



FREEMANTLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Testwood Road, Southampton

In focus

December 2025



IT'S THAT time of year again. The nights are long, the weather is gloomy ... BUT ... Christmas is coming!

How I love Christmas! I love to see the lights in and on people's homes as I walk the dogs locally. I love the lights in the shops, and in the streets. They all really light up the darker nights.

But it's not just the lights that I love. I love how the anticipation builds over the next few weeks. The children will be getting excited as they eagerly await the big day. Adults will be busily getting in shopping and writing cards.

But it's not just the lights and the anticipation that I love. I love the food. The roast potatoes, the cheese and crackers, the chocolates. All these things add to the joy of the season.

But it's not just the lights, the anticipation and the food that I love. Most of all I love Jesus, whose birthday we celebrate. He really is the *Reason for the Season*.

It never fails to amaze me how or even why God chose to come to earth as a baby and live among us. It never ceases to amaze me how He did all He did. The miracles - feeding over 5,000 in one sitting, healing the blind, the lame and the sick, resurrecting the dead on a couple of occasions too. Then of course, after the cross, His own resurrection. And why?

Love. It is because He loved us then and loves us now. It seems so simple, yet His love is life transforming. It's abundant and available to all who want it.

So, this Christmas let me encourage you to make room for Him among the lights, anticipation and food. And may you all have a wonderful, blessed, peaceful and love filled Christmas. Revd Linda Hayes



Welcome

to our **SERVICES** 10.30am

We continue in our **ADVENT SEASON** which will be led by Revd Linda Hayes unless otherwise stated.

Sun 7th 2nd Sunday in Advent

Subject: **The angel's announcement to . . . Joseph**

Reading: *Matthew 1: 18-25*

Sun 14th 3rd Sunday in Advent

We welcome members of Bethel Prayer House and the Impact Church with us this morning.

Subject: **The angel's announcement to . . . the shepherds**

Reading: *Luke 2: 8-20*

Sun 21st 4th Sunday in Advent

Subject: **Bethlehem's Got Talent!**

CHRISTMAS EVE 5.00pm

Subject: **Carols by Candlelight**

CHRISTMAS DAY 10.00am

Subject: **A time of celebration!**

Sun 28th

Subject: **Simeon's announcement** Leadership

Reading: *Luke 2: 25-35*

Please bring favourite readings, poems and carols to share at this informal service.

Sun 4th January, Covenant Service



Light refreshments are served after the Sunday Services

Previous sermons are on our Facebook page

Weekly Meetings

TUESDAYS


Turkish language school 5.00pm-6.30pm

Belong 7.00pm-9.00pm
Fortnightly discipleship group exploring aspects of faith.

WEDNESDAYS

Sunflower Café
12.30pm - 3.00pm

Livewires
3.30pm - 4.30pm

 For Key stage 1 children with parents +carers; older and younger siblings welcome. Break up 10th Dec.



FRIDAYS

Flowerpots

10am - noon
Baby and toddler group.



SATURDAYS

Impact Church 6.00pm
Polish church

SUNDAYS

Bethel Prayer House 3.00pm

Coming up . . .

Mon 1st
Leaders' Meeting
11.30am

Sun 7th
Prayer Breakfast
9.00am - 10.00am
Prayer led by Ian

Sun 14th
Church Lunch
Bring-and-share
12.30pm approx

Wed 17th
Lantern Parade
5.00 - 7.00pm

Sun 11th Jan
New Year Dinner
After the service

Contacts: Revd. LINDA HAYES Mob:07963 803884 or linda@dizzyanddaisy.plus.com
Anita Pike Administrator and hall bookings 07814 445929 or calm.pike82@gmail.com



NEVER STOP PRAYING

1 Thessalonians 5:17



*Thank You God
For Your grace,
For Your mercy,
For Your forgiveness,
For Your protection,
For Your guidance,
For Your peace,
For Your unfailing
love. For being my
saviour. Amen!*

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... for Christmas,
for all the great toys and presents.
I love this time
and never want it to end!

Thank You, Lord, for Christmas,
for all my friends and family.
I love them so much
and place them all into Your
loving hands

Thank You, Lord, for Christmas,
for sending Jesus to be with me.
I love Him so much
and give my heart to Him.
Amen.

CHRIST, our Redeemer, we wait in hope for Your coming. May we be found ready at all times, alert to the needs of others and eager to answer Your call.

Help us to see Your light reflected throughout creation, and shining in all our brothers and sisters wonderfully made in Your image.

