



Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021

**VICTORIA** Baptist Church News



**After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” Matthew 2:1,2**



**This morning's message is brought to us by Chris Short,  
preaching from Matthew's Gospel  
4pm this afternoon - No Service**

## **Freeway – MATTHEW 2:1-12**

### **“Magi from the East came...” (Matt. 2:1)**

In *Confronting Christianity*, Rebecca McLaughlin recounts a story many Christian parents will have sympathy with.

When her daughter was four years old they visited a local playground. An older Chinese woman was also there with her grandson. Her daughter asked the Chinese lady her name and where she came from. And then, in the entirely artless way only four-year olds can manage, she asked, “Do you trust in Jesus?”

The Chinese lady didn't seem to understand the question and so the little girl repeated it. Rebecca McLaughlin cringed and explained that they were Christians and her daughter sometimes liked to ask strangers if they also were Christians.

The Chinese lady said, “Oh, do I trust in Jesus? Yes. I do trust in Jesus! It's the most important thing in the world. I'm so glad you do too!”

McLaughlin reflected, “I had looked at an older Chinese-speaking woman and assumed she was not a Christian. She had looked at a younger, white British woman and assumed the same. We were both wrong.”

This morning we'll begin our Christmas series reminding ourselves that Christianity is the most racially, culturally, ethnically, socio-economically diverse belief system in the world.



### **Please note! Postponed**

This afternoon's interview with Dr. George John has been postponed until the new year. Consequently, there will be NO 4pm service today.

## STAFF/OFFICE MATTERS

Erik and Jack are with SpeakLife this coming week, a week of training; and Colin is taking Wednesday afternoon off as well as his usual Monday. Otherwise, it's the normal days off for everyone - Chris on Tuesday, and Sandra & Simon on Thursday, Julie will be in the office on Thursday and Tim on Wednesday. Please note that Jez takes up his position as Life Group Coordinator in the new year.

**Senior Minister:**

Chris Short

**PA to Senior Minister:**

Sandra Taylor

**Family Ministries:**

Simon Grimes - Children

Erik Cornelisse - Youth

**Church Administrator:**

Colin McMahon

**Caretaker:**

Kevin Virgo

**CAP Debt Centre Manager:**

Helen Diplock

**Treasurer:**

Louise Hughes

**Finance Assistant:**

Julie Hanks

**Pastoral Team Leader:**

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Victoria Baptist Church Trust

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*Sort Code:* 40-52-40

Staff contact details:

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## Mask Wearing

In the light of fluctuating COVID figures locally, the CLT would encourage you to revert to wearing masks on Sundays and at other meetings when moving around the building. It is down to the discretion of individuals as to whether they remove them when seated and for singing. Please continue to sanitize your hands on entry to the building.



Sun 5	9.40am	Pre-Service Prayer Meeting in Chris' Office
	10.00am	Live at VBC and online - Chris Short
	<del>4.00pm</del>	<del>Interview with Dr George John</del> <b>Postponed - NO SERVICE</b>
Mon 6	7.30pm	CLT Meeting
Tues 7	6.45pm	Alpha - "Why and How should I tell others?"
	7.15pm	Soaking in the Spirit (for ladies only)
Wed 8	8.30am	Community Fridge (until 10.30am)
	10.00am	Vicky Bees
	10.30am	Friends, Food & Fellowship - Coffee and Cookies
	3.15pm	Thanksgiving Service - Norman Roberts
	5.15pm	Boys Brigade (ages 4-8)/ 6.15pm (ages 8-18)
Thu 9	7.30am	Prayer Meeting (for men only)
	2.30pm	Women's F'ship with Pete & Karen Martin
Fri 10	9.30am	Alpha Prayer Meeting <b>(NOTE CHANGE OF TIME)</b>
	10.00am	Vicky Bees
	10.30am	Thanksgiving Service - Chris Papps
	5.00pm	Kids Club
	7.00pm	Xpect!
Sat 11	10.00am	Flow Café
Sun 12	9.40am	Pre-Service Prayer Meeting in Chris' Office
	10.00am	All-Age Christmas with Erik and his team.
	4.00pm	Passion for Life with Chris Short

**The Week Ahead**

**AND FURTHER AHEAD ...**

Sun 19	6.30pm	Carols by Candlelight
Fri 24	4.00pm	Christingle
Sat 25	10.00am	Christmas Day service



**Online Services**

Please note that because of the potential involvement of children on the platform, there will be NO live streaming via YouTube at the following services.



