



The Bridge



Your FREE newsletter from Hooe Baptist Church

Visit our website: www.hoebaptist.org.uk

Christmas 2015



Christmas. What does that mean for you? Does it fill you up with excitement or despair?

For some, the prospect of seeing children's faces burst with excitement as they tear furiously at the reindeer wrapping paper is pure joy, not to mention the huge feast that will be eaten and the traditional catnap to follow!

However, in contrast, it can be a time of sadness, for many will be missing a much loved person, and the feeling of loss seems even greater at this time. For some the joy of this season has gone. 'Tis not the season to feel jolly at all.

Many people also feel stressed and under pressure for it is a struggle to just get by each week, never mind the additional expense that Christmas seems to demand. We are bombarded with adverts telling us what to buy, and we feel obliged to get them all. This is the message that the world gives to us about what Christmas is about.

But the true message is the opposite, for it is a time to reflect on the birth of Jesus and what that really means.

Jesus was born in a stable that was no doubt draughty, damp and maybe even smelly from the animals that were being kept there. Not a good start you may think for a vulnerable baby. But God did make himself vulnerable and suffered amongst us. He came to serve as the perfect atonement for our sin, and to offer forgiveness and salvation to anyone who believes.

Jesus was fully human, but also fully God. He lived amongst the people as a carpenter, and I often wonder what did his hands look like from working with the rough wood all day. But I do know that these same hands, the hands of a carpenter, the hands of God, were also nailed to a wooden cross.

There, on that cross, He died. Not because He had done something wrong, but because He came to set people free. One of my favourite verses from the bible is Isaiah 61 which says 'The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.'

This passage tells the story of why Jesus came. He came to speak the good news of salvation to all, and to bring healing to the broken in heart. He came to set people free from all that brings them harm, for God has plans that will prosper us and not harm us, and plans that give hope and a future. (Jeremiah

29: 11-13). He came to bring people out of the dark places, the pits, and into His glorious light instead.



How wonderful that He should come to set us all free! But He asks us to seek Him. He is waiting.

During this season as you decorate your home with sparkly tinsel, wrap up the presents and stuff the turkey, may you reflect on why we celebrate Christmas and why Jesus came. The real meaning of Christmas does not bring stress, pain or despair. The opposite. It brings the message of peace, hope, love, freedom and healing.

May you and your loved ones discover these blessings, and discover the greatest gift of all, which is the gift of eternal life with Him because of what Jesus came to earth to do, to die and set us free.

Love came down and kissed the earth.

With blessings

Rev. Vanessa Appleton and family.



Friends

My name is Anne Hughes and I represent a group of lovely people who gather together each Thursday for a 'cuppa'. We start serving the tea and coffee about 11am, although the doors are open from 10.30am. A friendly smile and welcome awaits all who love to join us. Together with the friendship and the 'cuppa' comes teacakes, crumpets, doughnuts, Danish pastries, cakes and biscuits. These are, like the friendship, all free of charge; most of us just make a donation towards the costs. Our donations sometimes exceed what we spend so we do what all good friends do, we go out for a meal together! Sounds good – well you will be more than welcome to come and join us at any time. If you can't come regularly just pop in when you feel you can!



*Need a friend
Find a friend
Be a friend*



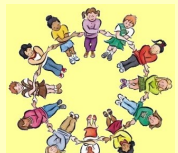
We asked some of our 'friends' to provide a comment about why they like to come and here's what they said:

"Happy time for a chat and refreshment in all ways. Great welcome to all Thursday mornings. Come and join us a 'Friends'." – Margaret

"You never know who will meet at Friends. We would be delighted to meet you; please come!" – Chris

"I thoroughly enjoy my visit to see my friends as I have only one relation nearby, my son Jeff, so again it is a most enjoyable time spent with friends." – Alan

"I really enjoy meeting up with everyone every week and always look forward to my game of 'crib' with Alan." – Jill



continued.....