Fill us with the warmth of Your love and guide us in the way of peace so that together we may strive for a future free from war.

Lead us to work together to share the warmth of Your mercy and build a better world lit by your compassion for all.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

Source: Cafod

HOW easily this flame could be put out; one puff of wind, a finger tightly pressed against the thumb, then nothing.

A man upon His cross; a flickering flame of life; how easily that life could be put out. Or so they said.

Advent promise; Christmas Lord; Easter Christ; You ever live in resurrection power. Amen.

Congratulations to our dissectologists!



FOR A number of weeks Jon Fisher and friends at *Sunflowers Café* have been beavering away at this 500 piece jigsaw puzzle.

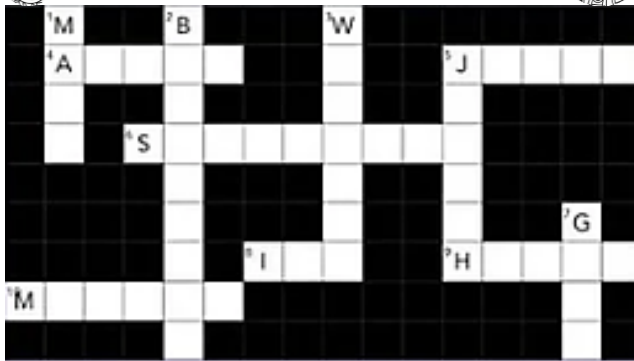
It caused a lot of head scratching in the early stages, but as the picture took shape so did the momentum in being determined to get it finished and there was great rejoicing as the last piece went in!

Puzzles are just one of the activities at the café on a Wednesday afternoon from 12.30pm to 3.00pm, for example, crosswords, sudoku, games, colouring, and folk bring along their own craft projects too.

A warm welcome awaits, along with tea, coffee and cake!



Christmas Crossword



Down

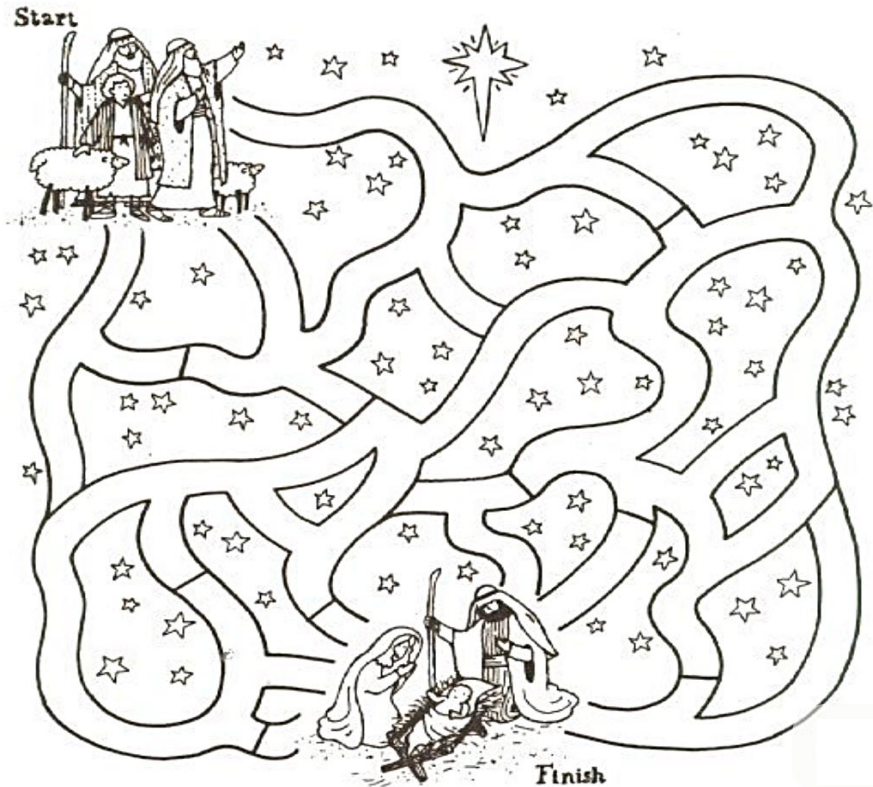
1. God told _____ she was going to have a baby.
2. Mary and Joseph travelled to _____ for the census.
3. _____ followed a star to Bethlehem to see the infant Jesus.
5. Mary was going to be married to _____.
7. The wise men brought baby Jesus gifts of _____, frankincense and myrrh.