Sun 12<sup>th</sup> Family Service at 10am; Sun 19<sup>th</sup> Carols by Candlelight at 6.30pm  
 Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Christingle at 4pm; Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day at 10am

We will be back to normal for the Boxing Day service.

## PRAYER DIARY: 6<sup>TH</sup> - 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Matthew 5

**Monday** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” We continue to pray for those working on the front line in the NHS and as volunteers administering the vaccines. Pray too for those who are isolating, waiting for procedures or who are ill. Pray that tiredness will be lifted for the workers and, as they serve our community, they will be blessed.

**Tuesday** “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden” Pray that the work of our staff team and volunteers here at VBC will be blessed and that the gospel message of hope this advent will ring out from the building and from all our lips.

**Wednesday** “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” As we learn more and more about our impact on the natural world, prayerfully think of how we can live with others in mind. Reflect on what we do that affects the poor of the world, reflect on the polluted, warming planet we are leaving for future generations.

**Thursday** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Pray for our government and the decisions they have to make for our nation. Pray that consideration will be given to those who can't speak for themselves and that relationship and negotiations with other countries will be peaceful and fair.

**Friday** “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Lift to the God of compassion those who have lost loved ones, whether recently or in past years. Pray particularly for Thelma and family as Chris' funeral is held today.

**Saturday** “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Give thanks to God that we have plenty and are able to be generous to others. Give thanks for the gifts given to CAP for Christmas and the donations given for the Community Fridge. Pray for the recipients of the food, that the message goes out that they can share in the season's joy.

**Sunday** “His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them.” Give thanks for this day when we can come together and hear His teaching. Pray that our church family of disciples will have ears to hear the message and joy in their hearts to bring worship to our Saviour. “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Pray for Christian disciples around the world who are gathering in fear of persecution.

**FUEL FOR PRAYER**

A number of people have asked me (*Anna Reid*) about NetworX, who we are and what we do, so here it is, in a nutshell. We work with refugees,

asylum seekers and migrants with no or little recourse to public funds.

This is in response to:

**Leviticus 19:34** *The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.*

**James 2:8** *If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right.*

**Mark 12:31** *Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater ...*

**Deuteronomy 10:18** *He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.*

**Proverbs 31:8** *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

**Micah 6:9** *And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

**Mark 6:37** *He answered, "you give them something to eat."*

We established the charity in 2015 under the umbrella of Churches Together but with a close connection to VBC. The trustees are all at VBC. Tony and Janet Mottram, Pippa Bowley, Lucy Craggs, Bruce Bird [Treasurer], and Jeanette Walter is our secretary.

In 2015 Mr Cameron pledged to bring 20,000 Syrians to the UK. It was 2017 before the first family on the Government programme arrived but in the intervening year we met others who had arrived in Eastbourne under their own steam. Those first three Syrian families are all linked to VBC. They were followed by Anakarina from Venezuela who was baptised recently, and Ala and Sepideh from Iran and many more.

Now in 2021 we have 7 Syrian families and 2 Sudanese [45 people] resettled in the town on the government programme. We have two homes ready for Afghans but sadly no Afghans have yet arrived. These refugee families are well looked after and well supported by Government funds.



Then there are many others who, having arrived under their own steam, need more support and most of our work is with these families .

More information can be found on our website

[www.eastbournenetwork.org](http://www.eastbournenetwork.org)

The 2021 report is there to read as is the 2020 report.

You can phone me or speak to the other trustees, or email me, or write me a letter. I'm in the Church directory.



## CHRISTMAS POST



The VBC Christmas postal service is now up and running, until 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. The post box is in the Welcome Centre and the cards will be collated and ready for distribution in plenty of time for Christmas. Please follow the following steps!

