countdown to Christmas Day.

If you're looking for a special gift for a young child this Christmas, I'd thoroughly recommend a wonderful book called The Christmas Promise. It's a captivating retelling of the Christmas story showing how God kept His promise to send a new King, with superb illustrations by Catalina Echeverri. It is biblically faithful and tremendously engaging. I absolutely love it and at £6.99 it's worth every penny.

And before you know it, Christmas will be over and we'll be celebrating a new year together! Do join us for our New Year's Day Together on Sunday service which is going to be held in the afternoon at 4pm and will be followed by a bring and share tea. What a great way to start the new year!

Alison Burgess



A REAL CHRISTMAS

There are a relatively small number of cards available depicting the true Christmas story. This is borne out by a 2011 survey by the Daily Mail of 6,576 cards in major supermarkets in seven locations in England and Wales which found only 36 featured scenes such as Jesus in a manger or angels. Traditional nativity scenes appear on less than 0.5% of all cards available. Knowledge of the Christmas story is fading too. When a group of 5-7 year olds was surveyed recently it was found that 36% didn't know whose birthday was celebrated at Christmas and 72% didn't know Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Among adults it was found that less than 12% know the full nativity story and 51% said that the birth of Jesus is irrelevant to their Christmas. We must conclude that unless Christians actively share the Christmas story, Christ will continue to be written out of Christmas.

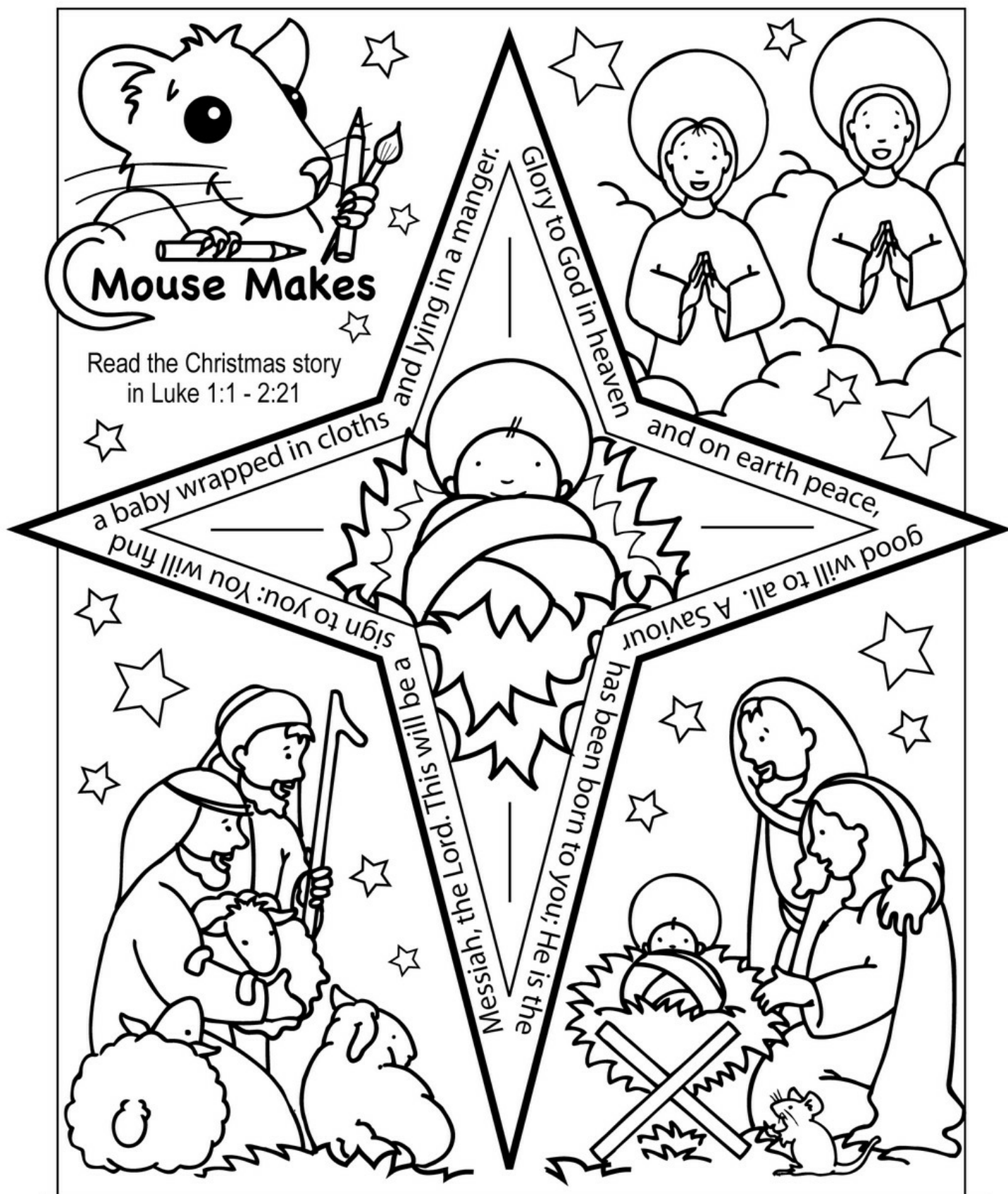
Advent is the season leading up to Christmas day. It's an exciting time for children as they wait for the big day when they will celebrate Christmas and open their presents. For Christians it is a time of preparation, and waiting too - recalling the events of the first Christmas 2000 years ago. Advent calendars were popular in Germany in the early 1800's and soon spread across Europe. The idea is simple - there is a window to open for each day of advent. It means that one day at a time you can share the journey to Christmas Day.

