

The  
Bethel  
Mag

The Church  
that Meets at  
Bethel

1900  
BETHEL CHAPEL



Winter  
2023

The magazine from the church  
In the community  
For the community

# NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCH



Hi all!

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go.” Loads of Christmas stuff is everywhere—we’ve been preparing for our Christmas Fayre (Saturday November 25th 12 noon) for ages, Christmas cards were in the shops in September and there are people who have already done their Christmas shopping!!

I actually love Christmas - not the hype and the greed, not the over-spending or over-eating, but the often sadly deeply hidden authentic meaning - here is Jesus, Saviour of the world, born into a really difficult world to help us as one of us, to save us as Redeemer and to completely change our perspective on life for now and for eternity.

I sit back and look around the world, then gaze back at my own life ..... I wonder what Christmas might be for the children in Israel and Gaza this December? I wonder what Christmas might be for the children in Ukraine this time?

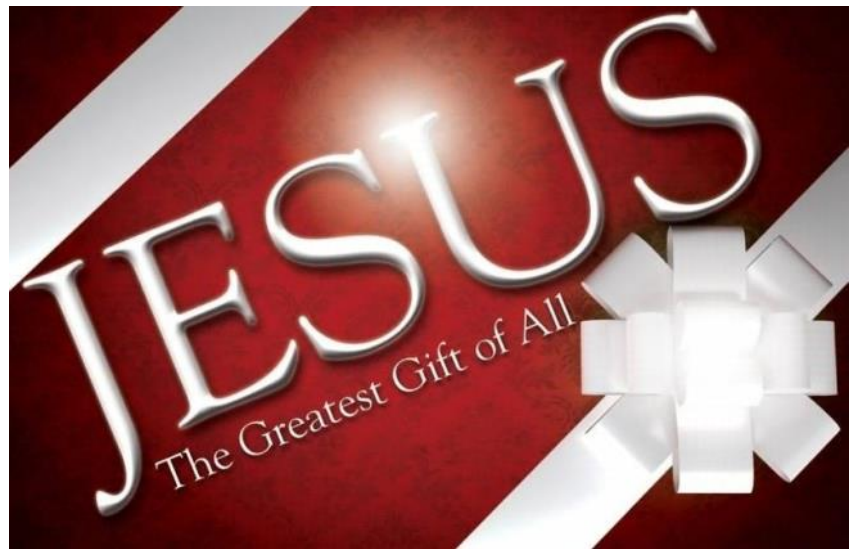
Christmas is not just a time for us to think about children though - no matter what the circumstances around us, it’s a huge gift for us all. The world situations change, God does not. I guess the thing about gifts



though, is that they are given, but also have to be accepted, received. Then when the gift is received it has to be unwrapped, then when unwrapped, it has to be used or ..... The original intention of the gift is completely and utterly wasted.

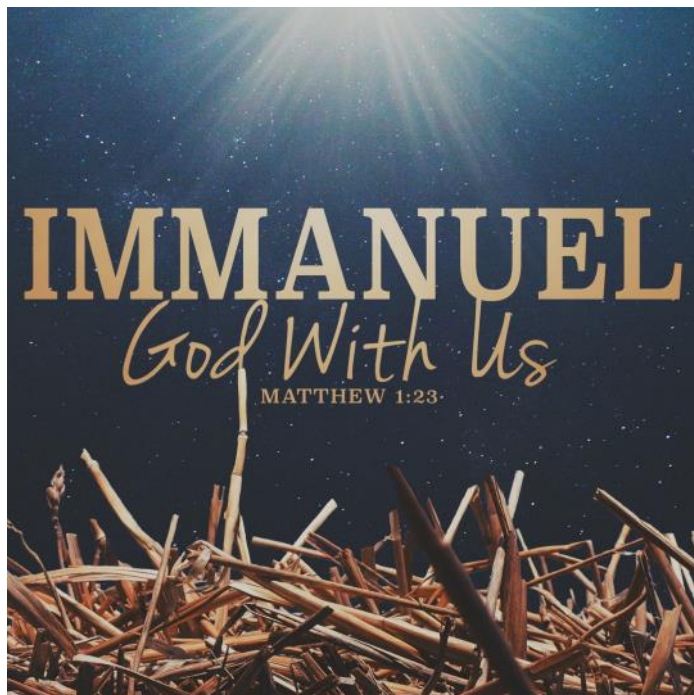
So let’s start with Jesus, given to us by God the Father - He has to be accepted, and when we are given a gift, we should say “Thank you.” Good start. Then the gift of Jesus into our lives has to be unwrapped. This is a process, getting to know Jesus is a day by day thing, a letting Him walk with us agreement through our lives, allowing Him to help and guide. Then when the unwrapping is in progress, the using of the gift from the Father is letting our lives be transformed from who we are into all that God knows we can become - that’s a great thing. He’s not saying that who we are isn’t OK, what He is saying is that there is even better ahead with Him.

