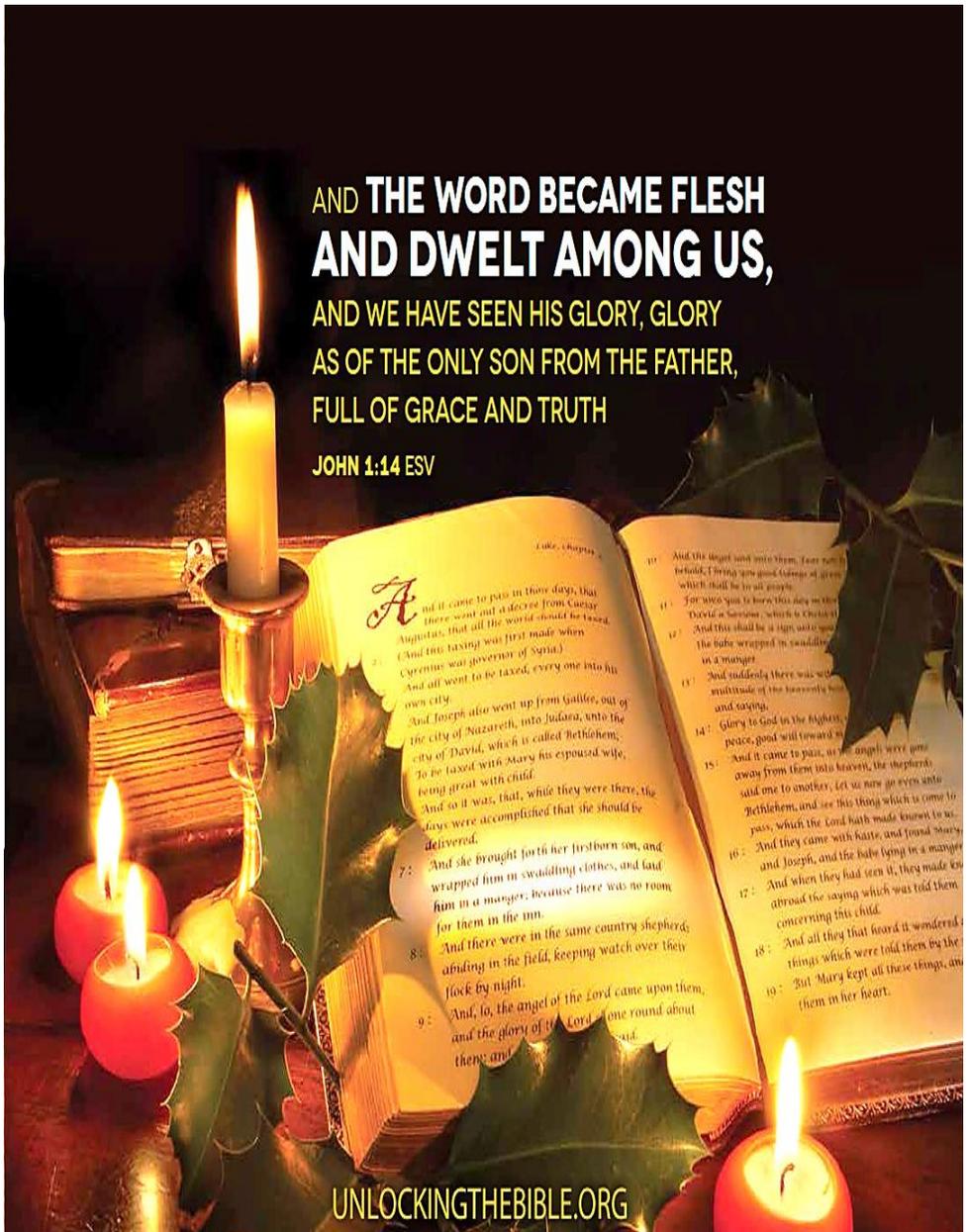


AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH
AND DWELT AMONG US,

AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, GLORY
AS OF THE ONLY SON FROM THE FATHER,
FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

JOHN 1:14 ESV



UNLOCKINGTHEBIBLE.ORG

“Arise, shine, your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you
...know that I the Lord am your Saviour, your Redeemer” Isaiah 60 v.16

Pastor's Study - Preparing for Christmas.