I looked on the John Lewis website – they have 46 Advent calendars on sale, including Star Wars and Lego - but not one depicting the nativity story. If Christ is being written out of Christmas – let's put him back by sharing the Christmas story so it's heard and loved. At Southgate, we have done one small thing to promote this by selling *The Real Advent Calendar* and giving it as a gift to all of the children who are in any way part of our church community. Thank you to everyone who has sponsored one or more. We are delighted to let more children know about the real Christmas story. And by the way, the chocolates are delicious too!

Bob Jones



Children's Corner



Mouse Makes

Read the Christmas story
in Luke 1:1 - 2:21

★ Eastern star, white and bright,
★ In the darkness a shining light,
★ Points to Jesus, God's precious Son,
★ Our Lord and King, our Saviour has come!

★ Shepherds hear the Angels sing;
★ "Glory to the heavenly King,
★ Peace on earth, good will to all."
★ Come to Jesus the Saviour of all.



Malawi -Faith in Action

May I thank all of you who were able to stay and be part of our A.G.M. a few Sundays ago.

It always helps to see and understand what our God is doing in Africa and one of the ways we can show you, is through our Newssheet and the A G M . The Newssheet, which I distribute to the many of you who are interested, is one of the best information documents around , but you might expect me to say so!! It gives as much up to date information to hand and details the way in which we spend the gifting you and other churches provide.

Thank you to those who commented on the display boards. These are the work of Sally Jeffree who is so dedicated to the work of Faith in Action. If a Newssheet would be helpful to you please let me know.

May I ask please for prayer for the Harvest in Malawi for next February/March. The drought of this last year took us completely by surprise and many of the people suffered and some died. Seed has been provided and we await the coming of the rains. I will try to remember to update you later.

Thank you,

Frank Rumball

Again Jesus said,
‘Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me,
I am sending you’
John 20:21

SOUTHGATE CHURCH Financial page

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2016

Expenditure	£
Ministry	19,303
Family & Community Worker	12,915
Premises	7,240
Administration	7,024
Depreciation	3,195
Tithes	3,150
Fellowship Activities	2,466
Church Groups	1,742
Restricted Gifts	706
Total	57,742

