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PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

We approach 2023 with much to concern us, both on the personal, national and international sphere. Personally, we have the significant increase in the cost of living, nationally we have seen three Prime Ministers in a year and industrial action not seen for many decades. Internationally we have seen the brutal invasion and action against Ukraine, alongside oppression in many other countries. The word crisis has replaced Covid as one of the most popular in our news bulletins.

When we look into 2 Chronicles chapter 32, we find words spoken by King Hezekiah of Judah in a time of national crisis in the 8th century BC.

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles' (2 Chronicles 32:7-8)

Israel became a great nation in the 11th century BC under King David but after periods of disobedience the country became divided. The northern part was occupied by Assyria, the 'super power' of the time and the aggression was set to continue as the southern part called Judah was threatened and the city of Jerusalem was besieged. It was at this point that the king said, **'with him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord**



our God to help us and to fight our battles'.

The words spoken by King Hezekiah remind us of the words spoken by King George VI in his Christmas broadcast at the beginning of the Second World War.

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

At that time, our nation was in a similar position to ancient Jerusalem, facing a national crisis under the imminent threat of invasion. But due to the sacrifices of many, the victory in the Battle of Britain and the national resolve, those early years of the war have become known as 'Britain's finest hours'.

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PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE (continued)

However, I firmly believe, in that period as in many others of a similar nature, there was another element that ensured survival, just as there was when ancient Jerusalem survived the threat from Assyria. In both cases the odds were such that deliverance by natural means seemed unlikely, but the words of Kings Hezekiah and George, bring Almighty God into the equation.

However, there is a shadow over the story of ancient Judah. Some one hundred years after the deliverance in King Hezekiah's day, the nation was invaded and taken into captivity by the Babylonian aggressor. The Bible is clear why that

was the case, it was because the nation turned its back on God and therefore, forfeited His protection.

There is a lesson for today for personal and national life. In times of crisis we need **'the Lord our God to help us fight our battles'**. As we approach the uncertainties of 2023, we should heed the words quoted by King George in 1939.

"Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way."

WRU President
George Phillips

A NEW FACE FOR 2023



The Royal Mint unveils official coin effigy of His Majesty King Charles III

The Royal Mint has released the first new coin with the Head of King Charles III depicted on it.

1. A little quiz on the new coin... (Answers at the end of the article)
2. Which denomination of coin with the Kings Head on was released in December 2022?
3. What has changed about the depiction of the King's head compared to our late Queens'?
4. What year was the first 50p released into circulation and what did it replace?
5. What was unique about the

50p coin when it was designed?

In Luke 20, Jesus was famously asked, "should we pay taxes?" It was a trick question of course; if He answered, 'Yes' it would show He loved Rome and therefore couldn't be the Messiah, but if He said, 'No' to paying taxes they could get Him arrested for rebellion.

Jesus was in the Temple, teaching and answering questions and the big question the Temple Authorities had (v1&2) was, **'Who gave you this authority?'** Jesus had to borrow a coin and then He

asked, **"Whose face is this?"**

"Caesar's," they replied. Now Jesus turns the conversation from a materialistic and political focus to God. He answered, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesars' and to God what is God's."

What do you think this means for us in 2023? What do I, you or we, need to give to God materialistically, timewise, devotionally, in honour, and in love.

How do we turn a news story such as a new coin or a war, a cost of living crisis to prayer, towards our service and devotion to God?

By Andy Wilcock

ANSWERS

(a1) 50p; **(a2)** The King's Head faces left and he is not wearing a crown; **(a3)** 1969, it replaced "10-shilling note"; **(a4)** It was the world's first seven-sided coin, designed to roll smoothly in vending machines.

THIS SERIES OF STUDIES IS BEING PREPARED FROM A BOOKLET ENTITLED "READ MARK LEARN"

Study number four—Mark chapter 2 verses 1-12 (Please read) FAITH WORKS!

These verses, which describe another incident at Capernaum, tell us several important things about **faith**, one of the most important words in the Bible. To have **faith** in a person means to trust or rely on that person. Notice, however, that the story begins with

DIFFICULTIES. A man was paralysed (verse 3). Only Jesus could cure him, but there was such a crowd of people that it seemed impossible to get near him. You may find yourself in that position at times, wondering just how you can bring a friend to Christ, or how some other problem can be solved. But notice that some people had...