'And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous - to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'
(Luke 1:17 NNIV)

John the Baptist is an essential figure in the Christmas story; he is God's appointed herald of the coming Lord Jesus, and more.

The angelic message to John's father Zechariah identifies his heritage back to Samson, Samuel and even Isaac, before concluding with this most explicit link to the great prophet Elijah. John the Baptist draws together several threads of God's promises and prophecies, to form an unbreakable cord that binds the Old Testament to the coming Messiah of the Gospels.

The angel tells Zechariah (and us) that all of this is: *'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord'*. Prepared to receive for ourselves the *'once for all'* incarnation of God in the person of Jesus. Prepared by belief in our hearts that this Son of God came: *'to seek and to save the lost'* (Luke 19:10); and prepared to put aside all worldly temptations and submit to Christ alone as Lord of our lives this Christmas.

That is a lot to prepare for, but it does not end there. John's preparations for the coming of Christ involve making *'straight paths'* into the future and a foretaste of many being reconciled to God before this Lord Jesus of the first Christmas returns. There is much for all of us as God's people to do while Heaven's doors are opened to any and all who will turn from the ways of the world to trust and to follow Jesus.

So, as we prepare for Christmas over the coming weeks, there will be a lot to do in presenting, celebrating and honouring the birth of Jesus. I know we will do this well and with great joy in our hearts; many will be blessed by their time with us, even the *'once-a-year'* visitors. Here we pray the Lord would, as the angel says: *'turn the hearts of [...] the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous'*. Preparing for Christmas is preparing for eternity.

Every blessing to all this Christmas time,

Pastor Robbie

Pastor's Diary: November - December 2018 and into 2019!

The Pastor's Office looks great! Thanks to all who helped, especially to Neil as project manager. Open for business! Or just a cuppa if you're passing. But this is not a case of "job done": we still need to get on top of our storage arrangements in the School building and continue a programme of re-decoration and catch up on some basic maintenance. Our Korean brothers and sisters are keen to participate also - more to follow.

Looking back over the (nearly) three months at Hope, God has certainly brought us blessing and encouragement. Receiving requests to join in membership, and others for baptism, is assurance of our Lord moving and working among us. We are encouraged by fruit.

Every Sunday has felt a little different and in its own way special. Following a book of Scripture as we have been doing with Mark's Gospel, forces encounters with the difficult passages that we might otherwise avoid; I believe that God uses this to achieve His purposes through the preaching of His Word (Isa 55:11). The exception to this was our service on the centenary of the Armistice which was richly blessed: a fitting act of remembrance and honouring to our Lord in right measure; this old soldier was moved. Thanks to all who helped on the day.

We will leave Mark for a time and look forward to our Christmas festivities. It will be very special for us to share the wonder and joy of everything that Christmas means to us as God's family at Hope. This is also our treasured opportunity to welcome people from the community around us, those whose visits to us might be very rare. This Christmas might just be the one that sees the Holy Spirit of God moving in their hearts, and so our work of witness is so important. Christingle or Carol Service or Christmas Eve Communion let us seek to serve the Lord and share the love of Christ with all our hearts.

And what does 2019 hold for us? I join with others in eager expectation that God is doing something special in Bridgend, and not least in Hope Baptist Church. Let's be ready to respond to His bidding and His calling.

All blessings as always, *Pastor Robbie*



The Christmas Geese

There was once a man who didn't believe in God. His wife, however, did believe and she raised their children to also have faith in God and Jesus, despite his disparaging comments.

One snowy Christmas Eve his wife was taking their children to a Christmas Eve service but he refused.

"That story is nonsense!" he said. "Why would God lower Himself to come to earth as a man? That's ridiculous!" – so he stayed home.

A while later, the winds grew stronger and the snow turned into a blizzard. He sat down to relax in front of the fire for the evening. Then he heard a loud thump. Something had hit the window. Then another thump!

When the snow let up a little, the man ventured outside to see what could have been beating on his window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. Apparently they had been flying south for the winter when they got caught up in the snowstorm and couldn't go on. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter. They just flapped their wings and flew around the field in low circles, blindly and aimlessly.

The man felt sorry for the geese and wanted to help them. The barn would be a great place for them to stay, he thought. It's warm and safe, surely they could spend the night there and wait out the storm. So he walked over to the barn and opened the doors wide; then watched and waited hoping they would notice the open barn and go inside.