Being the recipient of the gift of Jesus means that we are part of a huge, uncountable crowd of people who have also received the gift and are in this life-process of unwrapping the present and using it. Bethel is a great place to find out some more of those people who are also walking life with The Gift. At many of our events here at Bethel, we bump into people we've known for ever, people we haven't seen for ages, and new people that it's just good to meet.



Our Christmas Fayre is a most brilliant place to be alongside others who have said "Thank you" to our Heavenly Father for the gift of Jesus, and to be with those who are still wondering about whether to receive His gift. It's a great atmosphere, where we can see and feel that "Bethel" (House of God) is so very, very much more than a building, so very, very much more than just being here on Sundays. Bethel really is wherever God lives.

So, as Christmas - the real celebration of Jesus in our world approaches - can I invite you to become part of The House of God - with you receiving God's greatest gift, Jesus, saying Thank you, unwrapping His presence in your lives and using your gift to do God's will - bring His love and peace, forgiveness and mercy into our broken world. Pray for our world, the world's children all over, especially where war and hatred are currently more easily seen than God's peace and love.



"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas ...." Whatever Christmas means for you, I hope and pray that you might truly know that Christmas is for you, for you, for you. It's God's special time to say, "I love you, and here's my gift to you, my Son Jesus, your Saviour, your Forever Friend. Given with love."

For Christmas and forever -  
Immanuel -

**Bethel Chapel** Hill Street, Wollescote, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8TL  
Tel: 01384 892137

email: [admin@bethelchapel.org.uk](mailto:admin@bethelchapel.org.uk) Website: [www.bethelchapel.net](http://www.bethelchapel.net)

*The Bethel Mag is also available on our website*

# Bethel Chapel

Hill Street, Wollescote,  
Stourbridge, DY9 8TL



☎ 01384 892137

✉ admin@bethelchapel.org.uk

🌐 www.bethelchapel.net

## The church in the community, for the community



### Sundays

Morning Worship 10.30am  
incl. Pathfinders (under 12's)  
& Icebreakers (over 12's)

Evening Worship 6.00pm

### One Way Club

For 5 - 10 year olds

Monthly on a Saturday, 10.00am - 1.00pm

£2.00 per session



Games, Crafts & Activities

### Cancer Peer Support Group

Monthly on last Tuesday of each month

5.30 - 7.30pm



### Knit & Natter

From the experienced to the novice,  
everyone welcome

Monday 9.30 - 11.30am

### Breathe In, Breathe Out

Support group for people living with breathing  
difficulties of all kinds, e.g. COPD, Asthma, etc

Monday 1.00 - 3.00pm



Bethel is also available for  
**Weddings, Christenings and Funerals**  
For further information please see our  
website or contact the church office.

### Little Lambs Pre-School Centre



High quality 55 place private pre-school  
education within a happy, secure and  
stimulating early years environment for  
children aged 2½ to 5 years.

Further details and Prospectus available on our  
website

### Cornerstone

Luncheon Club for Senior Citizens

Wednesday 12.30pm

Free local minibus transport provided if needed

4 course meal

£5.00



### Little Acorns Parents/Carers & Toddlers

Play and activities for toddlers and their carers

Thursday 9.30 - 11.15am

£3.00 per session  
(incl. refreshments)



### Feel Good Friday

Social get together for anyone who wants to have  
a cuppa, a chat and play cards, dominoes, etc.

Friday 2.00 - 4.00pm

### Friday Night Icebreakers

For 11 - 18 year olds, get together at the end  
of the week, play music, games, cook, etc

Friday 7.00 - 9.00pm

# BIBO

By Angie Rae - BIBO group leader

We are BIBO (Breathe In Breathe Out)

We meet up every Monday between 1.00 - 3.00pm at Bethel around the table outside the kitchen.

We are a self-help group for people who have problems with breathing issues, such as COPD, lung disease, asthma, etc. and we meet up socially each week.

Some weeks we do crafts, e.g. card making and jewellery making.

We also go out for meals to celebrate birthdays, Easter, Christmas, etc.

At the weekly sessions we share a cuppa and cakes and we help each other if any of us have any problems. We can share our experience of dealing with the health issues we each have, and talk about the practicalities of coping with health services and systems.

The only problem is the sessions go so quickly, we never seem to have enough time!

