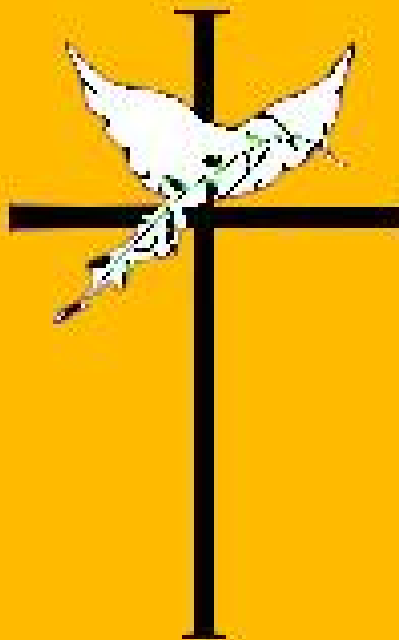


**The  
Messenger**

# **STAFFORD BAPTIST CHURCH**

*The Green, Bailey Street, Stafford*



**December 2018**

## DECEMBER

Sun 16	10.30	“Messy Nativity” – <i>exploring the wonder of God’s love all together</i>
Wed 19	7.30	“House Groups Together” – and an open invitation for EVERYONE – sharing reflections for Advent – <i>The hopes and fears of all the years</i>
Sun 23	10.30	Morning Worship
	4.30	Family Christingle and Carol Service
Tue 25		<i>Christmas Day</i>
	10.00	Christmas Morning Praise
Sun 30	10.30	All-Age Service

## JANUARY

Sun 6	10.15	Kids Zone Church
	10.30	Morning Worship - New Year Covenant Communion Service
Mon 7	7.30	Deacons Meeting
Wed 9	11.00	Friends Together – <i>including lunch at 12.30 NOTE CHANGE OF DATE – SECOND WEDS JUST FOR THIS MONTH</i>
Mon 14	10.15	“Prayer & Pastries”
Wed 16	7.30	Church Meeting
Sun 20	10.00	10AM Service
	10.45	Messy Church
	6.30	Love Stafford Celebration Worship ( <i>with “Mission Market” from 6.00</i> )
Tue 22 & Wed 23		New House Group series begins - <i>“Christian Community”</i>
Sun 27	10.30	Guest preacher: Rev Jimione Kaci, <i>in a “pulpit exchange” with the Stafford Methodist Circuit</i>
Mon 28	7.30	Fellowship Prayer Time

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## Welcome Teams

Sun 6 January	Linda	Ora
Sun 13 January	Andrina	Janet
Sun 20 January	Eslyn	Jacqui
Sun 27 January	Nigel	Claire

***Dear Friends,***

**A happy, joyful,  
and blessed Christmas**

**to you all**



**God's message is: Do not be afraid, I love you**

**“Do not be afraid”** ... said the angel to Mary.

**“Do not be afraid”** ... said the angel to Joseph.

**“Do not be afraid”** ... said the angel to the shepherds.

Just about every time an angel appears in the pages of the Bible, one of the first things he says is: **“Do not be afraid”**.

Is this because the appearance of an angel is so startling that everyone quakes with fear at the sight? It could be, but on the other hand, perhaps the people who met an angel already had something they were frightened of in the first place. Maybe something in their own circumstances, maybe something going on around them, maybe they felt threatened or under pressure, or overwhelmed, and things looked bleak and gloomy.

Joseph was already afraid, because things had gone horribly wrong in his engagement. He was afraid for Mary, because she could be taken out and stoned to death; he was afraid for himself and what others may think of him; he was afraid for both their families and the disgrace and bad reputation they would have in the community. And so he had planned to set aside the engagement quietly, without going down the legal route; but even then it might not work; had the damage already been done? Mary was pregnant, and soon everyone would know. ... **“Do not be afraid”** ... said the angel to Joseph.

The shepherds, along with just about everybody else in Israel in the first century, lived in a constant state of fear. These were brutal times. People were being herded around from one place to another. The whole country, and much of the known world, was under Roman occupation, and they demanded that the people be counted back in their own home towns. Half the population was forced to be on the move. First century Israel was a fearful place to be, and a brutal place to be, with the Romans pushing people around, and before long Herod - the unpredictable local king trying to cling to what little power he had - ordering the slaughter of a whole generation of baby boys. Life was full of fears. ... **“Do not be afraid”** ... said the angel to the shepherds.

