

TINSHILL FREE CHURCH

MAGAZINE



No 360 – November & December 2025

Pastoral Letter – November & December 2025

The promise of Christ's coming

Most of us look forward to Christmas. I realise that this is not true for some, for whom Christmas is filled with memories of loved ones no longer here or who are on their own and lonely. For many though this is a time to be enjoyed (not to excess I hope) and to spend time with loved ones and have a well-deserved rest from work and normal activity. The countdown to Christmas has now begun once we have passed Halloween and Bonfire Night. Recently on a flying visit to see our grandsons in Lancaster over the Half Term holiday I saw my first fully lit Christmas tree of the season in the dining area at a Premier Inn - I was surprised to see it so early – in October!

For the Jews God had promised them through His prophets that a Messiah would come and save them in God's perfect timing. But they had to wait... Take Isaiah's wonderful prophecy recorded in the ninth chapter and verses six and seven;

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this”

This prophecy was given to Israel, God's people, at a dark and difficult time when they were being threatened by an Assyrian invasion. Into this gloom and the shadow of death the light of God shone as verses 1 and 2 of Isaiah 9 make clear. **But they had to wait....** Some 700 years or so before the Lord's Christ was born into our world at Bethlehem.

Bethlehem – the house of bread and home of the youth David, son of Jesse who would become King over the nation. God’s King would be born in David’s line – a Man after God’s own heart who would do the Father’s will. The place of the Messiah’s birth was as foretold by the prophet Micah;

“But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5 verse 2)

So there is detail in God’s promise to send a Messiah. Lots of detail about the character of the Lord’s Christ and the nature of the kingdom He would establish. During difficult days the anticipation of such a Messiah would be great – they really needed Him and longed for His coming....**but they had to wait.** Even Micah’s detail about Bethlehem as the birthplace of Christ was given 700 years or so before it happened. God’s timing is often different to ours. We are impatient but God gets it right – His timing is always the right timing.

The Lord’s Christ has come and lived in our world with grace and truth. He has walked in our footsteps, experienced the joys and sadness of living here, faced the temptations we do and confronted life in all its aspects in this fallen world. At a young age and after only a relatively short ministry He gave up His life as a ransom for many – His blood shed for the forgiveness of the sins of His people. His work on earth as a man had been completed. He totally fulfilled His mission, given by His Father, to save His people from their sins. ...**But the wait is not yet over!**

Christ has promised to return – His second coming. That is now what we wait and hope for. Then will come the judgement and the new heavens and the new earth where Christ will reign in His Kingdom with His people forever. The old order will be gone, burnt up with all its sin and death and brokenness. It is something to really look forward to and

to want in our hearts. When the Lord Jesus taught His disciples He told them to pray this;

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”
(Matthew 5 verse 10).

There is a day coming when faith for the Christian will become sight and we will see the promise of God fulfilled in all its richness and beauty for all eternity. It will happen because God has promised it will. As Christ came the first time in fulfillment of God’s promise so He will come again, a second time, as promised.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, ...but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.....We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (2 Peter 3 v 9 and 13).

So we wait on..... trusting in God’s promises and looking for His return in Glory.

With love and thankfulness in the Lord Jesus as we approach another Christmas,

Martin Sellens

“ To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.”

Psalm 25 verses 1 to 5.

Exclusion Zone

They're having a party without me,
There's feasting and drinking galore.
Exchanging of presents with loved ones,
But no-one loves Me anymore.

There's much celebrating without me,
Enjoying time off work and off school.
But there is no mention of My name,
One who does is dismissed as a fool.

It was different that night in the stable,
Shepherds came from the fields all around.
Wise men came over the desert
To ask where the King would be found.

It'll be different the next time I come,
There'll be no ignoring Me then.
That day they'll ALL bow before Me,
I'll never be shut out again.

Submitted by Angela Mathers

A Christmas Hymn

God has spoken by His servants
as the timeless Scriptures tell;
now from Bethlehem He's speaking
through His Son, Emmanuel.
Welcome Jesus, holy Prophet,
welcome, Mary's tiny Son,
Word of Life to every nation –
You are Christ, all-powerful one!

There He lies, by angels greeted,
soon to suffer on a cross –
born to bring us to the Father,
make Himself a curse for us.
Welcome Jesus, Priest for ever,
welcome, Mary's Saviour Son.
Name of peace, the way to heaven,
You are Christ, all-perfect one.

Where's the crown, the throne, the sceptre?
where's the palace for the King?
Here is just a borrowed manger
for the Lord of everything.
Welcome Jesus, Prince of glory,
welcome Mary's royal Son;
finest gold was never purer –
You are Christ, all-precious one.

Emma Turl © / Praise Trust

Excerpt from Amy Carmichael 'Edges of His Ways'.