Income

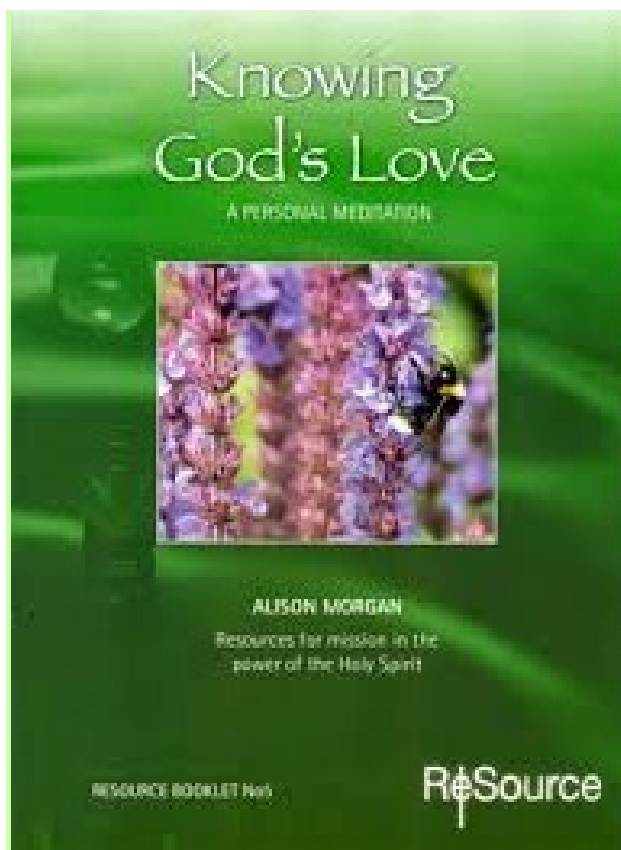
Regular Giving	30,733
Gift Aid Recovered	8,750
Other Collections	4,987
Church Groups	1,651
Fellowship Activities	1,580
Restricted Gifts	1,231
Other	401
Total	49,333

Net Expenditure - deficit **8,409**

The Church spent £8,409 more than it received in the first seven months of the financial year. It is expected that by the end of the financial year (31 March 2017) this will be around £28,000 as there is always more expenditure in the second half of the financial year.

At 31st October the church had around £53,500 in cash and investments so at the this rate of expenditure we can keep the church running at its current level until around December 2018 at which point the church will run out of money.

Church Finance Team – Peter Maddock, Terry Ball, Liz and Bob and Bob Jones



Quote from Alison Morgan's Resource booklet

"Knowing God's Love"

"Even your dearest friend or loved one cannot offer you the love that is flawless, limitless, unmarred, and available round the clock every day of your life. God's love is the only perfect love" Ruth Myers

I think this quote really encompasses in everyday English what God's love really means & we are all are desperate to know that we are loved by other people & often forget & ignore God's love for us.

I was intrigued to find out who Ruth Myers was so I googled her on:<http://www.navigators.org>, & discovered that she was a missionary for the Navigators which gave Liz & I valuable discipleship classes when we first became Christians in North America.

Liz Huddleston

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.



Isaiah 9:6

Cycling Lands' End to John O'Groats for Mission Aviation Fellowship MAF)

In November 2015 MAF, a charity that I have supported since I was a teenager, emailed their supporters to find 10 volunteers to ride from Lands' End to John O'Groats (LEJOG). After much prayer and discussion and much to my surprise, I was offered a place to do the sponsored cycle ride and raise money for MAF.



Team MAF before take-off!

MAF UK is an international Christian aviation organisation reaching places of deepest human need. With over 135 aircraft, MAF support the work of more than 1,000 aid and development organisations, missions and churches, enabling staff and supplies to arrive safely and quickly. Across the world in around 25 developing countries, we're crossing difficult and dangerous terrain to reach unreachable people with physical and spiritual care. MAF is Flying for Life.

Preparing to ride 9 consecutive days of 110 miles per day takes preparation.

Between the end of November 2015 and the end of August 2016, I managed to squeeze in **102 rides** covering **2135 miles** and spending **190 hours** in the saddle! – but I was not ready for the hills that Cornwall and Devon would put in my way – not so much the steepness or the length but the frequency of the hills would wear away my preparation – like waves on rock!

By day three of LEJOG every little hill was like a mountain to my leg muscles engaged in the act of hill climbing!

MAF's 10 riders were subsumed into the mass of 680 riders undertaking LEJOG for various charities or just as a personal challenge under the organisation of Deloitte Ride Across Britain 2016 (who did a brilliant job).

Every MAF rider brought some quality that was unique and as we talked to the other riders about who we were riding for, why we were doing it and who we were as people, you could see God making contact with people throughout the ride – either encouraging them in their faith or reminding them of past experiences of God or just challenging their preconceived ideas about what Christians are or do. All of the people on the ride were amazing people, from all walks of life and having a range of cycling experiences and abilities– most seeking to help others by doing the ride and supporting many different charities. As we all shared the challenges, there was encouragement and support from those around you as you worked through the miles overcoming whatever obstacles were in your way. LEJOG cycling 100 miles per day is hard work but the beauty and variety of the countryside as you cross the country is amazing.

