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## WE REMEMBER...

I am writing this in October and at the moment some areas of the country are going into local lockdown as we try to stop the spread of the Corona virus. As you read this, I am guessing there will have been a few more changes along the way.

People are saying Christmas is not going to be the same this year, and some even say that Christmas isn't going to happen. Perhaps we ought to reflect on what Christmas is really about.

Christmas is the time when we remember the angel visiting Mary announcing she would conceive a child by the Holy Spirit - The Son of God.

We remember the journey she and Joseph took to Bethlehem, fulfilling prophesy given several hundreds of years earlier.

We remember there being no room in the inn and the baby born in a stable, accessible to all.

We remember the bright light and joyful chorus of the angels, proclaiming the Saviour's birth.

We remember the visitors who travelled a long way, bringing precious gifts to Jesus.

We remember...

Christmas is the time when we remember, proclaim and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Jesus who came to earth as a baby, who grew up and lived a life without sin, and who gave his life on the cross making the way possible for everyone to receive forgiveness and be restored into relationship with Father God.



Perhaps the way we celebrate Christmas this year will be different, but let me assure you that the reason for Christmas will be the same as it always has. Let's remember the purpose of Christmas and the person we celebrate.

**Hebrews 13:8 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.'**

*Sandra Fall, WA Coordinator*

# Christmas Baskets



**You'll need:** A small basket (a plastic one from the Pound Shop, woven through with ribbon would do). Small gifts appropriate to the recipient and *Nuggets of Gold* wrapped in cellophane or a freezer bag and tied with ribbon.



## Nuggets of Gold

- 100g (4oz) plain flour
- 50g (2oz) wholemeal flour
- 1 level teaspoon paprika
- 1 level teaspoon mustard powder
- Pinch of salt
- 75g (3oz) butter
- 75g (3oz) finely grated strong cheddar or Red Leicester + some for sprinkling.

1. Preheat oven to Gas 5/190C and lightly grease a baking sheet.
2. Combine dry ingredients and rub butter in. Add grated cheese and mix well.
3. Using hands, draw the mix into walnut-sized pieces and place on baking tray. Press down lightly with the back of a fork keeping the shape.
4. Sprinkle a little more cheese on each nugget and bake for about 25 minutes or until golden. Cool on a wire rack.

*You could add a few finely chopped nuts and/or replace the paprika with chilli powder for a real kick.*

We know Christmas is going to be different and possibly very hard indeed for some this year. There may be no big family celebrations, no Carols by Candlelight, even no hugging after the Christmas Morning service – if we manage to have one at all.

But perhaps it will be a chance to think more realistically about that first Christmas and ponder on what the visitors to the stable saw.

The shepherds and Wise Men gave from their own resources, humble or great, because they *recognised* Jesus as the baby born to be King of the Universe and Saviour of the World.

I wonder if even in His babyhood He recognised them too, as folks wanting to honour Him in their sacrificial giving.

As we think about our budget for the festive season, could we look through the eyes of Jesus and try even harder to address the needs of the lonely, the stranger, the hungry and the lost?



A little Christmas Basket, made and given with love to someone who needs that extra virtual hug could be somewhere to start.

*Sue Over*

## 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY Norma Yates



The W.A. ladies of Moira Church celebrated with Norma Yates as she celebrated her 90th birthday in September. Norma is the much loved organist of the Church.

## 80 YEARS OLD

**Muriel Stonehewer**  
(Coal Aston, Sheffield Circuit)  
recently celebrated her eightieth birthday.



Whilst Covid restrictions limited her initial plans for celebration, it equally encouraged her family to plan alternative activities. She was able to meet with some friends (rule of six) and neighbours provided their own drinks as they

shared individually wrapped pieces of cake, all socially distanced of course. Another delight was to receive memories for her treasury box. Various people who have known Muriel down the years had been contacted to share some of their memories. These included memories and greetings from some friends and churches in the Union.



Instead of presents Muriel had suggested that people gave either to their own favourite charity or to Traidcraft Exchange and she was absolutely amazed, but also delighted that Traidcraft Exchange benefitted by £1000 pounds.





# SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL NATIVITY SCENE

Sheffield Cathedral commissioned Brian Fell to make a nativity to link to the industrial heritage of the city. Made from steel, the nativity group took four years to complete.

This static nativity scene is erected inside the cathedral during the Christmas season, and is composed of steel figurines of: baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Looking over the family is a shepherd and the three wise men.

In Brian's version of the Crib Scene, Joseph rather than Mary is depicted holding the infant Jesus. The shepherd is holding a lamb and his crook. While Melchior can be seen offering his gold, Balthazar is holding his present of myrrh and Caspar has the gift of frankincense.

Each year I look forward to seeing the nativity scene once again.

It clearly is not the 'twee' nativity scene or a sparkly depiction of the stable depicted on numerous Christmas cards.

- it is life size
- the characters are all standing
- the baby is held by his father
- the shepherds are 'above' the kings

So why do I choose to go and look again each year if at all possible?

Quite simply because it makes me pause and focus afresh on the miracle of Christmas and step aside from the commercialisation of the Christmas season.

It reminds me too

- that Joseph as well as Mary was called of God to be part of the story
- that the humble shepherds were accepted on the same terms as the learned visitors
- that we are all valued by God and have our part to play in ensuring that others are encouraged to remember that Christmas begins with Christ.