“The shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one”. (Ephesians 6 verse 16).

The word used for shield signifies a great long oblong shield which covers the whole body, and the dart mentioned here is the kind which when it strikes a hard object catches fire. The promise is that when the dart strikes the great shield of faith, though it is set on fire, it is quenched. It cannot pierce the shield. It cannot burn the one who is behind the shield. The promise covers all manner of darts. The kind of dart hurled against us makes no difference to the promise. 'All' means all. Do we expect 'all' to mean all? Is there a secret fear in our hearts about a certain kind of temptation which perhaps we shall not be able to overcome? Away with this fear! It is of the devil. The shield of faith is ready to be taken up and used. If we take it up and use it, not a single dart of any sort will pierce it. **All means all.**

Submitted by Carole Brearley.

Artin's Testimony of Faith

In the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord. My name is Artin, and I am 15 years old. I came to faith in Jesus Christ around 2020. I think my parents became believers in Jesus Christ when I was about seven years old. Because of some of the things I saw, I accepted Christianity, but sometimes I doubted whether Christianity was truly right.

Sometimes I thought maybe other religions were true, or perhaps God was only a creator and not bound to any religion. I wasn't very sure whether I was really a Christian or not. I remember that at school,

during Lent, we were told about Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Tuesday. I remember making a pancake at school, and as far as I can remember, we were told that this tradition was related to Jesus fasting for forty days. We were told we could also prepare for fasting or repentance by making and eating pancakes, as a way to give up something or to start doing something good.

So, I decided to give up chocolate for forty days. I wanted to know the true God after this fast. I began my fast, and during those forty days, strange things started happening. After weeks of body pain and high fever, I was diagnosed with leukaemia. I went through very hard days and months in hospital, but I kept my fast. During the last days of my fasting period, I became very angry and hopeless. Every day was very difficult for me.

Although I was still eager to know God and sometimes read the children's Bible, my hope in God was fading. After a while, because of a side effect of one of my medications, I suffered internal bleeding, which caused a blood clot in my head. Thankfully, by God's grace, I wasn't seriously injured, but after that incident, I felt like everything was over for me. I thought that either there was no God, or that God was against me, because He had answered my fasting in such a painful way.

A few days later, when I was feeling a bit better and still in hospital, my father asked me to pray. But I wasn't really willing to pray anymore. I asked God, "Why did You answer my fasting like this?"

That same night, I had a dream. I saw someone who looked like my grandfather — someone I had only seen in pictures but never met in person. He was sitting at a desk with a computer, just like the ones used by doctors in the hospital ward where I was staying. There was

also another person there who looked like an angel. The person who looked like my grandfather said to me, “Artin, don’t worry. I will write the prescriptions you need for your healing.”

This happened exactly when I had lost all hope in God. From the next day onwards, every single day I started feeling better in every way. For me, this was not just a dream — it was much deeper. I had met the Lord Jesus Christ, and the healing prescription He wrote for me began working in my life.

I realised that the God I thought was against me was, in fact, the one who saved me! I have seen God’s love many times in my life, and I believe that only Jesus Christ is the mediator between me and God the Father. I learned that Christianity is not just a religion or tradition — it is friendship and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way, the truth, and the life. Whoever believes in Him will not be condemned but will have salvation and eternal life and will become a friend of God.

Faith in Jesus Christ is not an old idea — it is the only way to have friendship with God and to be considered righteous before Him. Because the Word of God says: “There is no one righteous, not even one.” But I thank God that through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our sins have been forgiven. I thank the Lord that He first loved us and proved His love for us by dying for us while we were still sinners. Praise be to the name of God, who through His resurrection gave us faith, hope, and love. Amen.

(The photos show Artin giving his testimony and in the baptismal pool on the occasion of his baptism on Sunday 12th October. Just three weeks later on Sunday 2nd November Joe and Niamh Hickman were baptised at Tinshill in front of a full church of family and friends. We

will include their testimonies in the next edition of The Magazine. What a joy to see three of our young people take this public step of faith – do pray for them in the coming days that God would bless them mightily and use their lives for His own glory.)



Seven National Days of Prayer

As we pause in early November to remember those who gave their lives for our freedom it is good to reflect on God's deliverance of our nation during the Second World War some 80 years on from the end of the war. The following article was sent to me recently from Pastor John of "Strengthen the Faithful"

Seven National Days of Prayer were called for by the King at critical times throughout the Second World War. After each one, the natural chain of events which had been occurring suddenly changed and deliverance took place. Looking back, the Bishop of Chelmsford Dr H.A. Wilson wrote, "If ever a great nation was on the point of supreme and final disaster, and yet was saved and reinstated it was ourselves...it does not require an exceptionally religious mind to detect in all this the Hand of God." The Archbishop of Canterbury Dr William Temple further declared "We believe that He [God] Who led our fathers in ways so strange and has preserved our land in such a marvellous manner has a purpose for us..." (Part of that purpose was the eventual liberation of Europe). On every National Day of Prayer churches were filled with people pleading for Divine intervention because no human help was available. On 31st October 1942 Winston Churchill stated "I have a feeling sometimes that some Guiding Hand has interfered. I have a feeling that we have a Guardian because we have a great Cause, and we shall have that Guardian so long as we serve that Cause faithfully. And what a Cause it is!"