The geese just fluttered around aimlessly and didn't seem to notice the barn or realise what it could mean for them. The man tried every way to get their attention but he just seemed to scare them and they moved further away. He went into the house and came back with some bread, he

made a breadcrumb trail leading to the barn – but they still didn't catch on.

Now he was getting frustrated. He got behind them and tried to shoo them into the barn but they only got more scared. Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where they would be warm and safe.

“Why don't they follow me” he exclaimed, “can't they see that this is the only place where they can survive the storm”?

He thought for a moment and realized that they wouldn't follow a human. “If I were a goose then I could save them” he said out loud.

Then he had an idea. He went into a barn, got one of his own geese and carried it in his arms as he circled around behind the flock of wild geese. He then released it. His goose flew through the flock and straight into the barn – and one by one the other geese followed it to safety!

He stood silently for a moment as the words he had spoken a few minutes earlier replayed in his mind.

“If I were a goose, then I could save them”.

Then he thought about what he had said to his wife earlier. “Why would God want to be like us? That's ridiculous”!

Suddenly it all made sense. That is what God had done. We were like the geese – blinded by the storm, floundering and lost. God had sent His Son to become like us so that He could show us The Way and save us. That was the meaning of Christmas.

As the winds and blinding snow died down he became quiet. Years of doubt and disbelief vanished like the passing storm. He went out into the snow, fell to his knees and prayed,

“Thank you, God, for coming in human form to get me out of the storm”.

Anon

We all face storms of all kinds - God walks through each one with us.

“For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling,
He will hide me in the shelter of His Tabernacle”. Psalm 27 v.5

uttermost despite a very busy work load lecturing at Lampeter. You must delight in his playing and improvisation. Such talent always shines through; as does the partnership with Steve (guitar) and Phil (drums).

Steve and Sally have a knowledge of our sound system second to none making it possible for all to worship in comfort – hearing is imperative! We thank you for providing the Tape Ministry too – it eats into your time but is truly appreciated. Aply assisted by Clive and Hannelie the team do us proud. Thank you one and all. It is so good that work schedule allows Sally to be with us on Sundays. I want to say a special thank you to Steve for attending weddings and funerals when required alongside Huw Morgan.

I will stop. You all deserve a mention, from Sundays'cool teachers; to all who have manned rotas, to you who have raised monies for charities. Hope's generous heart has to be seen to be believed. I just want to name one other, Pam. She has worked long hours every month preparing the format of the magazine in readiness for the printers. Our thanks to all who have contributed - please use it as an outreach and blessing.

A heartfelt thank you to Hilary who continues with her card ministry despite not being able to attend Church at present. Don remains strong in many ways. We pray for you both as pain proves to be a constant companion for each of you.

Rhyl has had a successful heart procedure. We pray with you, Rhyl – feel the love of us all at Hope as we reach out to you. Your faith will overcome all. Derek King astounds us all with his courage and endurance in the face of relentless treatment. Hope prays and God comes near.

Our love also rushes out to Eva Evans. She had a nasty fall. As you pray for us (see page 17) we pray in earnest for you. Keep strong in your Lord.

Our thoughts and prayers are constant for all who cannot attend church due to caring responsibilities - Edward and Anita, Marion and Ken, also Brenda Cadogan, Dorothy Fear and Pearl. We know how much you miss us - know how much we miss you.

We are so sad to hear of the passing of Mrs Beryl Cox's husband, Alan. Beryl your past loyalty to Hope has always ensured you of a Church family who will support and pray for you in the years to come. **Rhonwen**

Month of Sundays...

