



# NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCH

Hi People!

Lovely to be talking with you in our latest Bethel Mag. Since the last Mag, we've had Christmas, and we've been busy with all sorts of events.



Firstly we had our Shoe Box Appeal where people filled empty shoeboxes with all sorts of goodies for children. These (almost 100) were taken by Steve Hawker and John Weston to the Operation Christmas Child central depot in Coventry. (Thank you lads!) From there, they are checked and begin their journey to places all over

the world where children are in such need - not only war-torn countries, but areas of abject poverty, disease and high child mortality rates. Thank you to each one of you who donated a shoebox or cash (as each box carries a contribution of £5 to help with transportation costs) to this very worthy annual collection.

Then came our Christmas Fayre - another enormous success both in terms of people through the doors, money raised for Bethel's ongoing work (£13,580.23) and seeds sown into people's lives for the Kingdom of God. Undying thanks go to Shelley, Jo, Hayley, Clare and Team (you know who you are) who made the whole thing happen. We also received fund matching through Shaun and Lloyds Bank, so again, undying thanks to him and the 11 volunteers from Lloyds.



Christmas at Bethel was as always, really beautiful. The 17 foot tall Christmas tree in Chapel, the window star lights, the blue lights in the tree outside, and Christmas flowers around the door arch and the gorgeous Christmas arrangements inside. It all combines to make a truly special feeling in this sanctuary that we call Bethel Chapel. Here is the home of our God, where you

are always invited to be - to come and visit, to spend a few moments in quiet, or to be part of a service. Our Christmas services included a Loved Ones Remembrance Carol Service, our Nativity Service with our Pathfinder children, and this year it was a brilliant retelling of the story called “Festive Fred finds the Greatest Gift”.



Christmas Eve on the lawn with Santa sing song was cold but great, and the midnight communion service Christmas Eve to Christmas morning was as peaceful, deeply meaningful and special as ever. We again streamed Christmas morning service, letting people join in wearing their pyjamas if they wanted!!!

So this year so far, we’ve been through our Covenant Service, Mothering Sunday Services and are heading towards the Cross of Jesus as we walk through Lent together. A highlight for me has been (and still is happening) the Lenten reflections with June Winnall on Zoom..... 20 minutes of peaceful, measured, calming restorative words from Robert Way’s book “Garden of the Beloved.” It’s not too late to watch in, and just look at the Bethel website and newsheet each week for the Zoom link. I guarantee, you’ll find it good for your soul.



Easter is nearly here, and the back page of this Mag has all the details of the special events, including the Maundy Thursday Passover (YOU MUST BOOK A PLACE IN ADVANCE), the Good Friday Choral Society performance of Stainer’s cantata “The Crucifixion”, Easter morning and evening services with hot cross buns!! I hope to see you somewhere, sometime. *(If you can’t make it to Bethel, most of our services are available on our YouTube Channel - [www.youtube.com/@BethelChapelLye/streams](http://www.youtube.com/@BethelChapelLye/streams))*

So, from me to you - may the love of God, seen best in Jesus, change our lives, this Easter and every day. Jill x

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*The Bethel Mag is also available on our website*

# Best wishes Lucy

The last few years have seen many changes at Little Lambs. The latest change is that we are sadly bidding a fond farewell to Lucy.

Lucy's journey at Little Lambs began many years ago – not only is she San and Jill's God Daughter (meaning that she has basically been part of Lambs since the year dot), but she was also a Little Lamb as a child herself. This means that Lucy has probably been wearing that famous yellow t-shirt for the majority of her life!!! Lucy was part of Little Lambs in the days of the old hut and even played Mary in our Nativity Play many moons ago, little did she know that she would be part of so many more Nativity Plays at Bethel!!



*Lucy's first staff photo, back from College days!*

Lucy first began as an Auntie when she came to us on work placement from school, back in September 2009. She must have enjoyed it as she went on to complete her Level 3 childcare qualification at Halesowen College, and of course she chose Lambs to attend for her placement.