The angels may have been quelling the immediate fears, generated by their own sudden appearance; but they were also addressing other fears as they gave their good news of God at work and the good news of Immanuel -

God right here with us; not remote and distant, not disinterested and uncaring, but coming right into our world in love ... **for God so loved the world** ...

What fears might we be carrying this Christmas and New Year time? There's certainly plenty of national fear and uncertainty, which we see flaring up in people getting angry with one another and then not listening to one another. And individually we can be carrying our own fears too ... it may be health concerns, or family worries; we may have a fear of things that might happen, and that other things might not happen; we may have fear of change, and fear that some things may never change ... the list could be endless and we could add one fear after another.

Let's be reassured this Christmastime that God is not remote and distant, he is indeed Immanuel - God with us. And already he is opening his future ahead of us, and inviting us to carry on journeying with him ... wherever that journey may take us in the year ahead. So let's hear the words of the angels to us:

**Do not be afraid ... I'm here with good news for everyone, news that is joyful, and full of hope. The Christ, the Messiah, has come into the world. There is hope and there's a future. There's a way through to life that is full and complete, in the love of God and in the glory of God. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth: peace.**

***Ron***

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**Annie Brown**, one of our BMS Partners working in education in Nepal asks us to pray that:

- She will continue to stay safe in the Kathmandu traffic on her motor scooter .
- Her EQUIP team and herself are kept safe on mountain journeys to reach their partner schools .
- She will continue to build good relationships with all those she works with.



## Thanks:

Thank you to the members of the Welcome Team who faithfully carry out their duties on Sunday mornings. Thank you to Connie who stepped down earlier this year. A very special thank you to Derek who has decided that, after many years, it is time to retire.

*Rhoda*

## **SPECIAL CHURCH MEETING** **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

**To God be the glory, great things he has done**, and great things he is doing, and great things he will do.

In an overwhelming vote (over 90%) the church has affirmed its calling to Danielle Leigh to be the next minister of Stafford Baptist Church, following Ron Davis' retirement in March 2019.

Through the past fifteen months Danielle has been amongst us as Associate Minister. This valuable time of overlap now becomes a transition into the next phase of the history of God's work at The Green.

Our prayer for the past two and a half years, and more, has been for stability and continuity, combined with a moving forward in the purposes of God with us and through us. Thanks be to God, who answers our prayers in his ways and in his timing. To Him be the glory.

We also celebrate with Danielle her accreditation as a Baptist Minister, and we pray God's leading for both our ministers in these busy months of transition.

Ron's final Sunday at The Green will be Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Danielle's ministry will be formally marked in an "Affirmation Service" on a Sunday morning after Easter (most likely Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May ... please book the date!)

## Message from the Associate Minister

Wow! Thank you all so much for your overwhelmingly positive support in appointing me as the Minister once Ron retires in March. I'm writing this the day after the vote in the Special Church Meeting and it's all still buzzing around in my head! I'll never forget that moment of walking into the church once the result had been announced and seeing the sea of smiling faces beaming back at me. It really was something special – and I think we can all acknowledge that the fact that I didn't cry is nothing short of a miracle!

Since I started my role at The Green in September 2017 I have really enjoyed getting to know everyone and serving you all in this way, and I'm so grateful and thankful that you have chosen to allow me to continue doing that, albeit in a slightly different capacity after March next year. It really is a privilege and a blessing to be able to do this 'job,' and with such a great bunch of people I'm doubly blessed! The number of dedicated, faithful foot soldiers is fantastic, and all gifted by God in different ways so that together we make a great team. And I'm convinced that we'll see God doing great things in us and through us as we plant the seeds and He makes them grow.

I also think the timing is brilliant – how very apt that this new chapter for The Green will begin in Spring, a season known for growth, new beginnings, new life and bright hope. My prayer is that The Green would increasingly be a place of growth, where everyone can flourish with roots that go down deep into the soil of his love, and branches that reach out to many and bear much fruit for His kingdom.

*Eph 3:20-21 'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'*

*Danielle Leigh*

# SUPPORT BMS THROUGH PRAYER!

One of the most valuable things you can do for BMS World Mission is pray for us. So we would like to invite you to join us on 27 January 2019 for our annual day of prayer.

