



Romford Baptist Church

Grapevine

Lockdown Edition 4(+1)



Family Magazine
December 2020
and
January 2021
No. 205

From the Editor

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him."
Lamentations 3:22-24 (NIV).

In this edition of Grapevine, we read many things that relate to new beginnings, from welcoming new members to changes in personal circumstances. We are journeying through Advent and look forward to good things in the future. Christmas is coming and we may be able to meet up (safely) with loved ones, either physically or virtually. Some of us see gifts wrapped up and can't wait to open them. There is a feeling of positive anticipation.



It is not always easy to be patient, but we wait for God's compassion. The last line of the Bible verse quoted also reads **"Therefore I hope in Him!"** (KJV). We are not just waiting, but we wait with a certain hope in God.

My prayer is that we as we celebrate Christmas and the New Year, we will have renewed strength as we put our trust and hope in the Lord; as Isaiah 40:31 says, ***but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.***

Cheryl Schulte

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Our purpose is to take the life-changing message of Jesus Christ to all, with the goal that they become His loyal disciples.

Pastor's page

Advent, a time of hope, reflection and preparation.

Maybe last Advent, as we prepared for 2020, we thought at last we will have clear eyesight (2020 vision) and all will be ok. We did not know then what was about to happen. We were not ready and nor was so much of the world.

Within days of the outbreak of COVID-19, there were "experts" set up to tell us what would happen. The truth be told, no one knew then what we know now, so-called experts have been seen as wrong and yet we still play the blame game for those who did not guess correctly.

Social media, telephone conversations, written articles and the media in general all had their own beliefs and know-all, and took every opportunity to tell people what they should do and what was the cause of all this. They preached their wisdom to all who would listen and to those who would not. As we navigate the world of COVID-19 one thing we have discovered is that there is far more that we do not know than that which is known.

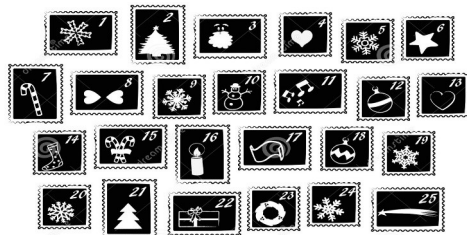
As we look forward to 2021 and the world beyond the pandemic, we also know that there will be new challenges and struggles to come and we cannot journey alone.

Yet one thing we do know, even at the end of 2020, the year of change, is that the Advent story remains a story of hope. Hope and trust in God who came to where we are, suffered with us, chose to be with us and experience the reality of life, hurt and hatred, just

as we do. Amidst our lives, the Christ Child, God with us, the Prince of Peace, the One with angry governments upon His shoulders invites us again to trust in Him.

We are not all in the same boat but we are all in the same storm. The same Saviour, Jesus Christ, will rescue us, and He will overcome and lead us through. Trust in the Baby, born at Christmas. And allow Him to lead us all through this storm to the calm that is before us. As a pilgrim people let's follow our Saviour wherever He may lead us!

*Rev I. Bunce
Team Leader*



Flowers

December 2020

1st Christine Wright
25th Muriel Warner

January 2021

5th Anne Barnes
15th Peggy Warner
16th Grace Bello
23rd Daphne May
25th Janet Loveard
28th Barbara Palmer



How should we respond to people begging?

A homeless person begging.

For many people living or working in large cities, being asked for money is an everyday experience. It can often cause feelings of distress, guilt and confusion. What is the best way to respond to someone asking you for money? In 20 years of working with homeless people, it is by far the most common question I have been asked in relation to my work.

It is a sensitive subject. I want to avoid the polarization which often occurs between what is seen as compassion on one hand and cynicism on the other. As this article will make clear, I do not agree with giving money to people begging, but I take this view because I don't believe it actually helps them. I am not advocating harshness but rather a compassionate realism about the nature of the problems which surround those who beg.

'Give to anyone who asks?'

For many people of faith, their beliefs can add a further layer of complexity to this issue. After all, Jesus said 'Give to anyone who asks you' (Luke 6:30). And Jewish Scriptures state 'If anyone is poor...do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them.' (Deut 15:7). And the Quran says 'You shall give the due alms to the relatives, the needy, the poor, and the travelling al-

ien' (17:26-29).

