



Cornton Baptist Church

Demonstrating God's love in action
in the community of Cornton



Magazine
December 2011

December 2011 - Church Magazine

Welcome to the latest edition of the church magazine.

We hope you enjoy the updates and articles. Thanks to all who have contributed.

Please let us know of any articles you would like to include next time around, or any ideas of what you would like to see included.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

The Editors

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Pastor's Ponderings

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are in the midst of Advent as I write this note looking forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. For many we are preparing for the family gathering round or getting ready to go home for Christmas. Home might be where we stay but perhaps it is the home of our childhood as we return to our parents for Christmas. For many there is something magical about returning to the family home to celebrate Christmas. It is full of memories of times past - of a childhood growing up, of times with Dad putting the tree and decorations up, of times with Mum preparing the food and cleaning the house, of time alone wrapping presents, and of times together putting the stockings out hoping that in the morning they will be full of presents. Memories too of the family trip to church for the Watchnight service and the singing of carols. And then of course all the memories of Christmas Day with presents being opened, Christmas dinner being shared, games being played and stories being told. Many of us treasure those memories and remember them fondly.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a lot of memories as well. We read in Luke 2:19 '*Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*' What were all these things? Most importantly they were the birth of her son and all that surrounded that birth. It was the visit of the angel to announce that she was highly favoured by God; it was the discussions with Joseph as he at first wanted to part and then the plans for the wedding after he too was visited by an angel in his sleep; it was

the excitement of Elizabeth her cousin proclaiming that the Lord's favour was upon her; it was the long and arduous journey to Bethlehem; it was the long and trying hunt for a place to stay; it was the birth of her son in a stable and the laying him down to sleep in a manger; it was the first visitors to see the baby - the shepherds, ordinary, hardworking men who had left their fields and flocks to see this child; and it was the wonderful story they told of being visited by angels who declared '*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*' Mary treasured these memories up and thought on them.

May we this Christmas think on the birth of our Saviour as well. Whether we have headed home or whether we are at home already, let us take time out to give thanks to God for his indescribable gift - the gift of his Son, our Saviour. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. And that is something wonderful to hang on to. God is with us.

Spare a thought for those who will be on their own at this time of year: those without family and friends; those who have lost loved ones in this past year; those without homes and shelter. Pray that God would be with them too.

The other excitement at this time of year is looking forward to a New Year. This is another time to join with family and friends and to celebrate. Many look forward to New Year because the year past has been a hard and difficult one for them and they hope that the year to come will be better. Others look forward to a New Year thankful for the year that has been and looking to

build on their achievements of the year past. Sadly some struggle with the events of life in general and do not look forward - our challenge is to get alongside them and encourage them; to offer them hope; to point them to Jesus, the giver of hope.

Some who were looking forward were Simeon and Anna. Simeon was looking forward to the consolation of Israel and having seen the baby Jesus he declared himself ready to go to glory (Luke 2:29). Anna never left the temple waiting and worshipping, fasting and praying (Luke 2:37-38). She gave thanks to God and spoke about this child to all who were looking forward to redemption as well. More than simply salvation and redemption, we look forward to an eternity to spend with Jesus in heaven. Wouldn't it be great if all our family and friends, our work colleagues and neighbours had that to look forward to as well? They can... but only if we share this wonderful gift with them. We can help them look forward to the New Year by sharing Immanuel with them... then they will know God with them too.

The New Year will bring us fresh challenges as a church. As we seek to share the unstoppable gospel, Satan will try his best to disrupt and destroy our efforts. We must be on our guard as we have been thinking in Acts 20. We must stick close to Jesus, seeking to follow him all the way. As he leads and guides, he also protects and provides. Our challenge is to keep sharing the gospel and to being Jesus' witnesses in all the earth - particularly in Cornton. We hope to have an adult mission week with various activities to invite the folks in Cornton along to and also our own family and friends and work colleagues. This will be followed by a Christianity Explored course (at least one). The Youth Work will

continue to grow and develop as we share Jesus with those at CBC kids club, youth café, Distinctive and the film night. This year will see the start of CrossSports, a new sports ministry aimed at those from P4 to S2. And the summer will see us have our children's and youth mission as well. Pray for these activities and ventures. Get involved with them where you can. Grow in your own faith as you share the gospel with others. Pray for opportunities to share your faith this coming year. And then when we sit down at this time next year we will look back on a year full of good memories which we will treasure in our hearts and ponder often.