	2 nd December	9 th December	16 th December
DUTY DEACONS	Maureen Turner		
	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev. Robbie Hall	SUNDAY'S COOL NATIVITY
			CHRISTINGLE CELEBRATION
	Barbara Harris	Maureen Turner	Rhonwen Miles
	AM Yvonne Matthews & Margaret Francs	Rosalyn Howells & Val Jenkins	Mary Johnson & Rosemary Rowe
	PM Pam Jones & Judith Jakob	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman	Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh
	COMMUNION PM Prep: Alison Evans		

Ladies' Guild

- 3rd Christmas Lunch
10th Christmas Celebration

Ladies' Guild will restart on Monday, 14th January 2019

23 rd December	24 th /25 th December	30 st December
Maureen Turner		
Rev. Robbie Hall	24th – 6pm Candlelight Communion Service	Rev. Robbie Hall
	25th – 10.30am Christmas Morning Service only	No Evening Service
Mary Johnson		Brenda Cadogan
Mel Denning & Joan de Vera	NO TEAS	
Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman		
COMMUNION AM Prep: Alison Evans & Pam Jones		

Women @Hope

4th Rev. Robbie Hall

11th Mr. Derek Slark

18th Carols for Christmas – Last meeting

Month of Sundays...

	6 th January	13 th January
DUTY DEACONS	Mary Johnson	
	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev. Robbie Hall
	Pam & Owain Jones	Gareth & Enid James
 AM PM	Enid James & Pat Fairfax	Lynne Chamberlain & Delyth Ware
	Pam Jones & Judith Jakob	Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh
	COMMUNION PM Prep: Alison Evans & Pam Jones	

Ladies Guild

14th

Rev. Robbie Hall

	20 th January	27 th January
DUTY DEACONS	Mary Johnson	
	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev. Robbie Hall
	Margaret Morton	Brinley & Pat George
	Rosalyn Hogg & Val Jenkins	Mary Johnson
	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman	Pam Jones & Judith Jakob
	COMMUNION AM Prep: Irene & Clive Griffiths	

Women@Hope

- 15th Rev. Robbie Hall
- 22nd Kristian Diamond
- 29th Pastor Adam Thomas

The Mistletoe!

It was the day before Christmas Eve, and the airport was heaving with passengers anxious to get back home for the festivities. Seasonal music was being played over the speakers, and seasonal decorations abounded. Long queues snaked from the many check-in desks.

Eventually the passenger in whom we are interested reached the head of the long queue. He presented his passport and documents to the young woman sitting at the desk. When asked to, he placed his baggage on the weighing machine at the side of the desk. I guess that most of you readers are familiar with the routine. The man couldn't help but notice the mistletoe hanging above the check-in desk. He looked up at the mistletoe, then looked enquiringly at the young woman as she attached the baggage tickets to the cases.

She returned his look and said, "Don't get the wrong idea, sir. That mistletoe isn't hanging there for you to kiss me; it's hanging there so that you can kiss goodbye to your baggage!"

Kiss goodbye to your baggage! How many of us have watched our cases, luggage, baggage, float out of sight on those conveyor belts? How many of us have wondered, "Will we ever see our baggage again? Will it be there on the carousel when we reach our destination?"

On a couple of occasions some or all of our baggage did not reach the carousel, but to be fair to the airline, they found it, and delivered it to our holiday address the next day.

Kiss goodbye to your baggage! When you think about it, that can be an appropriate motto for Christmas. How many are carrying emotional baggage, or conscience-stricken baggage etc., because of something that they have done, or something that has been done to them?

Looking down through the centuries to the one who would be born at that first Christmas, the prophet Isaiah said, "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6). A few months before the baby was due to be born, an angel told Joseph, "You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins". (Matthew 1:21).

Thirty years later, John the Baptist pointed out the grown-up Jesus and declared to the people around him, “Look, there’s the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”. (John 1:29).

Looking back at the events of Good Friday, the Apostle Peter wrote, “He, Jesus, bore our sins in his body on the tree”. (1 Peter 2:24).

In a manner of speaking, thinking back to the airport story, Jesus is a bit like the conveyor belt on which we can place our emotional and bad-conscience baggage etc., and see it whisked away. We do this by believing in him; by putting our trust in him as Lord and Saviour. Seeing him as the one who died and rose again.

Of course, at the airport our baggage is normally waiting for us at our destination. Thankfully, that is not the same with the baggage entrusted to our Lord. As we confess our faults and sins and shortcomings, he takes them away ... for ever! “I will forgive their wickedness, and remember their sins no more”, says the Lord as reported in Hebrews 8:12. The prophet Micah has a picturesque way of saying the same thing, “You, Lord, will hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea”. (Micah 7:19).

So, when we reach our destination, heaven, then according to the Bible our earthly baggage will not be waiting for us, if we have entrusted them to our Lord. We don’t have to carry such baggage throughout our life! That’s Good News, isn’t it? We can “Kiss goodbye to such baggage”!

