

Connecting @ Christmas



Sunday 15th December 2024

Victoria Baptist Church News

**THIS IS HOW GOD SHOWED HIS LOVE
AMONG US:**

HE SENT HIS ONE AND ONLY

Son



1 JOHN 4:9

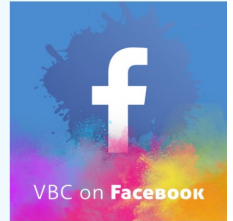
Live in CHURCH



VICTORIA BAPTIST CHURCH
to see Jesus Christ honoured in Eastbourne and beyond

HOME JESUS ABOUT SUNDAYS FAMILIES CHURCH LIFE CONTACT US

**Live and online
WITH
CHRIS SHORT**



SENDING

Connecting@Christmas – 1John 4:9-17

***“This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.”
(1John 4:9)***

Christmas is getting closer and our WiFi tree is getting nearer to the moment when we have a full signal. This morning we’re lighting our third bar entitled ‘sending’.

Sending is a key Christian idea. At the end of John’s Gospel, after the resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). Just as He was sent into the world, so also are we.

In his first letter, the apostle John reflects on the reason God sent Jesus into the world. He shows us three things that Jesus was sent into the world to achieve, God’s motive in sending Him and the response He seeks. The more we understand it, the more we can say with Paul, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.” (2Cor. 9:15). I hope you’ll be able to join us.



Next Week (22ND Dec)

Dan Fairhead will be speaking at the 10am service on the last of the Advent *Connecting@Christmas* series, focusing on Connecting.

Then, at 6.30pm, we have our Carols by Candlelight service, followed by a time of fellowship and a mince pie or two.



We would very much appreciate it if you could supply some mince pies for this - and indeed for our **Christingle** service on Christmas Eve at 4pm.

STAFF/OFFICE MATTERS

Staff movements for the coming week are as follows

Chris	off Tues		
Colin	off Mon	Phil	in Tues am, Wed, Thurs pm
Kevin	off Fri & Sat	Simon	off Tues
Tim	in Wed & Fri mornings	Julie	in Thurs
Nadine	annual leave	Lucy	in Wed am, Thurs, Fri am
Sandra	off Thurs	Jez	in Wed & Fri

Senior Minister

Chris Short

PA to Senior Minister

Sandra Taylor

Family Ministries

Simon Grimes - Children

Church Administrator

Colin McMahon

Caretaker

Kevin Virgo

CAP Debt Centre Manager

Phil Papps

CAP Debt Coach

Nadine Crawford-Piper

Treasurer

Mark Evason

Finance Assistant

Julie Hanks

Ministry Assistants

Tim Nunn (Discipleship)

Lucy Craggs (Women)

Life Group Coordinator and interim Youth Leader

Jez Taylor

Staff contact details:

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VBC Bank Details

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- Sun 15 9.30am Prayer Meeting in Chris' Office
 10.00am Live @ 10 with Chris Short
 6.30pm Prayer Meeting
 7.00pm Xcav8!
- Mon 16 6.00pm Girls' Brigade (see below)
- Tues 17
- Wed 18 7.00am Prayer Meeting
 8.30am Community Fridge
 10.00am Vicky Bees
- Thu 19 7.30am Prayer Meeting (men only)
 10.15am Men's Fellowship - next meeting 16th Jan
 2.30pm Women's Fellowship - next meeting 9th Jan
 7.30pm Ukraine Prayer Meeting
- Fri 20 10.00am Outreach Prayer Meeting
- Sat 21
- Sun 22 9.30am Prayer Meeting in Chris' Office
 10.00am Live @ 10 with Dan Fairhead
 6.30pm Carols by Candlelight

GIRLS BRIGADE



This coming Monday (16th) is the Girls' Brigade Awards Evening / Christmas Party. This is the last session before the Christmas holiday, with our next meeting being on Monday 6th January.

Preaching Engagements *Please remember in prayer*

- Tom Duncanson Dec 15 Shoreham Baptist Church 10.30am
 Francis Bates Dec 15 Polegate FC, 10.30am



Trial Sunday Evening Service

We will be having three trial, 6pm, Sunday Evening Services on the second Sunday of each month from January 2025 – 12th January, 9th February and 9th March.

The idea of having a Sunday evening service at VBC is not a new one: they have taken place in the past and the idea of starting them again has been talked about for the last few years. The issue of actually starting one has come down to, 'Is this God's timing?' These thoughts have also been influenced by the Church Holy Spirit Day on 6th April 2024 and the desire to create an environment where there is more opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to work freely.

The style of the service has been influenced by a group in their twenties and we hope to see young adults enjoying the evening service followed by hotdogs and drinks. The service is open to all ages.