As often happens at Lambs, God had a plan, and just as a new member of staff was needed to fill a vacancy that had arisen, Lucy qualified!! She passed the interview with flying colours and became one of the team permanently in September 2012.



*Lucy's most recent staff photo, this one from 2015*



Lucy's settled fantastically into her role, her practice flourished and after a few years she was keen to take on further responsibilities. She became a Senior Practitioner in September 2019 and in 2021 completed a Level 5 Diploma in Management. Lucy has, over the years, become an integral member of staff, thought of highly by not just the rest of the

team, but by all the children and parents that she has forged such wonderful relationships with over the years.

Sadly, Lucy has decided that it is time to spread her wings and extend her knowledge of Children's Work. She is moving on to work alongside a Speech Therapist and will, I'm sure, relish the challenge of the new skills she will learn following her chosen path.

It is an end to a wonderful chapter at Little Lambs, as Lucy has been one of the last ties to the days of the old hut at Little Lambs and of course to San, with whom she had such a strong bond.

Lucy – we will miss you terribly, but we wish you all the very best in your new venture! Please come and see us often and always stay part of our Little Lambs family. Think of us in those hot summer months boiling in the yellow tight knit fabric t-shirts that I am sure you will secretly miss.

Love to you always.



*Lambs 25th anniversary celebrations in 2016*



*The Lambs Team photo from Summer 2023*

# Our Young People

At the beginning of 2024, we had a little change in the way that our young people's Sunday morning sessions are structured.



For a many years we have had all the PathFinders together, sometimes split into classes and sometimes as one group, from the tiny ones up to around 11 years old. They then went onto Icebreakers when they got to senior school age.

As our young people get older, there is more pressure on their time from school and outside interests, so naturally some of them we see less regularly as they progress and some of them we lose for a little while.



To try to help with the transition to Icebreakers, we've now introduced an 'in between' group which we are calling PathBreakers (see what we did there?!). PathBreakers are now the group from last year in primary school (year 6), through to year 9 in secondary school. They still meet in Dove Room, now with Jacqui and Jorja, but are now doing less of the colouring pages and worksheets but more thinking about the themes and Bible stories covered and applying them to everyday life, along with more advanced games and work to get them ready to go onto the next stage of IceBreakers.

PathFinders are still meeting together but now with Jane and Clare in Rainbow Room and continue to do many of the things that they always have done, in their own area now so they are able to explore and express themselves as they are learning, targeted specifically at their age group.

Everyone seems to be adjusting well to the new set up and we've had great attendances since Christmas so we hope everyone is enjoying themselves. Hopefully this will help to feed up to a strongly bonded Sunday Icebreaker group in the fullness of time.



Please pray for all our PathFinders, PathBreakers and IceBreakers, that they remain strong in their faith, in their connections with each other, and that they always feel they are a vital and valued part of the church that meets at Bethel.

Just for fun - for those who enjoy a good wordsearch!

# RESURRECTION DAY WORD FIND



H	I	G	H	P	R	I	E	S	T	O	R	N	E	V	I	L	A
T	C	P	H	A	R	I	S	E	E	S	O	M	P	R	A	R	P
A	R	D	S	E	E	K	C	E	N	T	U	R	I	O	N	G	A
E	U	O	E	E	V	I	G	R	O	F	R	E	A	N	G	E	L
D	C	O	V	E	N	A	N	T	R	E	S	I	R	A	B	L	M
P	I	L	A	T	E	R	F	E	I	H	T	L	A	I	R	U	B
O	F	B	R	R	E	M	P	T	Y	T	O	M	B	L	E	Y	R
K	I	N	G	O	F	T	H	E	J	E	W	S	N	S	A	S	A
W	X	A	N	O	G	C	E	O	E	U	I	G	A	R	D	E	N
T	I	H	C	S	D	R	R	I	S	N	D	R	P	N	P	U	C
N	O	N	X	T	A	S	O	O	U	R	M	A	R	Y	N	T	H
J	N	O	E	E	B	O	D	Y	S	C	A	R	S	C	V	A	E
P	E	T	E	R	S	L	A	S	T	S	U	P	P	E	R	C	S
T	H	O	M	A	S	N	R	O	H	T	F	O	N	W	O	R	C