As a Christian, I believe that the overriding imperative is to love our neighbour and to be especially concerned for those in need. But as I have seen over many years, with many hundreds of people, giving money to someone begging is not showing them love. And it certainly does not address their needs.

Points to consider

Firstly, it is important to remember that the issue of homelessness and begging are related but are not the same. Many of those who beg are not homeless, and majority of homeless people do not beg.

Secondly, the link between begging and alcohol and drug misuse is well-proven. The homeless charity, Thames Reach, estimate that 80% of those begging are doing so to maintain an addiction. Figures from the Metropolitan Police show that between 70 and 80% of those arrested for begging tested positive for Class A drugs. Most recently, in autumn 2013, every single one of 40 people arrested in Birmingham failed a drug test.

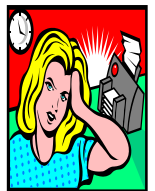
Thirdly, we need to recognize the untruthful manipulation at work in the exchange between someone begging

(Continued on page 5)



**The deadline for the
February 2021/March 2021
edition of the Grapevine is
Sunday 17th January 2021**

Please give any items to Cheryl Schulte, put them in the tray
on the Welcome Desk or email them to Cheryl at:
grapevine@romfordbaptist.org.uk



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and a potential donor. Often the scenario presented is designed to place maximum emotional pressure on the hearer to do what is being asked; e.g. that money is needed to pay for a hostel bed, to get a hot meal or travel money to see an ill child. Hostels and shelters for homeless people do not charge per night in this way. In my experience, the vast majority of the other scenarios presented are simply not true.

Fourthly, success in gaining money through begging undermines the positive work going on. I used to manage a hostel in Soho with homeless young people who could make very large sums of money from people leaving the pubs and night clubs around Old Compton Street. Often they would use the duvets we had given them as props to give the impression that they were currently sleeping rough and we fought a losing battle in drawing these vulnerable young people away from the instant cash they could get from begging. Despite the stories they told about needing it for food, virtually all of it would be spent on drugs.

Allowing untruthful and manipulative behaviour to succeed in eliciting cash helps nobody. In fact it further imprisons the person in a world of deceit. In Thames Reach's phrase, it can literally be 'killing with kindness'.

Talking openly

Some of the best conversations I have had with people begging have been when they are clear that I will not give them money and we can talk openly without the false pretence. I had a long conversation with a man at Clapham Junction after he unsuccessfully

begged from me. At the end of our chat, I explained that I often speak to churches about these issues and asked him if he thought people should ever give to people begging. He replied: 'Never. I tell you it all goes on heroin and crack.'

As human as possible

One of the primary needs of homeless and vulnerable people is healthy, positive relationships, built on truth and honesty. And whilst we can't have meaningful relationships with everyone we only meet briefly, we can seek to be as human as possible in all the encounters we have.

People who beg are not intrinsically bad people and we should avoid any language or tone which can appear harsh, cynical or dismissive. None of these approaches will help – most of them already feel bad enough about themselves and their situation. What we have to do is understand more fully the powerful and warping effect addiction to drink or drugs has on people.

How should we respond?

So to answer the title of this article, I would recommend the following:

When someone begs from you, look them in the eye when you respond and speak as confidently as you can.

If you have time, stop and talk with them. Ask them their first name and share yours.

If you have the time and money, offer to buy them a cup of tea, or a sandwich or pasty.

Do some work to find out what drop-in

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(Continued from page 5)

centres, charities or churches are open for homeless or vulnerable people in the area where you live or work. Knowing what is available allows you to ask the person if they know about these and whether they have used them. At the church where I work, we have a list ready to give to people, with information about opening times and what is available.

If you are worried about the vulnerability of someone sleeping rough then contact Street Link on 0300 500 0914 to inform them. This is a coordinated phone line to help inform the Outreach teams who work on the streets to help homeless people.

All of my experience and reflection on this issue makes me conclude that we should not give cash to people who beg. But we should never be judgmental or forget to treat them as humans. It is often easier to give someone a few quid than give 10 minutes of our time. But if we are prepared to talk and to give something of ourselves, you never

know what difference it could make.

Jon Kuhrt

This article was taken from the blog <https://gracetruth.blog/> by Jon Kuhrt with his kind permission.

Jon currently works as a *Rough Sleeping Adviser* to the Government, specialising in how faith and community groups respond to homelessness.