It was hard to believe that after **6 days** we were just outside Glasgow and had travelled under our own power **626 miles**, ascended **38700 ft** and spent **54 hours** in the saddle. This however was to be the end of my ride - due to ill health my transport back home was unable to come and get me from JOG so I needed to find an alternative way back – which was the train from Glasgow! Any further north and public transport with a bike becomes far more challenging.

Thank you to everyone that supported MAF by sponsoring me – you raised over £3500 (at this point money is still coming in so I think it will exceed £4000) – which is a brilliant effort and will keep an aircraft flying and supplying the needs of villagers for about four months. Between the group of MAF riders we hope to raise about £30000 which will keep a plane flying for three years.

If you would still like to donate you can either go to:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ShawnRichardson>

or go to the MAF website:

<https://www.maf-uk.org/>

Shawn Richardson

Christmas all wrapped up!

"And this will be a sign to you; you will find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:2

Do you ever dread wrapping all those Christmas presents? The large roll of fragile paper that slides around on the table, the lumpy gifts that defy wrapping, the tape that sticks to your fingers... what is so important about wrapping presents, anyway? Why not just hand them over?

Well did you ever consider that the very first Christmas present EVER was wrapped up – in swaddling cloths? In biblical times, after a birth, the umbilical cord would be cut, the baby would be washed, rubbed with salt and oil, and then carefully wrapped in swaddling cloths. The swaddling is described as a cloth or blanket tied together like bandages. This process was carried out with great love and care, and was thought to have health-giving benefits.

On the other hand, to ignore the swaddling process was seen as abandonment and rejection. "And as for thy nativity, on the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to soothe thee. Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. (Ezekiel 16:4 KJ21)

So why wrap your presents? Because just as the baby Jesus was swaddled as a sign of great love and care, wrapping our gifts is a sign of our own effort, love and care towards those whom we love. So be patient with the wrapping paper, and Happy Christmas!

This is adapted from an article by Norma Murrain

We wish you all a truly Blessed Christmas and New Year

OUR CONCERT AT THE APEX

WITH LOU FELLINGHAM

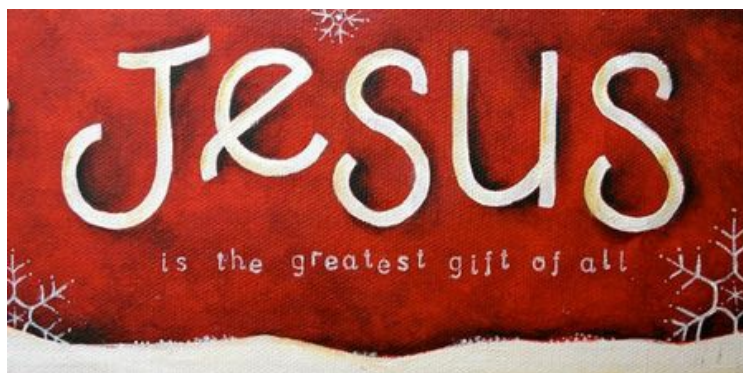
Lou and Nathan Fellingham write:

"Thank you all at Southgate Church for your hard work in making the event at The Apex such a success. We so loved being with you all - and playing at the venue. What a great place! We do of course hope that people enjoyed it and trust that God was working in the lives of those there! We enjoyed talking to people afterwards and hearing positive feedback. We are so glad that you were able raise some money too for Chaplain in the Workplace. And yes, let's hope we can work together again in the future."

Well over 400 people came and participated in a very special evening of praise and worship. We are glad to report that over £2500 was raised for Chaplain in the Workplace through ticket sales and generous donations on the night. Thank you to all who helped in any way to make the event such a memorable experience.

Bob and Joel

*Let us sing out His love
Let us sing out His grace
Let us sing of His mercy
That's poured out on us.*



No Room? On the Contrary

All over the world, doors are being slammed shut this Christmas. The closure of the Calais Jungle in the Autumn, which dispersed thousands of asylum seekers and would-be immigrants, brought into sharp focus the story of Joseph and the pregnant teenager Mary, for whom there was no room in the Bethlehem Inn. Vast numbers of Christians forced to flee from their ancient homelands in Syria and Iraq today mirror the Holy Family's escape into Egypt. Every time yet another infant dies violently, it will be a reminder of the first century massacre of babies in the Bethlehem region.

This year one carol will be sung with particular poignancy. It retells the message of angels, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests" and continues:

Yet with the woes of sin and strife, The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled, Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not. The love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, you men of strife, And hear the angels sing.