Race to see how fast can you locate the words on this list:

- |                                    |  |   |  |                                  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angel     | <input type="checkbox"/> Crown of Thorns | <input type="checkbox"/> God              | <input type="checkbox"/> Last Supper   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rooster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alive     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross           | <input type="checkbox"/> Grave            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mary          | <input type="checkbox"/> Scars   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arise     | <input type="checkbox"/> Crucifixion     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosanna          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nails         | <input type="checkbox"/> Seek    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cup             | <input type="checkbox"/> Herod            | <input type="checkbox"/> Palm Branches | <input type="checkbox"/> Sin     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Body      | <input type="checkbox"/> Death           | <input type="checkbox"/> High Priest      | <input type="checkbox"/> Peter         | <input type="checkbox"/> Thief   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bread     | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear             | <input type="checkbox"/> Jesus            | <input type="checkbox"/> Perfume       | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomas  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burial    | <input type="checkbox"/> Empty Tomb      | <input type="checkbox"/> John             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharisees     | <input type="checkbox"/> Trial   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Centurion | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgive         | <input type="checkbox"/> Judas            | <input type="checkbox"/> Pilate        | <input type="checkbox"/> Torn    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covenant  | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden          | <input type="checkbox"/> King of the Jews | <input type="checkbox"/> Pray          | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine    |

# Bethel Prayer Group

Prayer is central to our Christian life and our relationship with God as shown by Jesus Himself in spending time regularly in prayer with His Heavenly Father.

We can also read in the book of Acts chapter 2 verse 42 that following Pentecost the first believers devoted themselves to prayer as God's people seeking to do His will.



In the Bible we are all encouraged to pray, both in the teachings of Jesus and in the writings of Paul and others. If we are to fulfil God's plans for our lives and for the Church we need to present needs to God as well as hearing His instructions through the Word and through His communication to us by His Holy Spirit.

In addition to prayer in every Church service, and on the various WhatsApp groups the Lord's prayer is shared daily, there is in Church on Thursday afternoon in most weeks at 4pm a Prayer Meeting where a (currently) small group prays into all aspects of Bethel plus many other local, national and international matters.

There is a prayer box on the table in the prayer area into which everyone in the Church is encouraged to contribute an item for prayer, and the group take them out and pray over them. There is no need to include the originator's name.

All would be welcome to come along to the meeting and join in the prayer group any week they are able to.

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## Operation Christmas Child



Last November for the first time Bethel became a local collection point for the Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child, shoebox presents appeal. For many years we have collected our own shoeboxes and then had them either collected or taken to the previous collection point in Oldbury, but this year we were asked to be a local church collection point.

During the national collection week, we set up a reception point just inside the main church doors to receive shoeboxes filled with presents for children that people and organisations wished to donate to the appeal. We collected nearly 100 boxes, filled with love and prayers as well as the gifts. Some of the boxes came from our own



groups - Pathfinders, One Way and Little Lambs all contributed - along with other individuals and organisations coming into church, including a couple of pupils from Wrens Nest Primary School along with their teacher, who brought in their school's amazing contribution.

Steve Hawker and John Weston then took a road-trip out with them to the Coventry national collection centre, where they were readied for distribution to children in need around the world. 11.3 million shoeboxes were packed worldwide during last year's collection season, 237,735 of them coming from the UK, sharing the love of Jesus with millions of children and their families. Will you think about sharing a shoebox present this year?