*Muriel Stonehewer*



## “WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO FOR CHRISTMAS?”

My Christmas cactus is confused, sitting in an 'Easter plant pot' and blooming in October. Radio 5 asked today if we will be having a 'Digital Christmas?' meeting up with



our families on Zoom. And what will we do without Carol Concerts or kissing under the mistletoe!? In the past who's not declared "Christmas is cancelled" followed by "Bah HumBug!" So, just what are we going to do for Christmas this year? Same as always; worship the King, born of the Jews, and proclaim Peace on Earth! Jesus is the Peace

Offering from heaven, the ultimate Olive Branch, who shows that God means us Goodwill, through His Son Jesus.

As Churches, we are in the business, like the Angels, of proclaiming this great, timeless

message of Hope!

To those sitting in loneliness, fear, and darkness, to our neighbourhood, we need to offer the Love, Hope and Light of Jesus. There is an annual Sheffield Church initiative called "#streetsoflight" which this year has seen over 400 homes decorate their

windows with messages like this one that Anne-Marie put up. It coincides with Half-Term and Halloween.

The "10ofThose.com" website has produced a fantastic "Life Magazine" with lots of articles about preparing for Christmas, to be given away by Churches (60p each if you buy 100).

Maybe you could deliver one before advent to those who'd normally be at your Carol Services, and think of other ways to follow this up over the Christmastime.

*Andy Wilcock*





**THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH**  
Nehemiah 8:10



I remember a Christian woman telling me that she wanted to 'experience more of the joy of the Lord.' Wouldn't it be great if we could pick out all the nice emotions, like joy, peace, warm loving feelings, and leave all the others behind, like sadness, anxiety and anger? But the reality is, we either experience all our emotions, the good, the bad and the ugly, or we find it difficult to experience any of them.

So, I said to the woman: 'If you want to know more of the joy of the Lord you will have to be prepared to experience more of the sadness of the Lord.' Hitherto she had been the 'joker' in her family, always, on the surface at least, jovial and happy. But no one had ever given her permission to get in touch with the losses and sadness in her life, so she had no deep-down joy either.

I encouraged her to do a study of the emotional life of a man that we read about in the Bible, Nehemiah. Studying a man's emotional life is not something I would usually recommend (!), but Nehemiah was different, he was in touch with his emotions in a way most men are not

When he received news that the returned exiles were in trouble back in Jerusalem, and that the city wall was broken down and the gates had been burned with fire, he was overwhelmed with sadness. He sat down, and wept (1:3&4). This went on for some time. When even the King noticed that he was sad, Nehemiah then acknowledged another emotion - fear, anxiety: 'I was very much afraid' (2:2). At this point he is a long way from being able to declare: 'the joy of the Lord is my strength' (8:10).

And what about another emotion that Christians often have difficulty acknowledging, anger? Not so for Nehemiah. Various situations caused him to get really angry and express this powerful emotion: financial exploitation and human trafficking (5:6-8), shady goings-on in the temple (13:8-11), abuse of the Sabbath (13:20&21) and marriage to foreign women (13:23-25). Can you think of another man, much greater than Nehemiah, who also got hot under the collar about these sorts of things?

In chapter 8 we read that the people celebrated 'with great joy' (vs.12), but just before this even they had been 'weeping' as they listened to the Law being read. We also read in Psalms, in the context of evangelism and mission, that: 'those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him' (Ps.126: 5&6). With God it seems that sadness and joy are inextricably linked.

So an important lesson to learn from the emotional life of Nehemiah, for both men and women, is this: if the joy of the Lord is to be our strength, that joyful strength may well have to grow in the soil of anxiety, anger and sadness.

*George Irving*



**WRU ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**All on ZOOM!**

(Saturday, 21st November 2020, from 11.00 to about 16.30)

**Unfortunately, we will not be meeting at Swanwick**, but we are hoping that many more people will be able to meet with us over Zoom. It would be lovely to see representatives from every Church and Circuit.

Bookings must be submitted again, online, asap, but no later than 14th November.

Your secretary will have received details of the booking form by email.

Further information will be communicated shortly.

Thank you for your patience and support.

*Alina Taylor*

**EULOGY FOR**

**John Raymond Evans**  
**JUMP WR CHURCH**



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our dear Christian brother Raymond Evans. He, along with his wife Janet and sister-in-law Barbara, joined the church at Jump many years ago when the George Street chapel at Wombwell closed.

They soon settled into the church, and Ray, (as he was known by all who knew him) continued his preaching, becoming an accredited preacher in 1975. He preached in the church at Jump and the other churches within the Rotherham, Mexborough and Doncaster circuit, and others in the Union. He was a member of the leadership team for many years until he went into hospital with a chest infection. He was always proactive within the church, and he lived the Christian life to the full, witnessing for the Lord whenever he could. He was an avid member of the Bible study meeting, and he was a man of prayer. In 1991 he was inducted as President of the Wesleyan Reform Union, an office he was honoured to hold. His Presidential year took him to many parts of England and also into Scotland. A few years ago he was awarded the Maunday Money by Her Majesty the Queen at Sheffield Cathedral.

He worked with the local school children at Jump taking assemblies and listening to the school children read in class. All the children knew him as "Uncle Ray". He was loved by all the children and staff alike. During his time at Jump school he was involved with the "Bibles for children" project, which enabled children in the surrounding schools to have a Bible of their own which was printed especially for young children.

In his time at home he loved his garden. If the weather was fine he would usually be found outside working around the borders. If it wasn't so good outside he would either be in the conservatory tending his house plants, editing his photographs or listening to his large collection of classical music.

He was a man who everyone knew as a man of God, whether it be people within the church or people in the village of Jump, or others who knew him. He will be sadly missed by the fellowship at Jump, his family and friends.