Our group is small but slowly growing and everyone is welcome to come along.

**BIBO**  
A support group for people living with breathing difficulties  
**Every Monday 1pm-3pm**  
Bethel Chapel, Hill Street, Wollescote, DY9 8TL

If you live with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or any breathing disease, why not join your local BIBO group.

Here you can access free support and advice with people who understand what you are dealing with everyday.

BIBO boasts close links with respiratory nurses, and offers the chance for social interaction and educational talks.

Its easy to feel alone, but by joining a BIBO group you can reduce social isolation and improve your breathing, mental health and your overall quality of life.

So come Join us for a cup of tea or coffee and sandwiches and a chat with people who really understand

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact Angela Rea on 07505 811977



# Operation Christmas Child



The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Since 1993, more than 209 million children in over 170 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child.

Operation Christmas Child began in the UK in 1990, after Dave Cooke, a businessman in Wrexham and his wife Jill felt called to do something in response to the plight of Romanian orphans at the end of the Cold War. Dave's sister Jan, came up with the concept of the shoebox gift as a form of easily transportable 'Christmas stocking' wrapped and packed with love. A tangible message of hope for children in the toughest of circumstances.

This year, we at Bethel have volunteered to be a local church collection point for people to bring their shoeboxes during the collection week, commencing Monday 13th November - see poster opposite for the times we will be open to receive them. On the following Monday, 20th November, we will be taking all that have been collected here to the national collection point in Coventry so that they can be checked and distributed around the world. From here, our boxes mainly to go Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Items that **CANNOT** be included in a shoebox are toothpaste, sweets, lotions and liquids, used or damaged items, war-related items, seeds, gum, chocolate or food items, religious or political literature, medicines, aerosol cans, sharp or fragile items. Anything else that a child would love to receive is great, e.g. **cuddly toy, doll, toy car, skipping rope, washcloths, combs, pens, crayons, colouring or writing books, socks, sunglasses, etc.**

If you would like to send a shoebox gift this year, just bring them along during the collection times that the week.



## Send a Gift-Filled Shoebox in Jesus' Name

Bethel Chapel, Hill Street, Wollescote, DY9 8TL

### Local Collection Point - Times



- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2.00pm – 4.00pm
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 11.30am – 2.00pm
- Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 11.30am – 2.00pm
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2.00pm – 4.00pm



And before morning service on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 10.30am

**GOOD NEWS. GREAT JOY.**

Visit [Samaritans-purse.org.uk/occ](http://Samaritans-purse.org.uk/occ) to learn more about how God can use a gift-filled shoebox given in Jesus' Name to transform a child, their family, and their community.



# Bethel Memories

By Val Woodhouse



The Cost of Living Crisis is a topic that one does not seem able to escape from at the moment. For those of us of maturer years this 'Crisis' is not the first and probably not the last, and hopefully we have gained enough wisdom to realise they are temporal and transient, they are human in their manufacture and they come and they go. Financial constraints have often been a major consideration for Bethelites since the Chapel was founded, but, what God orders God pays for and armed with this trust, the Bethel Society purchased their first Chapel building in Pump Street in 1890. There being very little money for the refurbishment, it was agreed that materials would only be ordered when there was enough cash to pay for them. To keep costs to a minimum the majority of the conversion work was done by members after work and at weekends. Despite their best efforts some professional help was necessary and a local contractor Mr Samuel Brettle was approached. The deputation from Bethel waited anxiously to hear how much money they would have to advance to secure his services, but all Mr Brettle required was an undertaking that the account would be paid when the bill was presented. It would seem that this very generous soul had no intention of charging for the goods and labour he supplied and by 1950 the records show that the bill had still not been presented, and it still hasn't been today! It is heartening when so much is swept away in order for profit to be made, that there are business people for whom profit is not the only consideration.

*Looking back over the decades it seems that each generation of Bethelites have, by the grace of God, been able hand His House to the next generation of custodians in good order, so that the work of Bethel Chapel, started by such faithful servants of God over 100 years ago, can continue until the Lord returns.*