**From OCC - Here are a couple of inspiring true stories, because of shoeboxes like yours!**

### **Moldova: How a Pink Piglet Showed God's Love**



*All Corina wanted for Christmas was a pink piglet with sparkling eyes that she saw in a shop window. As Moldova is the most struggling economy in Europe, her mum explained to her that like many other families, she didn't have a lot of money. Corina's mum promised if there was enough money left over then she would purchase the piglet for Corina. Christmas passed and unfortunately, there was no money left to purchase the piglet. One day Corina received an invitation from a local church to attend an outreach event. At this event, Corina heard about Jesus' love for her and received a shoebox gift. When she opened her shoebox, she was stunned, inside was a pink piglet with sparkling eyes. In Corina's joy, she began to cry, this was all she wanted for Christmas.*

*Corina's mum was also overjoyed, she thanked everyone and said,*

*"Truly God knows what we need and what we want, the proof is today's shoeboxes."*

*Each year we send 8 lorries to Moldova, so up to 80,000 children receive precious shoebox gifts from our generous supporters in the UK.*

### **Sensitive Country: From One Shoebox To Thirty Lives**

*My name is Rama and I am from a region where there are many restrictions in sharing the love of Jesus. It is a real challenge to reach children with the Gospel, but Operation Christmas Child gift boxes open the door to reach children and families.*

*When I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I was the only Christian in my class none of my classmates had heard the name Jesus before. I wanted to introduce them to Him, but it was so difficult. I was invited by a local church to an outreach event to receive a shoebox, during the event they even shared the story about Jesus and invited me to attend The Greatest Journey programme. I thought this would be a great way to share Jesus with my friends.*

*The following year I went and informed the church to invite 30 of my friends to the outreach event and The Greatest Journey programme. The Church opened the doors to invite my friends who never heard about Jesus. They were presented the Gospel message, and this changed their lives and many of them began to attend church. I praise God for Operation Christmas Child and the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus through one shoebox at a time.*

*From one child to thirty children, the transformation has been amazing.*

# Bethel Memories

Spring brings the promise of lighter evenings and warmer days and optimism swells our hearts as we plan for the brighter days ahead. Earlier Bethelites felt this too, the magazine of April 1934 reported that Bethel Social and Sports Club was feeling very uplifted by the success of their efforts over the previous year to bring the tennis court (which used to be on the grass where the garden is now) up to standard as well as improving facilities for the other sports the club members took part in. They were looking forward to the prospect of enjoying the fruits of their labours in the fine weather to come.

The Bethel Organ Fund committee were also planning for the Spring season ahead, organising a Sausage and Mash supper, using potatoes kindly donated by Mr Howard Homer and Mr W Mobberley. Their generosity did not go unappreciated, according to the April minutes there was not a morsel left. This was followed a couple of weeks later by a concert in aid of the said fund. The records show that there were many people involved in the planning and execution of the Bethel concerts but I think Mr Fowkes and Mr Hill probably had the best fun being entrusted to operate the curtains! Bethel concerts seem to have been held in some renown, the minutes show regular requests from other groups for Bethel to help them produce their concerts, and one such request appears in the minutes for March 1936 when Bethel agreed to produce Two Gates Concert party.

For Christians the most holy festival of the year is Easter. The celebration is a roller coaster of emotions, from the happiness of Palm Sunday we go to sadness as we remember Jesus betrayed on Maundy Thursday then crucified on Good Friday. Tradition for many years indeed since the 1930's has been for Stainer's Crucifixion to be sung in Bethel on Good Friday evening. The editor of the 1992 magazine, Glenda Harvey states that the choir that particular year provided the *'best shout of Crucify' so far!* They earned their tea and hot cross buns that year.

Palm Sunday 1992 was one to remember too, it had been decided to hold a joint afternoon service at which the children would march into church carrying banners and palm leaves whilst the choir sang 'Makeaway.' They also sang several other songs including a 'make-it-up-as-you-go-along' song when the choir and keyboard briefly parted company! Happily they managed to coincide a little further on! Hopefully this year we will do something similar, but this year we will start off in church and then sing as we take out palm branches out onto the lawn to sing some

songs of praise and worship out in the elements.