The **first** National Day of Prayer took place in May 1940. The entire British Army was trapped at Dunkirk and so George 6th called for a National Day of Prayer to be held on 26th May. In a national broadcast

he urged the people of Britain to turn back to God in a spirit of repentance and plead for Divine help. Millions of people across the British Isles flocked into churches praying for deliverance with people and extraordinary scenes as people queued for prayer outside places like Westminster Abbey. Two events immediately followed. Firstly, a storm arose over the Dunkirk region grounding the Luftwaffe which had been killing thousands on the beaches. And then secondly, a great calm descended on the Channel, the like of which hadn't been seen for a generation. It was only because of this Channel calm coming at this precise moment and lasting the length of the evacuation, that tiny boats were able to sail across and rescue 335,000 soldiers. Hitler was furious. Because of this sudden Channel calm people referred to what happened as "the Miracle of Dunkirk".

The **second and third** National Days of Prayer were held during the Battle of Britain. Hitler now sought to destroy the RAF and its airfields prior to invasion. As events became critical, the King called for a Day of Prayer at the height of the battle on 11th August 1940. During the following week Spitfires and Hurricanes managed to destroy 180 Nazi bombers. This brought temporary relief, however on 30th August 800 enemy aircraft filled the skies intending to destroy RAF airfields. By 6th September the situation was again dire and defeat in the air looked inevitable. The King then called for another National Day of Prayer on 8th September. That week 185 enemy aircraft were shot down and Goering gave up his assault. On 15th September Churchill was able to declare victory in the air.

The **fourth** National Day of Prayer was called for by the King on 23rd March 1941 during a period of heavy bombing in London. He was completely unaware that this was the actual date planned by Hitler for the invasion. German ships were blown off course and Hitler then changed his entire plans, switching instead to invading Russia.

The **fifth** National Day of Prayer took place on 3rd September 1942 when the British Eighth Army had been driven back to the borders of Egypt by Rommel's Afrika Korps. General Montgomery was appointed as the Eighth Army Commander and led British forces to victory at El Alamein. This battle was the turning point of the war.

The **sixth** National Day of Prayer was held on 3rd September 1943, the fourth anniversary of the declaration of war on Germany. Italy surrendered to the Allies within 24 hours and Mussolini was killed.

The **Seventh** Day of Prayer was in spring 1944 for all military personnel in preparation for the liberation of Europe. This was then followed by an additional call on D-Day itself not only for nationwide prayer, but for a worldwide prayer vigil so that evil could be defeated. The poor weather that had delayed the D-Day offensive by 24 hours had suddenly lifted on 6th June and allowed the invasion to go ahead with far fewer lives lost than were expected.

As he reflected on events 8 years later, General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces responsible for D Day said;

"This day eight years ago, I made the most agonising decision of my life. I had to decide to postpone by at least 24 hours the most formidable array of fighting ships and of fighting men that was ever launched across the sea against a hostile shore. The consequences of that decision at that moment could not have been foreseen by anyone. If there were nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an Almighty and merciful God, the events of the next 24 hours did it...The greatest break in a terrible outlay of weather occurred the next day and allowed that great invasion to proceed, with losses far below those we had anticipated..."

Almighty God responded to those heartfelt National Days of Prayer with deliverance and ultimately with victory over the forces of evil. Immediately after the Miracle of Dunkirk the German Army stood on the other side of the Channel with over two hundred divisions flushed with victory. Most of our weapons had been abandoned in France so all Britain had was less than one division of armed troops. No wonder people prayed for Divine intervention.

What God did before, he can obviously do again. There is hope and deliverance if we turn to Him in repentance and humility as did the previous wartime generation.

Thanks for your support

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal for Eastern Europe. A total of 24 shoeboxes were taken to Garforth at the end of October ready to be transported up to Scotland and then checked and packed in containers to go out to Eastern Europe for Christmas. Do pray that they will safely arrive and be a source of great blessing, joy and hope to those who receive them. It is staggering that Blythswood have delivered over 2.8 million boxes since the work began in 1993 affecting so many lives and that we have played a small part in the continuation of this worthwhile ministry.