- 1) put all of your cards together with a rubber band - some will be available by the post box - and
- 2) please sort them by alphabetic order of surname.

Envelopes will be available to put cash/cheque in lieu of postage. Money collected will go to the Mission Fund.

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGES

Please start e-mailing your Christmas messages to be published in the news sheets on each of the next two weeks (12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>). Please send a photo too - or let me know if you're happy to use the one we used last year.



## CALLING ALL SHEPHERDS and ANGELS

December 12th is our Christmas All Age service and we would love you to come dressed as either a shepherd or an angel.

Feel free to bring along a sheep too.

(Due to there being children on the stage during this gathering, this service will NOT be streamed or available on YouTube)



## MIRACLES OF JESUS

**“If you are willing!” Grace touches the untouchable!**

**Matthew 8:1–4**

“When He came down from the mountain, great crowds followed Him. And behold, a leper came to Him and knelt before Him saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’” I WILL BE CLEAN!

“Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him saying, ‘I am willing. Be clean!’ Immediately, his leprosy was cleansed.

Jesus then said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.’”

Few conditions were as devastating in ancient Israel as leprosy. Dr. Luke, with his physician’s eyes, describes the man who suddenly breaks into the crowds to kneel in desperation before Jesus as full of leprosy. (Luke 5 : 12)

In our modern world, leprosy is a term reserved for Hansen’s disease, a heart-breaking condition that distorts and deforms by robbing its victims of the sensation of pain. As a result, the afflicted person can unknowingly inflict on himself terrible damage, since he or she lacks the signals that nerves are intended to send, warning of danger.

Let us consider the leper’s approach. There were three elements.

Firstly, he came with CONFIDENCE. He had no doubt that if Jesus willed, he would be cured. No leper would ever come near an orthodox scribe or Rabbi. He knew he would be punished by stoning, but when this man came to Jesus, he had a real confidence in what Jesus would do.

Secondly, the leper came with HUMILITY. He did not demand to be healed.

“If you will, you can cleanse me.” It was as if he said, “I know I don’t matter. Others run away from me, but perhaps I might be considered for your healing!”

Thirdly, the leper came with REVERENCE. The AV says that he worshipped Jesus. The words used – “a person’s feeling and action in the presence of the divine.” He knew that, in the presence of Jesus, he was in the presence of God. So what was the reaction of Jesus?

First and foremost, His reaction was COMPASSION. The Law said Jesus must avoid contact with that man and to keep at least six feet away from him. But Jesus stretched forth His hand, and touched him. ....



**John Purkiss**



..... For Jesus, there was only one obligation in life, and that was to help. For Him, there was only one Law and that was the law of love.

But there remain two things when Jesus would obey the law. He ordered the man to keep silence and not to publish abroad what Jesus had done for him. Why should Jesus command this silence?

Palestine was an occupied country and the Jews were a proud race. They never forgot that they were God's chosen people, and the popularity of Jesus could be seen as a threat to the Roman leadership. The other requirement was that a healed person had to present himself to the priest (Lev 14) who would have detailed instruction as to what action would be required.

What a wonderful miracle! Jesus! "If you are willing!"

## Funerals

The funeral of **Chris Papps** will be taking place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December. The thanksgiving service will be here at VBC at 10.30am. If you would like to join Thelma and the family for refreshments after the service, please sign the list in the Welcome Centre for catering purposes.



Meanwhile, we have Norman Roberts' funeral this coming Wednesday and Janet has asked for his obituary to be included here -

*Norman John Roberts passed away peacefully on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 after a long illness. Loving husband to Janet, he will be sadly missed by all of his family, many friends and neighbours, as well as his church family and his volunteer role at the DGH, where he enjoyed many years as part of a team of those taking trolleys to the ward.*



*The funeral is taking place on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 2.30pm at the Family Chapel, Eastbourne Crematorium, followed by a Thanksgiving Service at Victoria Baptist Church Eastbourne at 3.15pm.*

*Family flowers only. Donations to The Brain Tumour Trust c/o Serenity Funeral Directors, 43 South Street, Eastbourne BN21 4UT.*

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Old Town Churches carol singing in Albert Parade 18<sup>th</sup> December 10.30am - 12.30pm. Please come and support.