Later in the week on Maundy Thursday 1992, Bethelites shared the deeply moving experience of eating a Passover meal as our Lord would have celebrated on the night before He died. The evening gave us a chance to look at the traditions and try authentic food



and for many it was a rewarding and enlightening experience although there were some very funny faces pulled at the taste of the bitter herbs. Another chance to partake in a Passover meal is being offered this year, please see the details in the full article on page 14.

Celebrations often includes eating as a way of sharing and marking the occasion and Easter at Bethel is no exception as we celebrate Jesus' resurrection and the promise of an eternal home with him in Heaven. In the 1990's the Bethel church family often shared breakfast after Easter morning service. There were competitions for the young and the daft including in 1990 an egg decorating contest, Glenda thought she would romp to victory with her 'Eggwina Currie' but alas it was not to be.

In 1993 we introduced the 'Sonrise' service at Wollescote Park, a service which we held for many years through to 2017. The distress caused by having to arrive at the park at some unearthly hour was forgotten whilst singing 'See what a Morning, Gloriously Bright', 'Thine be the Glory' and seeing the world in the same light as those faithful women who went to tend the body of their Saviour that first Easter morning only to find that he was not there but risen.

As we celebrate God's love this Easter morning in a church awash with daffodils and filled with joy, let us always remember that the message of Easter is like the beauty of a spring flower, ever welcome, ever fresh and always inspiring. May you have a Happy Jesus filled Easter.



# 20 Years of Service at



You may remember that in the Summer 2023 Mag, Catherine Green wrote an article about being an 'old Icebreaker' and mentioned that she was approaching 20 years working at Youth for Christ. Well at their National Conference in January, Catherine Green received her long service award for her 20 years. Here is a photograph of Catherine with the award - it is engraved glass and hopefully you can just about see it!

Many congratulations to Catherine for her years of service at the central office of this national Christian charity in Halesowen, that aims to see young people's lives changed by Jesus, in places like schools, churches and local communities.

She can be contacted at Youth for Christ by emailing: [catherine.green@yfc.co.uk](mailto:catherine.green@yfc.co.uk). She also has a support page on their website [yfc.co.uk/catherinegreen](http://yfc.co.uk/catherinegreen) where you can find out more about what she does and why youth ministry is a subject close to her heart.



## **CRAFTING FOR FUN AT BETHEL TRY AND BUY DAY**

**Saturday 4th May 2024, 12-4pm**

**Lots of crafting items for sale,  
top branded crafting names,  
new and nearly new items.**

**Also have a go at some new crafts  
at our crafting tables**

# The Walking Stick

The long running saga of the walking sticks used by our Cornerstone bids continues!

You may remember that in our Spring 2023 mag, Win Parker submitted a poem about a walking stick that had gone on an adventure.

Well, here is the sequel

That walking stick's gone out again

We don't know where

We don't know when

We realised he was not there

Not resting on his favourite chair

Perhaps he's gone to meet a friend

Stay happy together till the end

There's one thing that we know for sure

We shall not see him anymore



Win Parker



# Passover

The Bible tells us that a Jewish settlement in ancient Egypt first occurred when Joseph, a son of the patriarch Jacob and founder of one of the 12 tribes of Israel, moves his family there during a severe famine in their homeland of Canaan.

For many years the Israelites live in harmony in the province of Goshen, but as their population grows the Egyptians begin to see them as a threat. After the death of Joseph and his brothers, the story tells of a particularly hostile Pharaoh who ordered their enslavement and the systematic drowning of their firstborn sons in the Nile. One of these doomed infants is rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter, given the name Moses (meaning "one who is pulled out") and adopted into the Egyptian royal family. When he reaches adulthood, Moses becomes aware of his true identity and the Egyptians' brutal treatment of his fellow Hebrews. He kills an Egyptian slave master and escapes to the Sinai Peninsula, where he lives as a shepherd for 40 years.

One day, however, Moses receives a command from God to return to Egypt and free his people from slavery. Along with his brother Aaron, Moses approaches the reigning Pharaoh several times, explaining that God is telling Pharaoh to "Let my people go."