From 2010-2018, he was Chief Executive of the West London Mission, leading their work with people affected by homelessness and addiction. He was Director of Community Mission for Livability (formerly the Shaftesbury Society) from 2002 to 2010. He was the manager of an emergency hostel for the youth homeless charity, Centrepoin, from 1997-2002. Before that, he managed a Crisis Winter Shelter in Tunbridge Wells, Kent (1996-1997) and worked in a large hostel for homeless people in Hackney (1995-1996).

Welcome to our new members!

We welcomed six new members into the Church, and look forward to getting to know them better very soon.



(Left to right) Barbara Elton, Ademola and Zainab John, Justin and Andrea Lewis, and Sally Collins

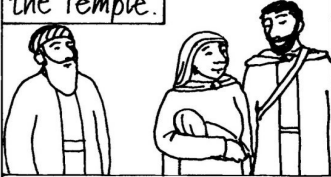
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 2 verses 22-38

God promised the Jews that when times were bad, He would send a Leader to save them. He told Simeon it would happen in his life time.

God told Simeon to go to the Temple.

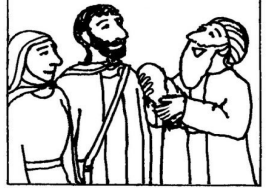


He saw a couple with a baby.

Mary and Joseph had come to give their offerings for their first-born, Jesus, and for childbirth.



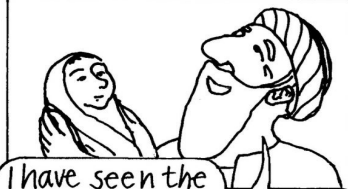
Simeon held Jesus and praised God.



I can now die in peace because You have kept Your promise.



I have seen the one You have sent to save Your people and all the world!



Mary and Joseph were amazed! Simeon blessed them, but said...



This child will show what people are really like inside and this will mean pain for you as well.



Anna the prophet was also in the Temple.

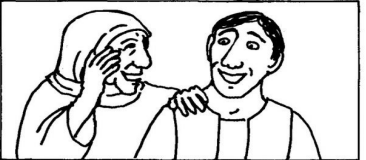


Her family was from the north of Israel and she was very old.



She spent every day praying in the Temple.

When she saw Jesus she praised God.



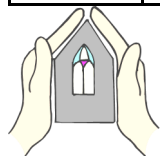
Anna spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God's Saviour.

Prayer Diary for December 2020

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Tues 8 th | A And we know that all things work for the good of those who love Him. Rom 8 v28. | ADEKANMBI, Rachel |
| Wed 9 th | D Do not doubt God loves you. | ADESINA, Bunmi |
| Thurs 10 th | V Value the RBC family, contribute to its well-being. | AJUEBON, Shirley |
| Fri 11 th | E Every day pray, thanks, sorry, praise. | AKINOLA, Emmanuel & Oluwaseun |
| Sat 12 th | N 'Nearer, my God, to Thee'. Let this be your desire. | AMOA, Johnson & Pumela, <i>Sipho, Isaac & Harry</i> |
| Sun 13 th | T Time to reflect on your Christian growth, has there been any? | ANDERSON, Lynn |
| Mon 14 th | C Count your blessings name them one by one. | AQUILINA, Connie |
| Tues 15 th | H Help someone who needs help today. | ARGENT, David & Jean |
| Wed 16 th | R Ring the people either side of you in the church directory, pray with them on the phone. | AROWOLO, Kolawole & Esther |
| Thurs 17 th | I Immanuel God with us, today and every day, not just at Christmas. | AROWOLO, Samuel |
| Fri 18 th | S Seek the Lord while He may be found. Isai-ah 55 v6. | AROWOLO, Emmanuel |
| Sat 19 th | T Time to grow your relationship with God, what do you need to do? | AROWOLO, Joshua |
| Sun 20 th | M Make someone feel valued, complement them. | ASUMANG, Enoch & Vera, <i>Brendon (Osafa), Bradley & Brady</i> |
| Mon 21 st | A Admit your weaknesses and pray for strength to overcome. | AYRIS, Hayley |
| Tues 22 nd | S Sincerely pray for forgiveness. | BAAH, Michael & Efua, <i>Michael, Julie, Nana & Stephanie</i> |
| Wed 23 rd | A Actions speak louder than words, act the gospel. | BALOGUN, Ayo |
| Thurs 24 th | N New every morning are God's mercies. | BALOGUN, Olakunle |