Every blessing

Hamish

* * * * *

The Christmas Story

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)

In the Christmas message of incarnation the really staggering Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth was God made man! He took humanity without loss of deity, so that Jesus was as truly and fully divine as He was human. Here are two mysteries for the price of one - the plurality of persons within the unity of God, and the union of Godhead and manhood in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word was made flesh and God became man - the divine Son became a Jew - the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. There was no illusion or deception in this, the babyhood of the Son of God was a reality.

The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is as fantastic as the truth of the incarnation - the baby Jesus born at Bethlehem was God. More precisely, in Bible language, He was the Son of God, or, as Christian theology regularly expresses it, GOD THE SON. Yes THE Son - not A son. John says, in order to make it quite clear to his readers "He was the only begotten Son of God". The Christian church confesses "I believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ His only Son - our Lord". John writes in John 1:14 "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". The identification is confirmed for us in John 1:18 "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father". John makes it clear what is meant by calling Jesus the Son of God. The Son of God is the Word of God - we see what the Word is therefore this is what the Son of God is. So the Christmas message rests on the staggering fact that the child in the manger was God.

However, this is only half of the story, for the baby born at Bethlehem was God made man. The Word had become flesh - a real human baby, and had not ceased to be God - he was no less God than before - He was not now God minus some elements of His deity, but rather God plus all that He had made His own by taking manhood to Himself. The mystery of the incarnation is unfathomable, we cannot explain it - we can only formulate it in the words of the Creed:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. Perfect God, and perfect Man - who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ - one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of manhood into God."

Our minds cannot get beyond this. What we see in the manger is in the words of Charles Wesley's hymn "Our God contracted to a span, incomprehensibly made Man".

Yes, incomprehensibly - we shall be wise to remember this - to shun speculation and be content to adore. How are we to think of the Incarnation? The New Testament does not encourage us to think of the physical and psychological problems that it raises, but to worship God for the love that was shown in it - for it was a great act of condescension and self-humbling. Says Paul "who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" - and all this for our salvation! Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 8:9 "for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich".

It meant love to the uttermost for the unlovely - "through His poverty we might become rich".

The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity - hope of pardon, hope of peace with God - hope of eternal glory - because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor, was born in a stable so that 33 years later He would hang on a cross. It is the most wonderful message that the world has ever heard or will ever hear.

That "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us".

George Little

Youth Worker's Yarn

You're probably reading this at the end of a very busy Christmas period, where you have probably spent endless hours in queues, been annoyed at having to wrap the most odd shaped gift and mulled (nice pun!) over the exact details of Christmas visits and the family politics involved.

When I watch Christmas television and hear people speak about Christmas, I often get really infuriated that they just don't really seem to understand what Christmas is about. They say it's a time of 'family', 'giving' and so also 'receiving'. And in actual fact they are 100% right. It's amazing, God gave to us Himself in human form. He came down to earth as a man, living the perfect life but dying a death that we deserve because of our sin. He gifted us forgiveness when we don't deserve it. Man, God is very generous! But we have to receive that gift, that forgiveness. You can't force a person to receive a gift from you; they can turn down that new iPad. But why would they, I certainly wouldn't!

And it's exactly the same with God; so many people don't accept that free gift. But when you do, you are reborn into God's family, welcomed and loved as His child and so will receive the best inheritance - spending eternity with God in heaven. That's incredible! Unfortunately, when people talk about Christmas being a time of 'giving' and 'family' they don't fully understand what this means and that is such sad news. It's the same with carols, as much as it's amazing hearing 30+ adults and 80+ kids singing praises to God at a school carol concert, it's very sad that they don't really understand what they are singing about.