# 'Dune' and the Blessing of the Desert

*Film Review by John Demetriou*

One of the big blockbuster films to hit the screen recently is 'Dune'. It is based on the 1965 classic science fiction novel by Frank Herbert which won prestigious awards and is regarded by many as one of the best of its genre. It tells the story of how a young prince called Paul Atreides meets his destiny and purpose in life on Arrakis, a planet distinguished by its sand dune, desert landscape and containing a substance called 'spice' which has precious, costly, life-enhancing powers and can aid space travel. It was this link with the desert that resonates with a theme we find repeated in the Bible of God, meeting individuals in unlikely, often remote places, to change them and, like Paul Atreides, help fulfil their potential.



The book, though highly regarded, has been notoriously difficult to depict on screen because of the complexity and nuances of the story that deals with a number of challenging themes such as religion, politics, economics and social justice. Despite these obstacles, Dennis Villeneuve, the Director, has received critical acclaim for what he has achieved. By dividing the film into two parts he has given himself more space to do justice to the intricacies of the story than those who tried before him.

Villeneuve has good film pedigree, having done a good job with the sequel to 'Blade Runner' and, my favourite, 'Arrival' which, despite its science fiction veneer, is a masterful insight into what makes for effective communication and lays out the dangers when we get it wrong.

In 'Dune', he cleverly captures the magnitude of the landscapes, the huge sandworms that dwell beneath the sands, spaceships, other machines and cities, by not depending on CGI alone but using real locations and practical effects where possible, sometimes just revealing only a detailed part to suggest and convey something greater. This is all complimented by the other-worldly, mechanical and mystical score composed by Hans Zimmer.

What was interesting for me as a Christian was the use of the desert as a positive, life-affirming force rather than its usual negative, unproductive portrayal. Duke Leto Atreides (Paul's father) calls it 'Desert power' while the cruel, evil Baron, 'My Dune' though for opposite avaricious reasons. ....

..... It is this aspect that reminded me of incidents in the Bible where the desert or lonely places are used by God to draw people to himself and commission them. People such as Abraham, looking up at the vastness of the stars in his new nomadic existence, Moses at the burning bush, Jacob at Peniel, John the Baptist 'calling in the desert', the apostle John exiled on Patmos or, in more recent biographies of Christian leaders, Hudson Taylor called to set up the China Inland Mission on Brighton beach or Billy Graham reaffirming his faith in the authority of the Bible on a walk in the Californian woods at a testing time in his ministry.

All these people had close encounters with God, alone and 'far from the maddening crowd' that gave them assurance, purpose and power to live mighty lives for Him. Like Abraham, it is as if they also heard God say, 'I am your shield and your very great reward' to strengthen them for the hard path ahead.

'Dune' is only fiction but the power God offers to those who seek Him and hear His call in the 'desert place' is real, life changing, affirming and fruitful. It helps us to say with the psalmist, *'Who have I in heaven but you, And being with you, I desire nothing on earth'*, and experience the truth of Jesus' words - *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

## Flow Café

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December from 10am for a Christmassy Flow Café. All the usual activities, and an opportunity to chat and relax with family and friends.

This month, all proceeds will be going to George Ebby for his mission trip next year.



## CHRISTMAS HELP NEEDED



It's the most wonderful time of the year...when we need extra teams of people to help at our Christmas events!

We are in need of a few people to help with serving coffee and mince pies after the Carols by Candlelight and Christingle Services. We also need some stewards and candle lighters at the Christingle Service.

If you are able to assist in any way, please contact Sandra.

## ST WILFRID'S HOSPICE

Please note that the Street Coffee Shop at the Hospice is closing from Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Dec until further notice due to the increase in Covid infections in the area.



# FLOWER MINISTRY

Only one vacant date left for January (30<sup>th</sup>) but plenty of spaces in February if you would like to donate to the flower ministry next year. Please contact Chris McMahon for more details.



The flowers last week were donated by Joan Wells



“Please convey my thanks for the beautiful flowers brought round last week I was touched to receive them together with the prayerful support I have received following my recent surgery.”