Prayer Diary for December 2020

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Fri 25 th | D Devote yourself to discerning God's will for you. | BARNES, Gordon & Anne |
| Sat 26 th | N New Year, new beginnings, what is God calling you to? | BARNES, Joanna, <i>Katie & Matthew</i> |
| Sun 27 th | E Endeavour to serve the Lord. | BARRETT, Simon & Debbie, <i>Joseph & Daisy</i> |
| Mon 28 th | W When you pray, say 'Our Father in heaven...' | BEARMAN, Susan |
| Tues 29 th | Y Yesterday today and forever, thank God for His faithfulness. | BELLO, Grace |
| Wed 30 th | E Everyone is made in the image of God. Treat everyone appropriately. | BENJAMIN, Michael & Michelle, <i>Luke & Sophia</i> |
| Thurs 31 st | A And do not treat them according to status. | BIGGS, Frances |
| Fri 1 st Jan 2021 | R Remember 'There by the grace of God go I.' | BITAGA Dougan & Fely, <i>Jiela</i> |
| Sat 2 nd | P Pray that you will be used by God to increase His kingdom this year. | BRETT, Dennis & Brenda |
| Sun 3 rd | R Rely on God's enabling, not your own abilities. | BROWN, Christine |
| Mon 4 th | A Always give the glory to God and rejoice when things go well. | BROWN, John & Glynis |
| Tues 5 th | I International relations are strained, pray for our world leaders. | BUNCE, Ian & Vikki |
| Wed 6 th | S Seize the opportunities God gives you to evangelise. | BURGESS, Joyce |
| Thurs 7 th | E Every day in 2021 is a gift – thank God. | Operation Mobilisation - Andy and Rianna Stannard, Moldova |



If you have any items for inclusion in the January 2021 Prayer Diary, please contact the Church Office.





Andy and Rianna **Stannard**



The uncertainty continues around the globe, but we are thankful that we can trust in a God who is never changing and a good provider. We are particularly thankful to see His care for us in how we have received several individual messages of encouragement and support from our friends and family and as well in your continued prayer and financial support.

In the last two months, God has been opening some wonderful opportunities here in Moldova which we are excited to share with you!

Personal Update:

You may remember a prayer request in a previous news letter to say that we were looking for an apartment to rent in Chisinau. For the last 3 years we have chosen to live in shared accommodation with an American family which have been close friends of ours for several years now. While we have really loved it and practically experienced the Kingdom community which we are designed for, we have felt that it was time for us to move out into our own space.



The rental market can move very quickly here in Chisinau and so we were looking for several weeks to find an apartment that

suited us well. After viewing several different apartments but not finding a good match for us, we finally viewed one that we could see ourselves feeling at home in, and it is common that after you view an apartment, you could be signing the contract and have the keys the very next day (which is what happened)! We are now enjoying this space which God has provided for us and have taken some time to get used to the new routines and life patterns once again.

What is the national state of Moldova?

The Moldovan borders have remained closed to internationals since the middle of March (although there is no problem getting in if you have a residency permit). In the last couple of months, the country had started to go back to more of a normal feel: commercial shops and parks had begun to re-open, however the number of cases of Covid-19 has continued to increase.

Today (Sunday 1st November) the country is having government elections and so we are waiting for the elected government to decide what action is necessary. At the moment, we are hearing rumours of lockdowns, especially since this is the pattern we are seeing across other parts of Europe, but we will know for certain in the next few weeks.

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OM ministry in Moldova:

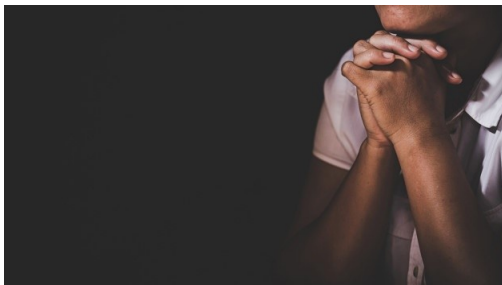
We have recently had a full team meeting to discuss the way that we see God leading our ministry forward in the months ahead. The short village visits have been able to continue and the team have given many more Bibles and shared the Good News with many across Moldova.