All of it reminds me, our work on earth and particularly in Cornton is no-where near done. Obviously my work concentrates on the

young people but I am also challenged that I need to show and share the real good news of Christmas to those around me.

Anyway, enough of my wee Christmas rant, I should really get on with telling you all about what's been going on and the hopes and plans for the coming months.

Well, the autumn term is over and I can't believe how quickly it has gone. This term has been a pretty busy one with new ministries starting, trips and plans for next term being developed. Our kids club remains a firm fixture of our week and we have been joined with a new intake of very hyper primary 1's who just love to dance. It's been so encouraging to hear 5 year olds with such little church contact, recite words of scripture. Our numbers overall have been slightly down on usual and so I ask you to pray that, not only would those kids we know return but that those kids and many more new kids would come through the doors. The youth cafe had also seen a slight drop in numbers, but this has started to rise again. Saying that, youth cafe has been very good these past few months with some great conversations and no behavioural problems. Over the next few months we will be looking to develop more group time on a normal Friday night, having more opportunities for interaction while we share our faith.

On a Sunday night we have a faithful few for Distinctive. This is our small group that has looked at expanding and deepening the knowledge of God and hopefully, helping in leading them into a relationship with God. It's slow work, which usually includes asking for earphones to be removed from ears 10 times during a night. But over the past few weeks, Stuart and myself have witnessed a real change in the group, with deeper conversations and real honesty. And so, can I please ask you to pray that this

continues, and that any break for Christmas does not damage this. As this group seems to attract the girls rather than the boys, one of the plans for the New Year is to create an alternative boys version. This will have a slightly different format; being centred around the two things boys love the most, food and football (although on the computer). Please pray for leaders for this group, as unfortunately this is one ministry where I believe I am not required to help at.

This term saw the introduction of 'Movie Kids'. From the beginning, this ministry has been positively received and on a normal night will have roughly 30 young children in attendance. I absolutely love watching 'VeggieTales' and so being able to share that with so many young people is awesome. We're teaching great truths through a medium that young people understand.

And lastly, can I please ask you to pray with me as I plan our new sports ministry that will hopefully be starting at the end of February. It will be a multi-sport and multi-church ministry that looks to engage with more children through that great tool available to us. It will be based within the Wallace High catchment area, introducing young people to some new, and some not so new sports and more importantly, introducing them to a God who transforms lives. It will only include a short, 5-minute, water break talk, but hopefully this will challenge the young people enough that they want to attend other ministries and even a Christianity Explored course. We will be targeting this new venture at primary 4-6 and primary 7 - S3. There are so many small details still to be worked out and the very large detail of putting a team together, a team that is qualified to deliver a ministry such as this.

As always, I am so thankful for all your support of these past few months, be that, financial, prayer, volunteering, or just listening to me and speaking words of encouragement. Our work is nowhere near done and so I ask you to continue with it, in whatever capacity that is.

Ruth

Rudolph and Olive

The game show contestant was set to come back the next day for more cash and prizes. All he had to do was correctly answer one last question.

"To be today's champion," the show's smiling host intoned, "name two of Santa's reindeer."

The contestant, a man in his early thirties, gave a sigh of relief, gratified that he had drawn such an easy question.

"Rudolph!" he announced, "and Olive!"

The studio audience started mumbling, and the confused host replied, "Yes, we'll accept Rudolph, but can you explain Olive?"

The man gestured impatiently, "You know, Rudolph - the Red Nosed Reindeer - had a very shiny nose. And if you ever saw it, you would even say it glowed. Olive, the other reindeer..."



Are you keeping up with our Daily Devotional "Through the Bible" reading plan? If not, why not start in 2012! Paper copies are available from the notice boards or follow along online at "<http://www.cornton.org.uk/throughthebible.htm>" We cover one chapter a day, with some reflections and points of prayer. Here is the Daily Devotional from Christmas Day...