Christmas Services

20th Dec

10.30am

**Morning
Worship**

20th Dec

6pm

**Carols
by
Candle-
light**

25th Dec

10am

**Christmas
Day
Celebra-
tion**

**Collections to support
Shekinah Mission**

**31st December 11.30pm
Watchnight Service**

REGULAR EVENTS

Sunday 10.30am Worship and Sunday youth.

Wednesday

1.45pm **HooeRays! Toddler and Parent group**

Thursday

10.30am **'Friends'** gathering for a cuppa & friendship

6.30pm **Girls' Brigade** for 5-18 year olds

Friday

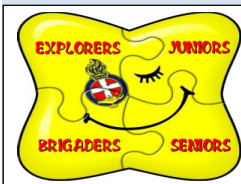
9.15am **Early Play** for pre-schoolers and parents

4.30-6.30pm **Messy Church** (1st Friday of every month)

House Groups - Monday, Wednesday & Thursday.

Information on Blessings for new children, Believers' Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Pastoral Care, joining the Church, and hiring the Hall is available from the Church Secretary.

Contact: email secretary@hooebaptist.org.uk or Tel: 480247 or see our website: www.hooebaptist.org.uk



Christmas Services at St John's, Hooe

Sun. Dec. 20th 10.45am

**Christingle, Nativity and Carol
Service**

Christmas Eve 11.30am

Midnight Communion

Christmas Day 10.45am

**Christmas Family
Communion**

Friends continued.....



"Come and meet us at Hooe Baptist Church on Thursday morning for coffee, cake and meeting new friends in our area. Everyone is welcome and we look forward to meeting you and knowing you and finding new friends." – Pat

"Friends make love go an extra distance. We chat and tease and tell stories and draw closer as winter draws near. It's a pleasure helping out here." – Stuart
"Paws for thought and lots of treats at Friends." – Charlie the dog

So you see we are very relaxed here. We do play games, board games and some even play table tennis, but most of all we enjoy the company – just being together and sharing that 'cuppa'.

"If Jesus was not who He said He was ...

...then he died in vain". This was the statement that my wife Faith and I heard one Sunday evening in 1981, whilst we were watching "Songs of Praise". We weren't church goers or true believers as such – I had a superstition of God, Faith had an awareness of belief. But this statement caused us to sit up literally. We were sitting on the settee, we turned to each other and I can hear myself now saying, "It's about time we started going to Church". The very next day, in the changing rooms at the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar, I was speaking to another Senior Rate, who I did not know, about TV programmes over the weekend and I happened to mention "Songs of Praise". He said "Do you want to start going to Church?, I'll meet you outside Brockhurst Baptist Church next Sunday at 10.15". I had no idea that I had been speaking with a Christian.

When I got home Faith was surprised to hear me say that we were going to Church the following Sunday. When Sunday came I was having second thoughts, but having said we would go, I thought that we had to. Since then we have hardly missed a Sunday. Over the following weeks things started to make sense to me, and something I had wanted to believe suddenly became very real and very clear.

Soon after starting at Church, we both began to believe in Jesus as Saviour/redeemer/healer/provider....God and friend. Our Christian walk has been full of wonderful stories and happenings. One of them was our moving into our house in Hooe. Not long after moving in we began doing children's work in our home with a team from the Elim Church (as it was at that time). Twenty something years later we find ourselves again sharing in this family work, but this time with a team in Hooe Baptist Church, and it is great fun!

"Messy Church" is held on the first Friday in the month, unless it's a Bank Holiday. At present we start at 4.30pm and finish at 6.30pm. We are looking forward to our Christmas session on the 4th December; don't miss it! We then restart in the New Year on the **5th February** at the **NEW TIME** of 4pm. Come as a family and join in the fun - we look forward to seeing you.

Pete Scurr.



We wish everyone in our community a happy, enjoyable and safe Christmas.