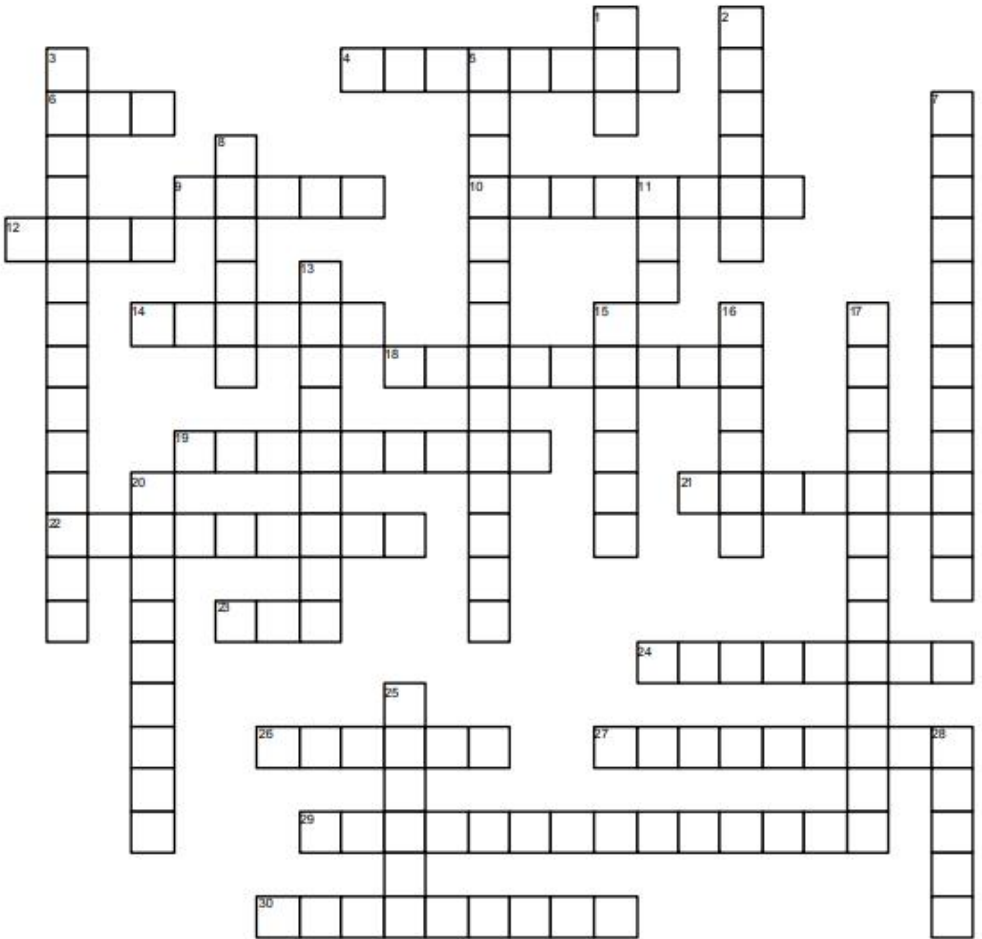
BMS workers like Helen, Wit and Simon would not be able to do the inspirational and challenging work they do every day without the support you give through prayer. Whether you choose to pray as a church, as a small group, or even individually, your prayers matter to us.

Please put the date in your diary.  
Thank you



# THE BIRTH OF JESUS - THE CHRISTMAS STORY

## Luke 2:1-20



### ACROSS

- 4 What was Mary's condition as she was pledged to be married to Joseph? (Lk. 2:8)
- 6 The angel told the shepherds that the good news of the Saviour will be for \_\_\_\_\_ people. (Lk. 2:10)
- 9 The town of Bethlehem is where Joseph had to register because he was of the house and ancestry of \_\_\_\_\_. (Lk. 2:4)
- 10 The decree for the census required everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ to his own town. (Lk. 2:3)
- 12 Who was pledged to be married to Joseph? (Lk. 2:5)
- 14 What was one of the signs mentioned by the angel to the shepherds



as they searched for the child? (Lk. 2:7)

18 To what town did Joseph had to travel to register? (Lk. 2:4)

19 What town did Joseph live at the time of the decree to register his family? (Lk. 2:4) a

21 When the angel told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus, what did the shepherds say to each other? (Lk. 2:15) two words

22 What did Mary do with all the things that had happened? (Lk. 2:19)

23 When the shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the Saviour, were their directions to find Him just as the angel had told them? (Lk. 2:16)

