

infocus

the news and prayer letter from CCM



COVENTRY CITY MISSION
Serving God · Serving People in Need

Christmas 2017

A fresh look at Christmas



While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.’ Luke 2: 6-7

As you may have seen in our last newsletter, Sarah White joined the CCM team as our Giving Tree Co-ordinator (you will hear from her later in this letter) Sarah has taken over the role from Helen who ran this Christmas focussed project for over 13 years. This has meant that I have had to work with Sarah to ensure she understands the project, to ensure that as many children can be helped as possible.

I have found that things I would have taken for granted before; things that have always happened need to be reconsidered, talked about and looked at in a new and fresh way.

Questions like ‘who knows how to put the grotto up?’ and ‘do we invite everyone to the Connect Christmas special?’ have had to be looked at.

I wonder how many of us take Christmas for granted in the way I have for the last few years? Going through the motions, doing it in the way it has always been done. Are we guilty of looking at Christmas with tired, old eyes? More interested in the turkey and the tinsel than the birth of a Saviour?

Maybe it's time to look at the wonder of the Nativity story with fresh eyes.

Over the summer I have succumbed to wearing reading glasses as reading from the Bible when I preach was getting increasingly difficult (my arms simply weren't long enough!). Suddenly text that I thought was badly printed came into focus. Books and letters are suddenly much clearer, and things are making more sense.

How can we bring back that clarity to the Christmas story? For us, for our friends, family and neighbours? How can we look at it with fresh, focused eyes?

Maybe we start with Gospel of Luke chapter 1, which tells the amazing story of a boy, a girl, an angel, a baby, some shepherds and wise men. A story that changed the world forever.

Maybe you could watch a Nativity at your local church, or attend the Carol service. You could join us for our Connect Christmas special (see inside for details).

Maybe you could follow a set of readings over Advent as we prepare for Christmas.

Whatever you do, I pray that it may re-focus your eyes on the coming of our Lord and bring clarity to the wonder, hope and promise that His coming offers us today.

Thank you for all your support in the last year. I hope this letter encourages you to continue to support us in so many ways in the year to come.

May God Bless you with eyes full of wonder this Advent.

With love in Him

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

HOLIDAY AT HOME

The year began early as far as trips were concerned with a visit in April to Spalding and the Romany

museum. Amidst the

wagons and memorabilia, the world of these amazing people unfolded in front of us. In

June a small group of us enjoyed afternoon

tea aboard the Conway Castle. Later in the month 16 of us visited the Red House Glass cone at Stourbridge and were entertained by a glass blowing demonstration. At one-point Paul volunteered to help cool the glass down with the aid of a wet wad of newspaper which is the traditional method used.

The following month 18 of us went to the mailbox for a visit to the BBC. The tour of the building was

very informative, but Barry and Chris were not too sure at being news reporters for the day. Those who enjoyed the 'Archers' saw how the effects were created and used within the programme. A visit to the control room informed us about programme making and broadcasting as part of the BBC network.

Glorious weather in August meant that Stoneleigh Abbey and its gardens were enjoyed by all. The railway children at the Belgrade had some stunning effects and made for a great afternoon outing. The visit to Beckford Silk later in the month rounded off our year of

visits. Watching and learning about the techniques used to produce some truly exquisite designs was fascinating.

To learn more about our Holiday at Home programme or our weekly senior lunch club contact Carole at the office or on carole@covcitymission.org.uk



Community Kitchen Garden

Work is ongoing transforming a piece of land next to the Mission into a community Kitchen Garden. We hope that this will develop into a useful project in the coming year. We are busy clearing space and building raised borders.

The project is being set up to get clients and customers involved in some positive outdoor activity, learn some new skills, meet new people and provide produce for the café to cook.

What we need next is a few 'green fingered' volunteers who could give some of their time on occasion to help the project move forward.

If you think that might be you, or someone you know please be in touch with me darren@covcitymission.org.uk or call the office.

Kitchen update and roof

In our Harvest prayer letter, we launched an appeal to raise £10,000 to refurbish the kitchen which serves our café, lunch club and other projects. I am thrilled to report that we have reached our target of £10,000 in just eight weeks, which is amazing! Thank you to everyone who prayed and to everyone who gave.

The refurbishment is planned to take place over the Christmas break. Please pray for the work as it happens and give thanks to those

giving of their time and talents free of charge to make this possible.

Please also pray for our roof! We are very aware that it desperately needs replacing, at a cost of approximately £100,000. We are now actively working on raising these funds as it is becoming ever more important that the building becomes water tight.

Please pray for the right opportunities and grant providers and, if appropriate, the right fundraiser to help us in these efforts.



As Darren mentioned earlier in this letter, I (Sarah) have taken on the Giving Tree this year and am currently getting to know my way around the role and looking forward to being able to match presents with those families who need them. I am keen to be part of this project which has been going for many years now and continues to provide Christmas presents for families with children aged 0-16 in Coventry who are in need year after year.

The presents are provided by individuals, churches and businesses, and the families are those we work with already or referred by foodbanks, and other agencies working with vulnerable families. We hope that by the time you read this many families will have registered to receive presents, however due to the extensive changes at the council a number of people who worked with children and families, and have referred people previously are no longer in the same role - therefore please pray that we are still able to reach those in need this year.

If you would like to donate presents for the project please do get in touch, we need new, unwrapped presents for children aged 0 - 16 which will need to be dropped off at our Deedmore Road Office by 4th December ready for sorting and wrapping that week!

The distribution takes place across the city in the week commencing 18th December, with 3 after school 'parties' for the families when they come to collect their gifts.

Last year one of the families came to collect their presents and shared that they were so grateful, as they could either afford presents OR Christmas dinner - this way they were able to share Christmas dinner together as we had provided their presents. We are so grateful to be able to bless families in this way and ask that you pray that the families who come will hear something of God's love for them through this project.

Thank you for your continued prayers.

Sarah (Sarah@covcitymission.org.uk)



Christmas Connect

Connect in the café is our weekly group (Thursday 9.30 - 10.15am) which draws together people from across the area and city to take part in an informal act of Christian worship. With a different guest speaker each week, *Connect* is fun, friendly and informative and you even get a free bacon butty and a hot drink.

Our Christmas special will be held on Thursday 14th December when we will come together to sing some carols and share a Christmas message. It would be great if you could join us!

Building works

For the last couple of months and for quite a few more to come the Mission has been surrounded by a major building project which will see more than 50 new houses (social housing) built around the Mission. When the work is completed we will have a whole new community to serve, which will be great. Until then please pray for protection over the Mission building. Being surrounded by a building site has left us feeling a little isolated. Please also pray for the relationship between the Mission and the developers, that it may be a good, friendly and open relationship.



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