Next Magazine

The next edition of The Magazine will be for January / February 2026 - the deadline for the submission of items and contributions to Martin will be Sunday 21st December - all contributions welcome.

Diary

November

Sat 8	10am – 12noon	Book Event with Christian Bookshop, Ossett at church
Sun 9	2pm	Remembrance Day Service at Cookridge Court
Thu 13	7.30pm	Missionary Prayer Meeting
Tue 18	7.45pm	Annual General Meeting at church
Thu 20	2pm	Thursday at Two Speaker: John Almond
	7.30pm	Rock up
Tue 25	7.30pm	Ladies Crafts for Christmas Evening
Sun 30		Fellowship Lunch after the Morning Service

December

Thu 4	2pm	Thursday at Two Speaker: Mick Lockwood
	7.30pm	Rock up
Fri 5	9.30am	“What is Christmas all about” with Cookridge Primary School
Tue 9	7.45pm	Elder Deacons at 68 Moseley Wood Walk
Wed 10	1.15pm	Tots Christmas Party and final meeting of 2025
Thu 11	7.30pm	Rock up Christmas Party and final meeting of 2025
Fri 12	9.30am	“What is Christmas all about” with Holy Trinity Primary School
	6pm	Ketchup Christmas Party and final meeting of 2025
Tue 16	7.30pm	Men’s Christmas Fellowship
Thu 18	1pm	Thursday at Two Christmas Meal
Sun 21	2pm	Cookridge Court Christmas Service
	5pm	Church Carol Service
Thu 25	10.30am	Christmas Morning Service – Martin Sellens

Dates to still be arranged in December - Missionary Prayer meeting, Bedford Court Service and possible time at Headingley Nursing Home

Bible Studies

Wednesdays at 7.45pm at the church with a Zoom option if you are not able to attend in person but no Zoom option for Deputations

November	12th	Martin Sellens	Genesis 47 v13-31
	19th	Paul Crossley	Genesis 48
	26th	Prayer Meeting	
December	3rd	Martin Sellens	Genesis 49 v1-28
	10th	Alan Brearley	Genesis 49 v29 – 50 v14
	17th	Carol Singing	
	24th	No Meeting	
	31st	Martin Sellens	Genesis 50 v15 - 26
January	7th	Prayer Meeting	

Preaching Plan

		Morning	Evening
November	9th	Mick Lockwood	Gordon Frame
	16th	Jonathan Chell	Adam Broughton
	23rd	Alan Brearley	Martin Sellens
	30th	John Harris	John Harris
December	7th	Martin Sellens	Steve Harding (Com)
	14th	Andrew Rowell	Andrew Rowell
	21st	Mick Lockwood	Alan Brearley
	28th	Martin Sellens	Martin Sellens
January	4th	Tba(Com)	Tba
(Com) = (Communion)		Tba = To be arranged	

Outside Appointments

Do pray for our men as they minister outside in the coming months ;

Paul Crossley;

Sunday Nov 9th am – Garforth

Sunday Dec 7th am - Hebron, Altofts

Sunday Dec 14th am - Garforth

Alan Brearley;

Sunday Nov 9th am - Bethel, New Wortley

Weds Nov 12th pm - Bible Study at Bethel, New Wortley

Rotas

Cleaning for week ending

Nov	15th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
	22nd	Hickman family, Natalie Sellens
	29th	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard
Dec	6th	Elaine & John Snuggs, Sue & Gordon Chell
	13th	Angela Mathers, Christine Crossley, Rosemary Hilton
	20th	Deborah Williams, Eva Ng, Anne Sellens
	27th	Hickman family, Natalie Sellens
Jan	3rd	Kathryn Hibbard, Nigel Hibbard

Flowers for Sunday

Nov 16th	Deborah Williams	Nov 23rd	Colette Hickman
Nov 30th	Kathryn Hibbard	Dec 7th	Sue Chell
Dec 14th	Christine Crossley	Dec 21st	Eva Ng
Dec 28th	Natalie Sellens	Jan 4th	Mavis Mathers

Diary of Services and Activities

Sunday	Sunday Morning Worship	10.30am
	Key Club (children aged 4-11)	10.30am
	Prayer Meeting	5.30pm
	Evening Worship	6.30pm

A Communion Service is held every month alternating between morning and evening on the first Sunday of the month and follows on from the main Service.

Tuesday	Men's Fellowship (3rd Tuesday – bimonthly)	7.30pm
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Wednesday	Tots Club (term time)	1.15pm
	Prayer Meeting and Bible Study	7.45pm

Thursday	Thursday at Two (seniors - fortnightly)	2.00pm
	Rock Up (school years 7-11- fortnightly)	7.30pm
	Missionary Prayer Meeting (monthly)	7.30pm

Friday	Ketchup (Children aged 5-11 in term time)	6.00pm
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