DETERMINATION. Try to picture the extraordinary scene described here in verse 4! As they as they could not get into the house through the door the four people concerned went up onto the flat roof and opened up the tiling (see Luke 5 verse 19) to lower their friend through. So great was their love for the sick man and their faith in the power of Jesus to heal him that they would not take no for an

answer! They were prepared to go to any lengths to bring their problem to Christ and ask Him to deal with it. What an example to us as Christians! The marvellous thing about all of this was...

DELIVERANCE. It was when "**Jesus saw their faith**" (verse 5) that he delivered the man, firstly of his sin (verse 5) and then of his sickness (verses 11-12) The Scribes were quite right to say that only God could forgive sin (verse 7), but what they did not realise was that Jesus was God! (John 10 verse 30 is one of the verses that tells us this). I am sure that we all know that the Christian life has many difficulties, and to some of them there may seem to be no answer. When this is the case, make sure that nothing stops you from taking them to Christ and trusting Him to act in response to your faithful prayer.

"According to your faith will it be done to you"
Matthew 9:29

*Prepared by David Shuttleworth
Jump WR Church*



CAROLS IN THE COMMUNITY



It was a cold and icy winter's night on December 15th, but members of our church here at '**Alderman's Green**,' braved the cold to visit the

local public house. **Our mission** (having been asked to do so) was to sing carols to the local community.

With carol sheets in hands and voices ready to go, we were soon having favourite carols requested. Mulled wine and mince pies were provided and after two hours we finished with 'We wish you a Merry



Christmas and a Happy New Year.

A joyous night was had by all who attended.

A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Happy New Year to one and all! We pray that this year will be a year of love, unity, growth (both spiritually and numerically) and that each of us will experience a greater sense of nearness to our Saviour. That we will all learn to walk ever closer in step with the Holy Spirit and follow His lead in all that we do.

On July 1st 2022, Lindsey and I embarked upon a journey in this new role of National Spiritual Coordinator and we felt that God had given us a clear message to bring to each of the Churches. The message was a simple one and remains the focus of this coming year as well, although we aim to build upon that. The message is to check our spiritual foundations! Every building needs good strong foundations, because if they don't, then cracks will appear in the superstructure above and decay and erosion will begin to determine the direction of travel.

We need more than ever to focus on our individual and corporate prayer life, to ensure we dig deeper into the Word of God for His truths, in order that we may live out our Christian lives shining His light into this



dark world, and having a desire to commune with Him through Holy Communion.

Never before in history has there been times like the ones we are living in. We believe that the Church needs to get back to the basics as in the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles, where they **were "praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."** (Acts 2:47). So how does that look for us?

It means that we come together and fellowship as one in common unity. It means we get

to know our Church family more, not just on a Sunday, but throughout the week.

It means we help one another... sometimes to the point of hurting, and it means we **"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another."** (Romans 12:15).

The key to all of this is Love! When we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we can love one another empowered by Him; **"By this the world will know that you are My disciples if you love one another!"** (John 13:35).

Lindsey and I have been excited

to see real, new growth, life in abundance and movement in our Churches as we have travelled.

We are as excited as ever for this New Year as we walk close together, praying together more, praying for other Churches in the Union and reaching out in ways that perhaps we haven't thought of before.

So for 2023 let us continue to love one another, pray until something happens and watch as God moves and brings change in our Churches and our communities.

God bless,
Michael and Lindsey Hedley

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"Who do you say I am?" Jesus asked His disciples. The question is recorded in three of the four Gospels, Matthew 16:13-16, Mark 8:27-29, and Luke 9:18-20. This question is more complicated than it might seem. Their answer wasn't just "Jesus." It was so much more. At some point in all of our lives, we are faced with a similar question. Who do we say Jesus is? A prophet? A moral teacher? A heretic? The Son of God?

Jesus, of course, knew who He was. He didn't need the disciples to tell Him. Being divine, He also already knew what the disciples thought. First, Jesus asked the disciples what *others* said about Him. They responded easily enough, with a slew of speculations. But then He turned the tables. "What about you? Who do *you* say I am?"

What the world thought didn't matter anymore. The mentality of the crowd was irrelevant. Now, it was time for the disciples to claim Jesus' identity for themselves. "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:16).

Jesus' identity as the Messiah and Son of God was the very rock, or foundation, on which the church would be built. In all three of the accounts, Jesus' exchange with His disciples is recorded shortly after the feeding of the four thousand (after the five thousand in Luke). Jesus had travelled all over the area teaching, healing, forgiving sins, driving out demons, and even raising the dead. The disciples had seen all of these miracles and had been following Jesus for some time. They had even been sent out in His name, preaching repentance, healing, and casting out demons.