When the Pharaoh refuses, God unleashes 10 plagues on the Egyptians, including turning the Nile River red with blood, diseased livestock, boils, hailstorms and three days of darkness, culminating in the slaying of every firstborn son by the angel of death.

The Israelites, however, are told to mark the door frames of their homes with lamb's blood so that the angel of death will recognize and "pass over" each Jewish household.

Terrified of further punishment, the Egyptians convince their ruler to release the Israelites, and Moses quickly leads them out of Egypt. The Pharaoh changes his mind, however, and sends his soldiers to retrieve the former slaves.

As the Egyptian army approaches the fleeing Jews at the edge of the Red Sea, a miracle occurs: God causes the sea to part, allowing Moses and his followers to cross safely, then closes the passage and drowns the Egyptians. The Jews then trek through the Sinai desert for 40 tumultuous years before reaching their Promised Land.



Passover is celebrated every year by the Jewish people to remind them of the

goodness of God in rescuing them from the slavery in Egypt and God leading them to their long-promised land of Israel. Christians too rejoice in being able to celebrate this meal, as Judaism, the foundation of our faith is all about God, His goodness and His love shown best in Jesus, who by His life, death and resurrection rescued us from sin and death and led us to the Father and the promise of eternity with Him. An important ritual pre-Passover is to remove all leavened (those with yeast) food products (known as *chametz*) from homes, as yeast is seen as a symbol of sin.

Instead of bread, in Passover, there's a type of flatbread called matzo. According to tradition, this is because the Hebrews fled Egypt in such haste that there was no time for their bread to rise. The meal also has to be eaten fully clothed, ready for departure.

During the meal, the story of the exodus from Egypt is read aloud from a special text called the Haggadah (Hebrew for "telling"), and certain things are done which correspond to various aspects of the story. Parsley is dipped into salt water representing the tears Jews shed during their time as slaves, and bitter herbs (usually horseradish) and matzos symbolizing the unpleasant years of their slavery are eaten.

A seder plate at the centre of the table contains Passover foods with particular significance to the exodus story, including matzo, bitter herbs, a lamb shankbone and a mixture of fruit, nuts and wine known as *charoset*, which represents the mortar Jews used while bonding bricks as slaves in Egypt.



Children play an important role in the seder and at one point during the meal, the youngest child present recites the four questions which ask, "What distinguishes this special night from all other nights?" The children also participate in the traditional hunt for the *afikomen*, a piece of matzo that is hidden early in the evening.

Passover however is so much more than the retelling of a story - it's elements all point to the One who was to come as Saviour - not only from slavery, but from sin and offer us all new life, new hope and a place in the Father's House for eternity.

Want to know what all the symbols mean??? See you at our Passover, Maundy Thursday, 7pm. PLEASE BOOK IN SO THAT YOU HAVE A SEAT!!

*Please book your place, either on the list in Bethel, or give the office a ring on 01384 892137 so that we can put you on the list and make sure you are catered for.*

*If you are unable to attend in person, but would still like to see what Passover is all about, we will attempt to live stream it and it will be available afterwards if you can't watch live. The link is [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDMFBDPnfTs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDMFBDPnfTs)*



# Easter at Bethel

Hill Street, Wollescote

You are welcome to join with us for:

**Thursday 28th March**

**7.00pm**

**Passover Meal**

*(Please contact the office to book a place for this)*

**Good Friday, 29th March**

**12.00 - 3.00pm**

**Church open for quiet contemplation**

**7.30pm**

**The Crucifixion by J. Stainer**

*The Choral Society that meets at Bethel*

**Easter Sunday, 31st March**

**10.30am**

**Easter Morning Celebration Service**

*including a light Easter Breakfast*

**6.00pm**

**Evening Celebration**

*including hot cross buns*

[www.youtube.com/@BethelChapelLye/streams](http://www.youtube.com/@BethelChapelLye/streams)