Through the Bible

Sunday 25 December 2011

1 Chronicles 25:1-31

All these men were under the supervision of their fathers for the music of the temple of the LORD, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God. (v.6)

Here we see David assemble the worship team and when it speaks of them prophesying with harps etc, don't let that confuse you. They were not necessarily foretelling but forth-telling the things of God through their music. In 1 Corinthians 14:3 we read '*But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.*' Worship songs should minister to our hearts, they should build us up, they should encourage us, and they should comfort us, as we focus back on the Lord. And what a joy it is when God gives you a new song as He touches your heart, and then you share that new song with others. God can and does speak to our hearts through worship!

I want you to see that this was not some chaotic free for all, and everyone was doing their own thing. David was overseeing this ministry, keeping things in order and moving in the right direction. Yes, Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were the leaders, but it was David who ultimately was in charge. And every musician was under the supervision of their fathers. Parents have a responsibility to bring up their children well and to watch over them.

And notice too that these musicians were divided into twenty four groups just like the priests so they could each minister for two weeks in the temple. Everything done in an orderly manner.

We were created to worship and bring glory to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Whenever we see and experience the goodness of God our hearts ought to break out in praise. On this Christmas day we remember the angels bringing their song of praise to God at the birth of Jesus 'Glory to God in the highest'.

Pray: giving thanks to God for his most indescribable gift to us.

Reflect: what can I worship and praise God for today?

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Prayer Diary

Cornton Baptist Church Prayer Diaries are available from the notice boards. Make sure you pick up a copy and take the opportunity to pray each day for those within the fellowship.

The Bible Returns to the Castle

I was privileged to attend a unique service held on the last Sunday in November in the Chapel at Stirling Castle. The occasion marked the gift by the Scottish Bible Society, of a King James Bible to be placed in the Chapel. This event was instigated by members of Christians Together in Stirling and approved by Historic Scotland.

There had not been a Bible in the Chapel within living memory and it was thought important to have this situation remedied. It was especially fitting that 2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the version of the Bible authorised by King James VI of Scotland, who was born in Stirling Castle.

Around 150 people from churches in the Stirling area were present, along with various dignitaries, including the Lord Lieutenant for Stirlingshire who received the Bible on behalf of the people of Stirling. Scripture readings and prayers were made by representatives of local churches, while the choir of the Church of the Holy Rood led the unaccompanied singing of several Psalms and sang an anthem. The music was chosen to reflect that used during the 16th Century and proved to be exceptionally moving.

Elaine Duncan, Director of the Scottish Bible Society, gave a fine address, which she based on the three Bible passages read, which were from Isaiah chapter 61, Romans chapter 12 and St. John's Gospel chapter 1. Elaine spoke about the historical, the cultural and the cosmic significance of the Bible, emphasising its continuing relevance to our national and individual lives.

Kath Arton

Church Signs

The Best Vitamin for a Christian is B1

Try our Sundays.
They are better than Baskin-Robbins.

You are not too bad to come in.
You are not too good to stay out.

Can't Sleep?
Try counting your blessings.

Try Jesus. If you don't like Him,
the devil will always take you back.

Life is Hard. Afterlife is harder.

Aspire to Inspire before you Expire.

Where will you be sitting in eternity?
Smoking or Non-Smoking?

Under same management for over 2,000 years.



Tea Rotas

Morning

8th Jan Mayra
 15th Jan Catherine Hanlon
 22nd Jan Ruth Smith
 29th Jan Netta Denison
 5th Feb Roni Fleming
 12th Feb Carol Smith
 19th Feb Nan Thomson

Evening

8th Jan Nan Thomson
 15th Jan Elaine
 22nd Jan Roni
 29th Jan Mags
 5th Feb Catherine Hanlon
 12th Feb Kath Arton
 19th Feb Morag

Christmas Services

Sunday 18 Dec 2011 11am	Nativity
Sunday 18 Dec 2011 6.30pm	Lessons in Carols
Saturday 24 Dec 2011 11.15pm	Watchnight Service
Sunday 25 Dec 2011 10.30am	Christmas Day Family Service
Sunday 1 Jan 2012 11am	New Year Communion Service

www.cornton.org.uk