Beginning in the book Acts, the twelve disciples are no longer called "disciples," they are called "apostles." The whole community of believers may be referred to as disciples, but the twelve have been given a new name. reflecting what Jesus asked them to do. A disciple is a student, a follower, but an apostle is one who is *sent*. And there's one more important name change that we find in Acts: *it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians."* (Acts 11:19-26) They'd called themselves "followers of the way" in Jerusalem, or disciples of Jesus or apostles of Christ or simply "believers" and all these names were good ones, drawing on the essence of what it means to follow Jesus.



Each of us has been given a name. All of us have a first and last name, some may have a middle name. We may have a name of a family member or loved one that has passed. We may be named after our parent or grandparent. We may have been given the name of someone famous during the time we were born. Some of us may have a nickname that only our family knows us by. Some of us may have had a nickname as a child, that we got stuck with... and are still called by that name today. We may not even know how we got the nickname... somebody just started calling us that name... and we got stuck with it.

Names are powerful objects and our names are significant to us. Our name is our identity... it's how we introduce ourselves. It's how we change our relationship with someone, at one point we're strangers and after we exchange names, we are an acquaintance, a friend or a companion. Sometimes we can use our name to get us out of trouble or to help get us into an event we may not have been invited to.

There is meaning in a name... there is significance in a name... there is power in a name... but most of all, there is a name that is above all names. Jesus means Saviour, He is our salvation, He is our deliverance. As we face a New Year, let's remember where we can safely put our trust.

Marie Nichols
Staincross Church

NEW BEGINNINGS EVERY DAY

*"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning: great is your faithfulness."
(Lamentations 3:22-23).*

God's mercy is new every morning. Hallelujah praise His Holy Name! **Thank you for your prayers and support for all the WRU Overseas Missions Personnel and the Hot Meal project in Lebanon that we are financially supporting as a Union.** We managed to send some funds over to the programme before Christmas to allow it to keep functioning as it is a new programme.

The latest news from Nicolette at Safe Haven is that they are serving lunch to 25-29 children each weekday. They have two volunteers who cook once per week in their homes and the other days they cook in the centre over the duration of the week.

The programme is going extremely well. As well as providing a hot meal for the children it gives the workers an opportunity to teach them about being thankful for all we have been



given, as well as how to thank God for everything we have.

The Overseas Missions Team continue to value your prayers and financial support for this much needed programme. **We would ask that you would please continue to give support where you can.**

When we look at all the conflicts that are happening around the world we can easily be side tracked and look at the chaos and evil that is happening, **but we must never lose sight that God is in control and that He has the whole world in His hands and His mercies are new every day.** Great is Thy faithfulness!

As we look forward to this new season, please uphold our **Missions Personnel** and all of our brothers



and sisters who continue to spread the Good News of the Gospel in far away lands.

If you would like to get involved in the Overseas Missions Team, we have a **Whatsapp** group that anyone can join to share information from around the world, so that we can pray. We also meet via Zoom regularly and in person approximately 4 times annually. **Come and join us united in Jesus.** Exciting times ahead as we trust in God and watch Him move. **He is the way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper, light in the darkness. Fix our eyes on the GREAT I AM! AMEN.**

God Bless!

Lindsey Hedley and all OM Team

CESA VALUES DAY 2023

POVERTY: THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

VALUES DAY RESOURCE: The C.E.S.A. committee has produced this resource about Poverty to be used in the next few months. We have looked at several issues relating to poverty and given references to Bible passages and ideas for sermons or Bible Studies. Please feel free to pass this on to anyone that can use it. The idea is that it will create opportunities for discussion, prayer, thought and action. Below is a little taster from the resource. We hope you find it useful and thought provoking. You will be able to download this

resource from the WRU website.

POVERTY restricts opportunity. Opportunity to eat, to think, to choose, to hope, to aspire, to relax, to love and so much more. Maybe you are reading this, and you have never had to wait for anything. Pause for a moment, and consider how your mind works when you are hungry, cold, ill or stressed... Most people just want to be left alone, preferably in a dark room; you certainly don't want to apply yourself to a major task that requires any level

of thinking. Consider the person that has been hungry, cold and stressed for months on end. Add to that the responsibility of bringing up children, not to mention the stress it would put on any relationship.

POVERTY also devalues a person. Devalues them in their own estimation and in the estimation of society. Dignity is far more important than we may first realise and it's Jesus who demonstrated this priority. If we ignore dignity as an essential to any type of provision, we

The Mission Field Is Not Always Abroad!