In 1926 Britain was again in the grip of a deep depression, but the 'Lords Vineyard' known as Bethel Chapel was flourishing. The visible fruits of the labourers in the vineyard being so many scholars in Sunday School (classes included adults as well as children in those days) that new classrooms were needed together with a cost effective heating system. In December 1926 a letter was sent out to potential benefactors asking for donations and interest free loans, it was estimated that a total of £800.00 was needed. The letter



acknowledged that the timing was not ideal but added that they believed the work of God must not stop. Despite the economic gloom of the time the generous response to the December appeal enabled these needs to be met. Although not immune from the vagaries of economics, Christians know the certainty that God's love for us can always be banked upon, and the joyous festival of Christmas celebrates this. For Bethel the seasonal celebrations begin with the Christmas Fair, formerly the Christmas Bazaar. The account books of the sixties reveal that the Drapery stall was a favourite at the Bazaar, whilst a very popular competition appears listed as 'Chicken:' Whatever that was I can only leave you to imagine! The Christmas Fair in 1986 had a new and rather lovely innovation, where the Sunday School children were all sponsored to sing at the Fair and for the half hour between 3.30 and 4.00 everyone was invited to join with them to sing all the well known Christmas favourites. This year the Fair is on 25th November, and as always it is wonderful to see old friends and new. So come along and join the queue for Santa, hot pork sandwiches, bag a bargain or just guess Rudolph's birthday. Whatever you choose to do we can promise a happy, Holy Spirit filled beginning to the Advent season.

Christmas and parties go together; and there is a lovely description of the Sunday School party of 1936 in the teachers' minute book. Armed with a budget of £2, the teachers managed to cater for 150 children each of whom had two cakes with icing and a packet of sweets with their party tea. After two hours of fun, the happy souls departed, replete with paper hats and a small novelty toy very kindly donated by the local co-op. Again, we see the generosity of the local business community.

In 1989 the Sunday School party went 'on the road' all the way to Ashend Farm in Tamworth. The children and the grown ups enjoyed a special time together feeding the animals and visiting a Nativity scene in a stable complete with live donkeys!



At the end of the visit each child met Santa who gave them all a gift to help them remember their day.

***This Christmas as we open our gifts, let us remember the most wonderful gift of all. Jesus was given to us as a perfect gift in an imperfect world.***

***Don't leave the gift unwrapped, - open and reveal its treasure.***



# BETHEL TREASURES

Heaven Scent

## Our Little Shop of Hope at Christmas

Everyone is doing their best to keep going as usual as we approach Christmas, but with the cost of living crisis and the desire to be as sustainable as possible, what better place to shop than Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent?

We have a constant new supply of items coming in each week, from Christmas jumpers and outfits to Christmas trees and decorations, good quality toys to sparkly jewellery and much more besides. The prices are as reasonable as we can make them and the staff in the shop are only too willing to try to source anything you might be looking for that we currently don't have - just ask and we'll see what we can do!

*Wishing all of our customers a very happy and blessed Christmas from everyone at Bethel Treasures Heaven Scent xx*



# BETHEL TREASURES

Heaven Scent

190-191 High Street, Quarry Bank, DY5 2AB

please call in any day they are open, you will be made most welcome

Tuesdays 10am - 2pm - Wednesdays & Fridays 11am - 3pm - Saturdays 10am - 1pm



# Pathfinders Nativity



When Jacq and Jane get back from their holiday, just after the Harvest each year, the first question usually asked by the Pathfinders (or their parents!) is 'have you sorted the Nativity yet?'

We love it that our kids are still so enthusiastic about telling the Christmas story and love to be involved in all the planning that goes into it. Usually we try to keep a respectful lid on it until after the Remembrance Day service, but after that it is full on Nativity until the actual day - this year being Sunday 17th December at 10.30am. We used to have the church nativity services at 4.00pm, but during the Covid lockdowns we had to change the way we approached them, and it seems to go well to have it at our normal church



time of 10.30am and then have highlights played at the evening service from our YouTube recording so that everyone in church can see the play. Unfortunately because the nativity prominently features our children and young people and we want to keep them safe, we are unable to make the YouTube recording open to the general public, those wishing to see it need to ask the office for a link.

Each year we say, 'what shall we do this year?' Trying to come up with something different whilst telling the same story every year can be challenging! But this year we were inspired by a story about the greatest gift ever from the Bible Society, so we hope everyone will enjoy seeing the different spin that we have on it this year.



Our Pathfinders are very excited to show you all about God's greatest gift. His birth and a bit beyond that! They would love to see you if you can come along to support them - you won't be disappointed!

# Advent

Every year at Bethel we have a beautiful Advent wreath that sits on top of the font, waiting for one candle to be lit each Sunday during Advent.

Historically, Advent was the time of fasting in preparation for the coming of Christ, and the four Sundays were originally associated with the themes of Heaven, Hell, Death and Judgment, but they came to represent The Patriarchs, The Prophets, John the Baptist, The Virgin Mary and Christ, but more usually the candles have represented Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.