Thank you so much to all who supported Flow Café last Saturday. We had a great morning and raised just over £370 for SeeKenya.

Our next café is on 11th January 2025.

News Sheet

Next week's (22nd) edition will be the last one of the year and there will be a two-week break in production! The first one of the new year is scheduled for Sun Jan 12th with all material for this edition being required by Wed 8th Jan. Please give some thought to this and submit any urgent material for early January by Wed 18th Dec for inclusion in next week's news sheet.



Creative Writing



This group meets every month, during Flow Café. Last week, when they met, they were encouraged to write a piece which reflected the following day's service, focusing on "No Room at the Inn". The next pages (6-9) are the contributions made by 3 members of the group. Do read them, they are quite inspirational.

No Room at the inn

The Cotswold hills rise gently from Oxford in the east to a line running between Bath and Stroud in the west where a dramatic ridge drops suddenly to the Severn Vale. An ancient route follows the top of the ridge and in the fourteenth century a Posting House was built to accommodate travellers and their horses. Much altered and extended in the 18th century, it is now the Cross Hands pub and hotel, still hard on the highway, the A46, and completely isolated. We lived not far away during the seventies and occasionally had meals there with friends so know it well.

One day, In December 1981, a sudden unexpected storm blew across the exposed ridge, rapidly becoming a snowy blizzard. The Cross Hands became crowded and business was brisk. Some became stranded in their cars nearby and sought refuge, abandoning their cars on the road causing more problems. The owners did what they could to provide shelter for all, as hundreds were stuck and riding out the blizzard. Pressing his way to the bar, a tall, swarthy but smartly dressed figure asked to speak to the manager.



“That’ll be me then mate, but as you can see I’m a touch busy”

Leaning across the bar the stranger, with no hint of the local Gloucestershire burr, said very quietly but with authority, “I have to inform you that her majesty the Queen is outside. Could you accommodate her too?” The Queen had been visiting Princess Anne at Gatcombe Park near Nailsworth and was travelling back to Windsor.

Naturally, the answer was in the affirmative but a ‘fair old tizz’ developed back of house. A plan was hatched with the royal party, respecting their wish to keep the Queen’s presence a secret. At the rear of the hotel is a cobbled courtyard where horses used to be attended to and converted stables. Room 15 was available at first floor and could be accessed directly from the courtyard by an outside stair. Queen Elizabeth was 55, plucky and up for the adventure! Her sense of humour would have helped.

The little group of burly security men and her driver guided her, a diminutive figure, through the snow around to the rear of the Hotel, the Queen in a heavy green greatcoat with a large hood concealing her identity and leaning into the wind, across the courtyard and up the staircase, hastily brushed clear of snow, and into the warmth of room number 15.

There she was given a cup of tea and later a meal. They stayed for seven hours and the staff maintained secrecy as the crowd downstairs was totally unaware! ...

A snowplough was commandeered to clear the highway for a few miles to the M4 junction at Tormarton and the Royal party departed just before midnight.

It was reported that, in the weeks following, business at the Cross Hands was exceptionally brisk after the story was released by Buckingham Palace. How strikingly different from the experience of Mary and Joseph and their precious little baby, relegated to a stable but heralded by a blinding light in the sky and a heavenly choir of angels proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to mankind."

Eric Pavey

Mothers,

some count the sleeps
to Christmas
she counted her contractions

we moan about the price of stamps
on our Round-Robin tales
she weighed the cost
submitted all
conversing with an angel

we forge through supermarket aisles
stuff piled in trolleys
with wayward wheels
she journeyed with Joseph
some ninety miles

we plan, we wrap, we decorate
glitter and sparkle for the big event
for her, there simply was no place
the humble, obedient servant

what a hassle, we say
what an offering she gave
for us, that's it, we've done our part
she pondered these things
in her heart



No Room at the Inn

It was the evening of December 24th, one of those grey winter days where the rain had been on and off all day and had now settled into a constant drizzle. The stranger entered the seaside town and walked towards the seafront. He was cold and shivery and walked quickly, maybe in an effort to get warm.

He saw the large, imposing hotels and walked towards them. Looking through the window of one such hotel, he saw the huge Christmas tree covered in lights, the log fire mirrored in the shiny baubles, the streamers and the giant decorations hanging from the ceiling. People were dressed in fine clothes and were balancing drinks. Smartly dressed waiters carried silver trays which held all kinds of food. Music was playing, and some sang along with the music, while others danced. He knew that he didn't have enough money to stay in such an impressive hotel, so with hunched shoulders he continued to walk along the seafront.