24 When the child Jesus was born, what did the angel bring to the shepherds? (Lk. 2:10) two words

26 The angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be \_\_\_\_\_." (Lk. 2:10)

27 When it was time for Mary to give birth, she gave birth to her \_\_\_\_\_. (Lk. 2:6-7)

29 Who appeared to the shepherds telling them of the birth of a Saviour? (Lk. 2:9) four words

30 Who was governor of Syria when a census was taken of the entire Roman world? (Lk. 2:2)

DOWN

1 When Mary and Joseph inquired for a room to stay for the night, there was no room for them in the \_\_\_\_\_. (Lk. 2:7)

2 What is a feeding trough for livestock in which Mary and Joseph placed their son? (Lk. 2:7)

3 Who gave the order that a census be taken of the entire Roman world? (Lk. 2:1) two words

5 What shone around the shepherds when the angel told them of the good news? (Lk. 2:9) four words

7 Suddenly, who appeared with the angel to praise God? (Lk. 2:13) two words

8 The angel announced to the shepherds that a \_\_\_\_\_ had been born. (Lk. 2:11)

11 Mary's firstborn child was a \_\_\_\_\_. (Lk. 2:7) 13 Who were watching and caring for their flocks of sheep? (Lk. 2:8)

15 A word that means a special proclamation or notice.

16 When the shepherds spread the word about the birth of Jesus, those who heard the message were \_\_\_\_\_. (Lk. 2:18)

17 What was the name of the new-born Saviour? (Lk. 2:11) three words

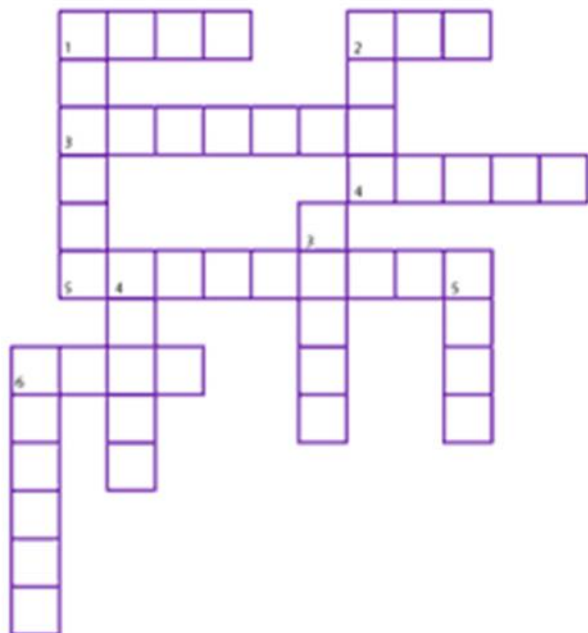
20 To what town did the shepherds travel to see the new-born Saviour? (Lk. 2:15)

25 What was one of the signs mentioned by the angel to the shepherds as they searched for the Christ child? (Lk. 2:7)

28 At what time of the day was Jesus born? (Lk. 2:8)

## Nativity Crossword

Read the clues below and fill in the blanks to complete this puzzle on the nativity.



## ACROSS

- Luke 2:36-38 She was a prophetess who recognized that the infant Jesus was the Messiah.
- Luke 2:13, 14 "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising \_\_\_\_\_, and saying Glory to \_\_\_\_\_ in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."
- Luke 1:26,27 "in the sixth month the angel \_\_\_\_\_ was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph"
- Matt 1:20 "Joseph, thou son of \_\_\_\_\_ fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife"
- Luke 2:8 "there were in the same country \_\_\_\_\_ abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."
- Luke 2:5 Joseph's espoused wife

## DOWN

- Luke 2:15 "as the \_\_\_\_\_ were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass,"
- Matt 2:7-12 One wise man brought \_\_\_\_\_
- Matt 2:1 "\_\_\_\_\_ was born in Bethlehem of Judaea ...
- Matt 2:1 "...in the days of \_\_\_\_\_ the king,"
- Matt 2:2 "...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his \_\_\_\_\_ in the east, and are come to worship him."
- Luke 2:7 Mary "brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a \_\_\_\_\_."

## DITCHING THE CHALKBOARD FOR THE COMPUTER LAB

How you're helping Nepali students.



How did you learn to use a computer? You probably sat in front of one, right? Pupils at school in the UK learn the same way. They'll

probably have regular access to a laptop or personal device at home, too. It's easy. Accessible. Normal.

That's not how it is in Lamjung District in central Nepal. In Lamjung, only a small minority of students have access to a computer at home. Everyone else has to learn at school, which is difficult as schools don't have enough of them. Students learn instead by taking down instructions put on the classroom chalkboard or written in a textbook – instructions for how to start a computer and work through the very basics. They memorise the steps, and then eventually get to watch a teacher put them into action on an actual computer.