The angels' goodwill message will persist despite our clamour, for it proclaims God's all-embracing and eternal welcome. Heaven's doors are ever-open: it is home for everyone. The final biblical vision is of an all-encompassing city: "On no day will its gates ever be shut... the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it."

Jesus, for whom there had been no room at the inn, taught that God's kingdom is home for every race: "I say to you that many will come from the East and the West, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He reassured those anxious about the future: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms..."

No room? Don't you believe it!

Ven John Barton

Dates for your diary

Together on Sunday Toy Service

December 4th 10 30 am

Christingle Service

December 11th

Christmas Tea for our 'Seniors'

December 10th 4-6pm

Christingle Service

December 11th at 4pm

Carol Service Sunday December 18th

At 4pm followed by a Bring and Share Tea

Christmas Eve

Crib service at 4pm and Midnight Communion service at 11. 30pm

Christmas Day Family service at 10am

Sunday 1st January 2017

Together on Sunday Service at 4 pm (no morning service) followed by a Bring and Share Tea

Friday January 20th 2017

Men's Group Brewery Tour and meal afterwards

Saturday February 18th

Valentine's Ball



Communications - Guidance for articles For Connect

If possible please include items by email between 250 - 400 words **or less**. We would particularly welcome short, personal 'Good News' stories which may help others in their faith journey.

Southgate Church Text for 2016

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you/ As the Father has sent me,
I am sending you". John 20:21

THE WAY I SEE IT: The Most Beautiful Story

Earlier this year a well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. In the course of an enlightening chat he was asked how he spent Christmas, and he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. 'But you're an atheist', his interviewer protested. 'Yes', he replied, 'but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told'.

That 'beautiful story' tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.

That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children's Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.

During 2016 we have all become familiar with probably the best-known statue in the world, Christ the Redeemer, towering over the Olympic city of Rio, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough. His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, 'the most beautiful story ever told'.

Enjoy it again this Christmas.

David Winter

Sizewell Weekend

Church weekend at Sizewell hall 30th June - 2nd July 2017

Next year sees our bi-annual weekend away at Sizewell Hall, a glorious hall only yards from the beach. This is a great opportunity to spend some quality time together as we learn, share meals and have fun together. Nothing on the weekend is compulsory so you can stay or go as you wish.

Andrew Butress has agreed to come and do the teaching and I'm sure that what he has to bring to us will be encouraging and challenging wherever we stand in the Christian life. If you haven't been before please do consider it and, if you have been before, please come again.

The forms will be available in the new year and, as before, we will not be charging a set fee, but we do hope that you will make a donation to cover the costs. This way, we can claim gift aid if you are a tax payer. We suggest the amounts of £65 for each adult, £40.00 for young people (11-17) and £30 for children (3-10). Under 3s go free. There will be a few chores to do during the weekend for those who are able.

Put the dates in your diary now and be ready to sign up in the new year.

Further details from Roger and Doreen Whomes

Calling all men to the Sizewell Men's Weekend

The annual Sizewell Men's weekend takes place next year on 17th -19 March. If you have never been it really is a great time of fun, good food, good company, good teaching and all in a beautiful hall yards away from the beach. This year's speaker is Bob Telford a counties evangelist from Warwick and is regularly engaged as a speaker at sports clubs and men's church events..

There is plenty of free time and nothing is compulsory, not even the meals! If you are interested please take a booking form from the back of the church and if you want more information don't hesitate to speak to me or Martin Tooley; we're going. We would love you to come and give it a try.

Oh yes, there is a cost of £68.00 and one or two chores to do during the weekend

Roger Whomes

Southgate Community Partnership

A black and white silhouette of a man in a tuxedo and a woman in a formal dress dancing. The man is on the right, holding the woman on the left. The woman is wearing a large, ornate necklace. The background is black, and the couple is white. The text is in various fonts and colors, including red and black.

Valentines Ball

Black Tie
Bar
Raffle

Tickets £35
*to include a Three Course Dinner and Wine.
Glass of Bubbly on arrival and dancing to the Marrakesh Swing Band*

«New Date»
**Saturday 18th
February
7pm - Midnight**
at Southgate
Community Centre

All Proceeds to:
*West Suffolk Hospital
My WISH Charity -
Love Your Noses Campaign
&
The Mayors designated
Charities.*

Tickets available from the Community Centre
open weekdays except Wednesdays from Jackie 01284 703705 &
Andy Abbott 07508409043