Over the last 6 months the training department within OM in Moldova have been testing the waters with DMM (Disciple Making Movements). This is a term used to describe simple disciples who multiply (make more disciples who in turn make more disciples). The basic principle of DMMs is obedience, do we do what Jesus commanded or taught his disciples to do? This is a very challenging question to ask, as for most people (us included) there are areas of our lives that we are



not fully obedient to Jesus in. We have been walking through these challenges personally but also looking at how we can bring this call to full and simple obedience to the Jesus followers here in Moldova. This is particularly difficult in the current climate: with lockdown looking ever more likely and public

meetings being at risk, we have started to look at the possibility of going online to facilitate this process of rediscovering what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.



Prayer Points:

- The future may yet be unknown to us but God's work continues. Please pray for individuals to burn with God's passion for the world and commit to join global missions and our MDT program (Missions Discipleship Training) which runs every year from January to July.
- Pray for wisdom in our team as we plan for future ministries in this unstable climate
- Pray for the Moldovan government elections and the new government which will form

Praise Points:

- The ministry opportunities which have opened up for our team during this season
- The new apartment which God has given to us to rent
- Through the short visits to the villages, many have heard the Good News, received Bibles and committed their lives to Jesus' Kingship.
- Continued good health within our team throughout the whole of this season.

Congratulations



Congratulations to Mr Peter and Mrs Rebecca Cross who had a small intimate wedding on the 24th October 2020.

Smile Lines

Picture

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw a picture of a Bible story with a Christmas theme. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. 'The Flight to Egypt,' was the reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: 'That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?'"

'Oh,' explained Kate happily, 'that's Pontius - the pilot!'

Next Christmas

The grandson had just taken a photograph of his grandmother who'd come to stay for Christmas and her 89th birthday. 'Granny, I sure hope I'm around next year to photograph you on your 90th birthday,' he said tactfully.

'Why not?' his grandmother shrugged. 'You look healthy enough'.

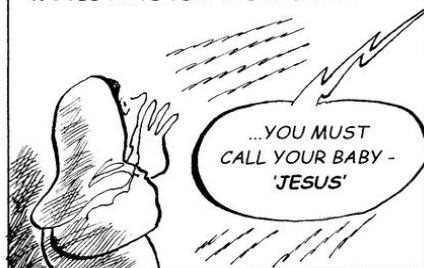
The First Christmas



JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE VERY SPECIAL BABY



MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE BY THE CENSUS.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL... THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE...

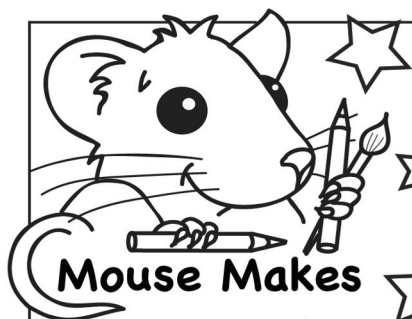


...WHICH IS WHERE THE BABY JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY. AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAS BEEN BORN.





"I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Saviour** has been born today! ...

*Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom
God is pleased".*

from Luke 2 vs. 10,11,14

HAPPY
CHRISTMAS!

Read the Christmas
story in Luke
1:1 - 2:21



A picture to colour
for Christmas. Colour in
one star each day as you
count down to Christmas!



Current Church Activities **(during lockdown)**



Monday

9:30am - 1pm Food Bank Donations received via Side door

Tuesday

9:30am - 1pm Food Bank Donations received via Side door

8:00pm Prayer meeting via Zoom

8:15pm "Journey" 18-30's Life Group via Skype

Wednesday

9:30am - 1pm Food Bank Donations received via Side door

10:00am The virtual Meeting Place Chat via Zoom

6:30pm Youth Quiz Night via Zoom

7:30pm Wednesdays @ RBC via Zoom

Thursday

9:30am - 1pm Food Bank Donations received via Side door

8:00pm RBC Music Team via Zoom

Friday

9:30am - 1pm Food Bank Donations received via Side door

Sunday

10.30am

Morning Service

(Online or in-church, with booking)

12:30pm

Youth Stream for years 6 -9 via Zoom

6.00pm

Online Evening Service

6:30pm

Student Stream for years 10 -13

If you have any regular church activity which you would like to have included, please let the editor know.



"Given the cost of heating the Church you'd think the treasurer would be all for it!