Across

4. An _____ appeared to the shepherds to tell them to go to Bethlehem.
5. God told Mary that the baby would be called _____.
6. The _____ were watching their sheep when an angel appeared.
8. Mary and Joseph had to stay in a stable because there was no room for them in the _____.
9. King _____ wanted to kill baby Jesus.
10. Baby Jesus had to sleep in a _____.

Source: Planbee.com

Help the shepherds find the path to Jesus



WEDNESDAY 17th DECEMBER

5.00pm - 7.00pm



Lantern Parade

Meet at church to make lanterns and enjoy sausage rolls, mince pies, cake, fruit and a drink. Then process to Freemantle Lake Park to sing carols.

Everyone is very welcome to come and join us.



Shine, Jesus, shine

was voted the most popular school assembly hymn after a national poll.

The results were broadcast last month on BBC's Songs of Praise and the order is:

1. Shine, Jesus, shine
2. Give me oil in my lamp
3. Lord of the dance
4. All things bright and beautiful
5. I, the Lord of sea and sky
6. One more step along the world
7. O Jesus I have promised
8. Colours of day (*Light up the fire*)
9. He's got the whole world
10. Make me a channel of your peace
11. Morning has broken
12. He who would valiant be

If hymns were still sung when you were at school, was your favourite amongst these? Let Les know for an FBC poll!



Christmas Shopping Charge

IT WAS Christmas and the judge was in a merry mood as he asked the prisoner, "What are you charged with?"

"Doing my Christmas shopping early", replied the defendant.

"That's no offense", said the judge. "How early were you doing this shopping?"

"Before the store opened."



A BRIDEGROOM wanted to surprise his bride on their wedding day on Christmas Eve, so he arranged with the bakery to have a Bible verse inscribed on the cake.

He chose **1 John 4:18**, which reads:

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love".

But the baker, not being familiar with the Bible, got the book wrong and on the day of his wedding the groom was surprised to find the cake inscribed with **John 4:18**, which read:

"You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband."

GET
WRAPPED UP
IN THE
MOMENT



REGULAR readers of IN FOCUS may remember the little game I like to play around Christmas time: I look out for slogans in shops and on billboards that would transfer to a church setting and reflect the real meaning of Christmas.

My favourite for 2025 so far is from Ferrero Rocher, *Get wrapped up in the moment*. The moment is, I suppose, when you pop the chocolate into your mouth, close your eyes, and linger a while, savouring the taste and texture of the famous Ferrero flavour.

Get wrapped up in the moment . . . with Jesus! Turn your thoughts towards Him, His coming into the world; close your eyes, take your time, contemplate the baby in the manger, linger in prayer, listen for His whisper in your heart.

And like reaching for another chocolate, come back for more! Return to this place of encounter to savour the Saviour. Anita Pike



Jon Fisher on 10th
Steve Hayes on 23rd

Gifts for Patrick House

THANK YOU to those who have already contributed to our *Reverse Advent Calendar* in support of the residents at Patrick House.

This will continue on 7th and 14th December. Please put any gifts in the basket at the back of the church.

Donations can include woolly hats, gloves, socks, toiletries and Christmas goodies; they will be most welcome. Thank you.



. . . **for your financial giving** towards the work and witness of this church during November which came to £1,344. It is always appreciated.

. . . **to Anita** for replanting all the tubs in the front garden.

Sunflower Baptist

NOTICE BOARD

James would like to share his Christmas cracker joke he had from the party after his school's Nativity play.

What do you get when you cross a Christmas tree with an iPad?

A pine-apple!

Why don't skeletons have birthday parties?

Because they have no-body to celebrate with.

Before the paling of the stars

Before the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cock-crow,
Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made
Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together,
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Shepherd of the fold:
Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory

Christina Rossetti - 1830 -1894

Can you name two other of Christina
Rossetti's well-loved Christmas
poems/carols?

1. I _ T _ B _ _ _ M _ _ - W _ _ _ _
2. L _ _ _ C _ _ _ D _ _ _ A _
C _ _ _ _ _ _ _



Love Came First

by Donna Ashworth

YOU DON'T move on after loss,
but you must move with. You
must shake hands with grief,
welcome her in, for she lives
with you now.

Pull her a chair at the table
and offer her comfort. She is not
the monster you first thought
her to be. She is love. And she
will walk with you now, stay with
you now, peacefully. If you let
her.

And on the days when your
anger is high, remember why
she came, remember who she
represents. Remember.

Grief came to you, my friend,
because love came first.

Love came first.