If there are other computers available for students to use, they often don't work properly, or can't be used because of national power cuts. And so it's back to learning from the

textbook for these young people who need IT skills to get on in a world that is becoming increasingly reliant on technology.

BMS World Mission worker Simon Hall lives and works in Lamjung, training teachers in IT, and helping bring technology into the classroom. In the past few months, he's helped four schools through the process of securing and installing computers, and it's hoped more will follow.

Over 100 computers have been installed in schools in Lamjung over the last two years through Simon's work. The computers are new, publicly funded, and are in rooms that are battery-powered.

The students are understandably loving the opportunity to spend more time in front of a computer, as opposed to simply reading about them. Thank you for giving children in Lamjung the opportunity to learn the skills they need to succeed in the modern world.

*Your support means children in Nepal are getting the education they deserve. Head to [www.bmsworldmission.org/ditching-the-chalkboard](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/ditching-the-chalkboard) to read more of their story.*

## MESSY CHURCH

family friendly, and for all ages together



### **DATES FOR MESSY CHURCH:**

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April (please note, this is a change to the regular third Sunday of the month)

Messy Church starts at **10.45am**  
- following the 10AM Service

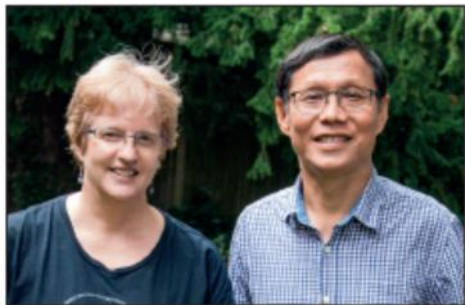
## Recipe for a Happy New Year

- Take twelve whole months.
- Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate, and jealousy.
- Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.
- Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once.
- Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.
- Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work.
- Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness.
- Blend with one part prayer, one part quiet reflection and one good deed.
- Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cupful of good humour.
- Pour all of this into a vessel of love.
- Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness.
- You're bound to have a happy new year.

Author Unknown

# THE CHURCH PLANTERS WHO NEED YOUR PRAYER

**“There were no Christians when we first came. None at all.”**



*Helen and Wit Boondeekhun*

Being Jesus in a village that is 100 per cent Buddhist is challenging work. But church planters Helen and Wit Boondeekhun insist on living out their faith in Wang Daeng village.

It's really difficult for people to convert to Christianity in Wang Daeng, northern Thailand. BMS World Mission workers Helen and Wit have been faithfully serving the community and trying to meet the practical needs of their new neighbours for the last two years.

Creating strong relationships within the local community is especially important because many people there struggle with drug and alcohol addictions. “Recently, I found out one of the people I know, they're under 40, they just died because of alcohol,” said Wit. Watching their friends struggle is

immensely challenging for the Boondeekhuns, but they are committed to finding ways to keep the community thriving and bring people to Christ.

When they first arrived, they set up English classes. At first with just a handful of students, but now they have about 40 local students enrolled. But their first believer came through other means.

“Through the basket weaving project, we got to know this lady, and she became a Christian,” said Helen. “But nobody really knows about this. She hasn't been brave or bold enough to tell her friends yet, because it's hard.”

Even though it is a challenge, the Boondeekhuns are consistently living out their faith and sharing it with their