Some will already know that in mid-July 2022, I moved home from Worsbrough to Derby and transferred my Membership to our Griffydham Church. My new home is a two-bedroom appartement in an “independent living” complex of 45 appartements.

Everyone has his or her own apartment but there are also a number of communal facilities – a refuse room, a laundry and a resident’s lounge. It provides the best of both worlds. I have the privacy of my own apartment but, if I want some company, there are usually one or two other residents in the communal lounge to sit and chat to.

Quite deliberately, I didn’t tell any of the other residents that I was a retired Minister. However, the Manager had already done so *“You’ll all have to be on your best behaviour from next week as we have a vicar coming to live here”*.

When I knew what my accommodation was going to be like, I joked with one or two folk that it might turn out to be my own personal mission field and began to pray accordingly. I tried to go to as many communal activities as were appropriate and gradually got to know everyone and allow them the opportunity to get to know me. One resident commented *“for a vicar, I think you have settled in very well”* – I think that was a compliment!

I continued to pray for the residents and for opportunities. Imagine my surprise and delight when one of the residents (let’s call him “Martin”) approached me in the lounge and quietly asked me **if I would consider starting a Bible study group in the development.**

A few practicalities needed to be overcome and the approval and support of my church obtained but the outcome is that we now have a small bible study group here in the development. Three of us are meeting monthly – but there is the potential for growth in number and of an increased frequency.

So, the “Mission Field” is not always abroad but can often be right on your doorstep – sometimes, literally!

I’d encourage you to continue to pray for your friends and neighbours and, who knows what God might do in response to those prayers!

Rev Colin Braithwaite

CESA VALUES DAY 2023 (CONTINUED)

devalue the person. Companies and advertisers know this when selling to the rich, so why are those who are vulnerable not given the same priority. For example, sticking people in high-rise concrete flats, so when they open their front door, all they see is a grey concrete wall a few feet away, robs them of dignity, value, and hope. Jesus speaking about poverty said, “consider the lily of the valley!” He was speaking to those concerned where they’re next meal or clothes would come from, and He got them to consider the beauty, of a wild, free, flower for hope. In the same breath He was offering them the love of His family and a relationship with His heavenly Father, this is true dignity.

By Andy Wilcock

DATES

Presidential Visits:

5th February - Jump
19th February -
Griffydham

DOC Visits:

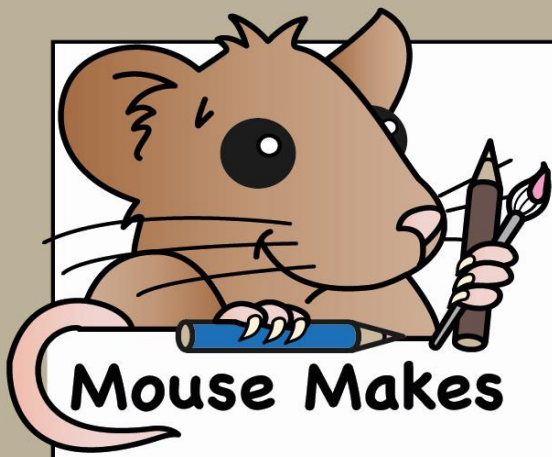
22nd January – Curba
5th February – Coal
Aston

General Meetings:

4th March (Rushden Mission Church)

Conference 2023:

12th-14th June (Swanwick)



A JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

When the **Magi** (wise men) came to Bethlehem where had they travelled from?

The _ _ _ _ _

Why did they make the journey?

What did they follow to get there?

A _ _ _ _ _

What did they see?

Read *Matthew 2:1-12*



Why did **Joseph** and **Mary** travel to **Bethlehem**?

Read *Luke 2:1-4*

When **Samuel** came to **Bethlehem** who sent him? Who did he go to see?
_ _ _ _ _ and his sons.

Who had he come to anoint as king?

Read *1 Samuel 16:1-13*



Naomi and **Ruth** came to **Bethlehem** where had they travelled from?

_ _ _ _ _ and why?

When did they arrive?

At the _ _ _ _ _ harvest.

Read *Ruth 1:22*

The name **BETHLEHEM** means 'House of Bread'

Look up the Bible references to find the missing words, find them and these words below in the wordsearch

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

JOURNEY
BETHLEHEM • GOD
JOSEPH • MARY
JESUS • BORN
MAGI • MESSIAH
NAOMI • RUTH
FOOD • HARVEST
SAMUEL • ANOINT
KING • BREAD