Our candles at Bethel are usually red on the 4 Sundays of Advent, and then the final central white candle is for lighting on Christmas Morning as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. In some churches you will see 3 purple, 1 rose-pink and 1 white advent candles in their wreaths, reflecting the liturgical colours of the weeks.



Advent wreaths have their origin in the folklore of Northern Europe. At the darkest time of year, people would light candles on wheel-shaped bunches of evergreen, which symbolized their hope of the eternal Spring of life, which would return with the longer days. By the 16th Century, Christians in Eastern Europe

had adopted this idea and were using the lights and the greenery to remind them of the life of Christ and Jesus Light of the World.

The first modern Advent wreath was made by Johann Wichern, a German theologian and educator who founded a home for poor children in the city of Hamburg. During the Advent season, the children would ask daily if Christmas had arrived. In 1839, he built a wooden ring (made out of a cartwheel) with small red candles and 4 big white candles. A small candle was lit successively every day of Advent. On Sundays, a large white candle was lit. This eventually led to the modern Advent wreath with its four candles.

Those of us of a certain age will surely remember the excitement of the first sign of Christmas, when Blue Peter made their Advent Crown out of coat hangers, tinsel and baubles, with John Noakes or Valerie Singleton lighting a perilously placed candle teetering at a jaunty angle each week in the lead up to Christmas - and then pestering our parents to make one too, though I can't remember one ever actually being completed at home!



The underlying symbolism is the accumulation of light as an expression of the growing anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the Light of the World.

The circular wreath represents God's eternity as it has no beginning or end and the evergreens are also a symbol of everlasting life.

Advent candles have the days of December marked on them, up to Christmas Eve. They are more likely to be used in homes rather than in churches. Each day in December the candle is burnt down a little more, to show the passing of the days leading up to Christmas.

In a world that is sometimes dark physically and spiritually, watch the light grow during Advent this year, and know that Jesus Light of the World

never dims. He will never leave us or forsake us, and His invitation is for us all to receive Him as He comes as Saviour and Lord.



# Knit & Natter

By Margaret Cartwright

Every Monday morning at 9.30am, Bethel is open to Knit and Natter. A small group of ladies who come together to share a cuppa, a chat and a shared love of crafting.



Although the group is called knit and natter you will also find crocheting, needlepoint and occasionally other crafty things going on, but one thing for sure, nattering is always the main star of the morning!!

Knit and natter have always loved a project and its members have been part of many things over the years including knitting hundreds of poppies for Bethel's remembrance displays, tiny hats for the Innocent Big Knit Challenge, coats for Greyhound Rescue and small hats and blankets for premature babies at Russells Hall

Hospital. The current members are still just as generous knitting teddies for charity, knitting and crocheting baby clothing for Bethel Treasures charity shop and the local Baby Bank and one lady knitting toys for her Grandson's special school. And of course, the Christmas Fayre always benefits from a beautiful selection of well-crafted handmade items for our Winter Warmers and Christmas Gifts stalls.

The group was started in 2015 by Sue Wilding with people from Bethel and over the years has reached out and welcomed people from the local community. So whether you are a master crafter or complete novice, as long as you can natter, you are welcome too!!





**Bethel Chapel &  
Little Lambs Pre-School Centre  
Hill Street, Wollescote**

**CHRISTMAS**

**FAYRE**

**Saturday 25th November  
12.00 noon**

Grand Draw,  
Bottle Tombola,  
Chocolate Stall,  
Toy Stall,  
Fun & games

Cuddly Toys  
prize every time,  
Home-made Cakes,  
Winter Warmers,  
Christmas Gifts  
& Crafts

Hot Pork  
Sandwiches,  
Jacket Potatoes



Visit Santa  
and his REAL  
Reindeer!

**FREE ENTRY!!**

# Christmas at Bethel

At this special time, we invite you to join with us  
at any of our Christmas Celebrations.

## **Sunday 3rd December**

10.30am - Advent Christmas Communion  
6pm - Traditional Carol Service to remember loved ones

## **Sunday 10th December**

10.30am - A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols  
6.00pm - Advent Christmas Communion

## **Friday 15th December**

9.45am - Little Lambs Pre-School Centre Nativity Service

## **Sunday 17th December**

10.30am - Church Nativity Service  
6.00pm - Evening Worship

## **Christmas Eve**

## **Sunday 24th December**

12.00noon - Carols with Santa on the lawn  
11.30pm - Worship the New-born King



## **Christmas Day**

## **Monday 25th December**

10.00am - Christmas Morning Celebration (*streamed*)

Services streamed at [www.youtube.com/@BethelChapellYe/streams](http://www.youtube.com/@BethelChapellYe/streams)