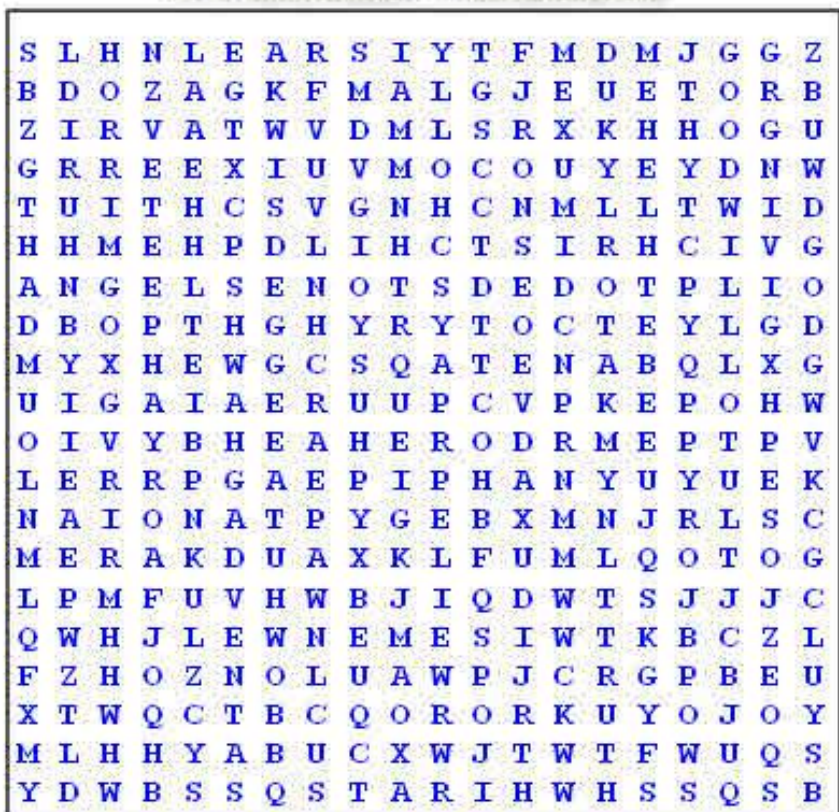
*Basket weaving is changing lives in Wang Daeng*

new friends in Wang Daeng. And they believe that more ears will be opened.

Helen and Wit have become part of the community – and they're so happy that they have seen one of their new friends come to faith. Now, they would



## A Christmas Wordsearch



ADVENT, ANGELS, BETHLEHEM, BIRTH, CAROLS, CHRISTCHILD,  
DONKEY, EGYPT, EPIPHANY, GABRIEL, GIVING, GOD, GOODWILL,  
HEAVEN, HEROD, HOLLY, ISRAEL, JOSEPH, JOY, LIGHT, LOVE, LOWLY,  
MANGER, MARY, NATIVITY, PEACE, PROPHECY, TRUMPET, SON, STAR,  
TRUTH, WISEMEN, SHEPHERDS

REMEMBER  
THE REASON  
FOR THE  
SEASON



## FEBRUARY

Sun 3	10.30	All-age Worship
Sun 10	10.15	Kids Zone Church
	10.30	Communion Service
Mon 11	10.15	“Prayer & Pastries”
Tue 12 or Wed 13	7.30	House Groups All Together
Sun 17	10.00	10AM Service
	10.45	Messy Church
Tue 19	7.00	SAFEGUARDING TRAINING
Sun 24	10.30	BMS World Mission Sunday
Mon 25	7.30	Fellowship Prayer Time

## MARCH

Sun 3	10.30	All-age Worship
Sun 10	10.15	Kids Zone Church
	10.30	Communion Service
	11.30	<u>Church Meeting: AGM</u>
Mon 11	10.15	“Prayer & Pastries”
Sun 17	10.00	10AM Service
	10.45	Messy Church
Wed 20	7.30	Church meeting ( <i>“ordinary” meeting</i> )
Sun 24		<i>Ron’s last Sunday</i>
Mon 25	7.30	Fellowship Prayer Time
Sun 31	10.30	<i>Mothering Sunday</i> - all-age Worship and BBGA Parade Service

Wel Te	come ams	Sun 3 February	Linda	Ora	Sun 3 March	Linda	Ora
		Sun 10 February	Andrina	Janet	Sun 10 March	Andrina	Janet
		Sun 17 February	Eslyn	Jacqui	Sun 17 March	Eslyn	Jacqui
		Sun 24 February	Nigel	Claire	Sun 24 March	Nigel	Claire
					Sun 31 March	Eslyn	Jacqui

## Contact us

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**Secretary**

Email: [secretary@staffordbaptistchurch.co.uk](mailto:secretary@staffordbaptistchurch.co.uk)

[www.staffordbaptistchurch.co.uk](http://www.staffordbaptistchurch.co.uk)

Find us on 

**Sunday Worship Services**  
**Every Sunday at 10.30 am**

Full youth & children's programme every Sunday morning

Communion Services every 1st Sunday morning

**'Sticky Fingers'**  
*(parents and under 5's)*

Thurs 10 to 11.30 am

**Friends Together**  
*(over 55's)*

Monthly on first Wednesday 11 am to 3.00 pm

**Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association**

Thursday at 6.30 pm

**Christian Book Shop**

Monday and Friday - 10 am to 2 pm,  
Saturday - 9:30 am to 2 pm.

**Open Door**  
*(A time for a drink and a chat)*

Weekly on Friday 10 am to 12 noon