A large car pulled up at the next hotel, where a couple alighted. Immediately, a man dressed in uniform rushed to them, holding a large umbrella. He held it over their heads and guided them into the brightly lit entrance. The stranger walked behind them. As he got to the door, the man with the umbrella pointed it at him and told him "to be on his way." The stranger turned sadly and walked away. He followed the road for quite some distance until he came to a modest building. He could see the Christmas tree in the window and a sign that said 'Vacancies'. He looked at the small amount of money in his pocket and rang the door bell. A middle aged man answered the door and asked gruffly what he wanted. The stranger said he needed a bed for the night. The man said "No vacancies, mate!"

The stranger looked confused and pointed to the sign, but the door was already being closed. He knocked on the door of the next property, and although he could hear voices and loud music, no one answered. He went to door after door, but either no one answered or the door was closed in his face. Eventually, tired, wet, hungry and cold he realised he wasn't going to find anywhere to stay.

He saw a seaside shelter and went inside. It was damp and there was a terrible smell, but what choice did he have? Curling up into a ball, he tried to sleep. His clothes were so wet and his trousers clung to his leaden legs.. He tried to get comfortable but it was an impossibility. Eventually, exhaustion took over and he must have slept for sometime because when he opened his eyes, the sun was rising and the sky danced with shades of yellow and orange and red. ...

He stretched his cramped limbs and reached up as high as he could, in thankfulness that a new day was dawning. His clothes were dirty and crumpled, hair stuck to his head and a new growth of whiskers had appeared on his chin. He was glad he couldn't see himself. He tried running on the spot to loosen his limbs and warm himself, but it just made him feel thirsty, which reminded him that he hadn't eaten or drunk anything for over 24 hours. Sitting down on a nearby bench, he read the inscription. It seemed Molly Jones had loved this spot, and her family had loved her. Above him, the seagulls circled, their wings white against the pale blue of the sky. Lost in thought, he heard the sound of childish voices. There were two small children on scooters, their feet pushing at the ground as they rode closer to him. He could feel their excitement as they laughed and shouted to each other. Some way behind them was a group of adults, all dressed in warm coats, wearing hats and scarves and gloves and carrying steaming cups of tea or coffee. They chatted to each other as they strode determinedly along the promenade. When the children drew level with the stranger, one of them stopped to show him her scooter and to tell him proudly that Father Christmas had brought it. The stranger reached out to touch it, but just then a woman rushed up and took the child's hand and led her away, telling her not to speak to strangers.



He was left alone with his thoughts again as the white capped waves methodically hit the shore. A male voice called out to him: "Hello mate, are you OK."

There stood a man wearing a dirty coat, and trousers held up with string. His shoes looked too big and slipped on and off his feet. His face was covered in whiskers and he had a woolly hat pulled down over his ears. He called out again, "Are you alright mate?" then ambled over and sat down on the bench. The stranger explained that he had slept in the seaside shelter and was cold and tired and hungry.

"Well that's easily fixed" said his new companion, and with that he told the stranger to follow him. They left the promenade and walked through narrow streets, turning right and left and left and right, until they came to a large building. The door was open and there was a Christmas tree with brightly coloured gifts hanging from it. Singing could be heard and then a large man with a big smile came to the door. "Merry Christmas Jim" he called to the stranger's companion. "Come on in, some have already arrived. There are hot drinks and clean clothes and dinner will be served later." Just as he was turning to go back in, he noticed the stranger who was holding back. "Welcome stranger," he said. "You look like you could do with a good meal, please join us. What's your name?" The stranger replied: "My friends call me Jesus." ***'And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'*** Matt. 25:40-45



OFFERINGS

You will be aware that we don't have offerings during services but have offering boxes at the back of the church. However, we are going to make an exception to this over Christmas by having a retiring offering at our Carols by Candlelight service (6.30pm, Sunday week, 22nd) and an offering during the

service on Christmas Day. Cash can be placed in the plates/bags available, or you may prefer to use a debit/credit card to make your gift. We will have card machines available for this. Alternatively, you may pay directly via the bank with a reference of Lebedyn.

All proceeds from these offerings will be donated to **Hope Lebedyn** to contribute to the amazing work our brothers and sisters have undertaken in Ukraine since the Russian invasion, nearly 3 years ago. We never cease to be amazed and are truly humbled by the work they are doing and the depth of their faith in the most trying of circumstances. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



The VBC Staff Team wish you all many blessings this Christmas and a Christ-filled new year. Thank you all for your support in so many different ways!



From all at Women's Fellowship: A Happy Christmas and blessings for 2025

Warmest Christmas Greetings to our Victoria Church Family - from Richard and Margaret Brown
"JESUS, the Light of the World"





Sam & Miriam wish everyone a Happy Christmas & best wishes for the New Year



Happy Christmas Church Family. May the Lord bless each one as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless. Henry, Joyce and Peter Kirkman



We wish all our friends at Victoria Baptist Church a very happy and peaceful Christmas. May the Lord bless you all throughout 2025. Lawrence and Doreen



Festive **F**elicitations to **F**riends at **F**ictoria
from Ian Doling
"Immanuel God with us"





*To all who remember me.
My love and prayers,
Anne Lines (former member)*



*Dear friends, wishing you all a joyful Christmas and a Jesus-filled
New Year. With our love Andrew and Mandy*

*"To all friends at Victoria Baptist
Blessings for a Christmas and New Year filled with Peace
and Joy in Jesus" - with love, Nancy*



*Christmas Greetings to all
my church family
at VBC
With love to you all - Thelma*



**To all the Victoria Baptist community, we send good
wishes to you all for Christmas and the new year.
Thank you for the prayers and also the messages
and cards we have received. God's blessings.
John & Heather Backholer**

PRAYER DIARY 16TH - 22ND Dec

'Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.' Psalm 82:3-4 Christmas is a time that exposes the difference between those who have, and those who have not. This week our prayers are focused around the ministry of Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

Monday

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the hope brought by the arrival of Jesus on Earth. We lift up those in the midst of financial crisis this Christmas season, praying that your light would pierce through the darkness of these situations. May You grant hope to the hopeless. We also pray that we, Your Church, would extend our hands in generosity and compassion to those struggling under the pressure of debt and poverty, and that together we would see a UK where poverty no longer exists.

Tuesday

Jesus, there was 'no room in the inn' (Luke 2:7) when You were born, and during Your life you said that "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head." (Luke 9:58). We know that good and affordable housing is a serious problem for CAP clients in Eastbourne, and housing is a major worry for so many in our town. We pray today for those who are homeless, at risk of eviction, in emergency or temporary accommodation or in a refuge. We pray for those who cannot afford their rent or mortgage payments. We pray for those stuck in unsuitable housing or living with challenging neighbours or being exploited by unscrupulous landlords. As the God of justice and compassion, we ask You to meet the needs of those in Eastbourne who long for a safe and affordable place to lay their heads.

Wednesday

Thank You, Lord, for inspiring John Kirkby to start CAP in 1996 and for blessing this ministry which now has 1,330 churches working together with CAP and has seen 25,000 people become debt free since 2010 - hallelujah! We pray for all those at CAP head office who support the debt centres and other CAP ministries in churches. Thank You for calling VBC to be a part of this frontline work in Your Kingdom and we pray You will draw the right people to the ministries of our church so we can show the love of Jesus in practical ways .

FUEL FOR PRAYER

Thursday

Father we grieve at knowing that half of all people who call CAP's helpline have considered or attempted suicide as a way out of debt. We know that the ongoing strain of money issues deeply affects mental and physical wellbeing. Please have mercy, O God. May Your precious people be protected from self harm and despair; may relief of mind come to all those in need. May we be open to helping those who struggle with their mental health, being willing to listen and support where we can.

Friday

Father, Son and Spirit, as the Trinity is a perfect relationship of love, we pray for all those with broken or painful relationships that have contributed to, or continue to mean financial problems. We pray for those who argue about money, for those who have been left with debts and struggles because a relationship has ended or because of a bereavement, for those who have been exploited by people they should have been able to trust. We pray particularly for children affected by debt in the family or strained relationships due to money worries. Lord, make all things new and restore harmony where there is discord we pray.

Saturday

Lord, we pray against the grip of fear that can diminish hope for those on low incomes, those with deficit budgets, or those facing the financial demands of bringing up a family or living on a pension with no way of increasing future income. We pray against the fear of rising prices, the fear of losing a home or having to choose between heating or eating. We pray against the shame that can be associated with having debts or being poor in a society such as ours. Jesus may Your hope and peace flood our town and the lives of all who come into contact with CAP.

Sunday

Almighty God, we give You thanks and praise for the 30 debt free clients we have seen through the CAP debt centre at VBC in these last 4 years, and for the help, support and encouragement many others have had. We thank You for each client's determination, resilience and hard work. We pray they will be able not only to stay debt free but live in a freedom that has its source in You. God we earnestly pray that You will turn their financial freedom into the full freedom that comes from knowing You as Lord and Saviour. Keep us faithful in prayer and always a place of welcome.

Flower Ministry

The flowers last week were donated by
David & Wendy Dick

Looking ahead to the New Year, we have vacancies for flower donations for both January & February - only 2 dates have been taken thus far so please give some thought as to whether there are any special occasions you would like to commemorate. See Chris McMahon for more details.



It was a lovely surprise to receive a beautiful bouquet of flowers from VBC. They certainly cheer up what is a challenging time, especially at work. Please thank anyone who thought of me, made up the flowers & delivered them. I am very grateful. Sincerely yours, DE