And there is more. There is another sort of baggage we can place on the Lord. The Apostle Peter encourages his readers to “Cast all your anxiety, all your cares, on the Lord ... because he cares for you”. (1 Peter 5:7). In other words, “Kiss them goodbye”! he says.

Take a fresh look at the crib, and at the cross, and at the empty tomb. See again the Lord Jesus, the great burden bearer. And enjoy the freedom of being children of God.

Rev. Mike Weldon



Throw away your credit cards, no January bills through the door,
If you saved with Hope for Christmas, worry no more.
We all know the true meaning of Christmas, as Christians of course we do,
It's still nice to place gifts under the tree for family and friends from you.
The Minister's Benevolent Fund has suffered - the interest was very poor,
We asked each saver, a small donation, not under a pound, maybe more!
The response was great, it made us smile
We think our effort is really worthwhile,
Thank you all for saving with us.
Put this date in your diary – January 6th we start again.
A Happy and Blessed Christmas from Angela and me

Jean Langdon.



Your Christmas Menu.

Answers on Page 15

Soup: An animal and a short story. **Sweet.** The pastor's busiest day.

Fish: Cash on delivery. I make a noise in fright.

Game: What most men do. **Dessert** Adam's in the throat.

Main: A follower of Mary A beverage or two?

Veg: (a) A vehicle and decay (a) What sailors long for
(b) Before the taxi age. (b) Pretend anguish.



WHAT'S OCCURRING!

SUNDAY'SCOOL NEWS

We are now starting to prepare for our Nativity service which will be on Dec 16th. We're planning to use materials provided by The Bible Society.

Pam Jones

Along with Sunday'scool, we will be praying for Helen, Angus and family in Kathmandu, Nepal; not forgetting our three other Link Missionaries, Linda and Tim Darby working in Gulu, Northern Uganda, Jane Edwards in Mosambique and most especially for Lucy and Mac. They have returned to the UK, having done great work in Guinea. Lucy's pregnancy continues to cause concern. Our prayers are assured for her and for all the above. Christmas blessings to you all.

Pam Jones

CHRISTIAN AID NEWS

A big thank you to all who responded to the Christian Aid emergency appeal for those affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia. The envelope collection raised £290. Thank you again

Delyth Ware

NB:-

GIFT SUNDAY – 2ND DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS CARDS - No later than 10th December

CAMBRENSIS “Promise of Christmas” on the 9th December

SUNDAY'SCOOL Nativity and Christingle are on the 16th December. Please make every effort to support both these services

BRIDGEND CHRISTMAS – THE STORY 2018 commences on 8th December through to 15th December (not including Sunday) at Tabernacl , Derwen Road. Performances are 9.30, 10.30 and 11.30 most days. Some performances are in Welsh. For further information follow @BridgendNativity on twitter or www.facebook.com/BridgendNativity. Much publicity will be given in Church with Mary and Joseph (Roselyn and Phil) and several others taking lead parts. We are so proud of you and wish you well on all performances.

Answers to Quiz.

Oxtail; Cod; Grouse; Lamb; Carrot; Cabbage; Sundae; Ice cream; Apple; Port; Champagne.

For the Love of Christmas still lives in your heart.

The love of Christmas still lives
Though childhood has gone
The love of Christmas remains
And still lingers on
You turn the pages of the mind
Remembering Yuletides past
And on the daily round of life
A wondrous spell is cast
For the love of Christmas still lives in your heart

The spirit of Christmas still lives
Though childhood has fled.
The spirit of Christmas remains
When dreams are not dead;
If in the star, the Wise Men three
And manger you believe
If you still hang your stocking up
With hope on Christmas Eve
The Spirit of Christmas still lives in your heart

The wonder of Christmas remains
If you can recall
The rapture, the tingle, the thrill
Of when you were small.
If you can join the carollers
Around the Christmas tree
And if your heart can be transformed
By Christ's Nativity
The Glory of Christmas still lives in your heart
And just like the Wise Men you'll follow the Star
And be led to the manger, whatever age you are.

Thank you Hawys

We pray that the Spirit of Christmas
will live long in our hearts



As Hawys writes her inspiring poetry, her friend and our friend Eva Evans prays. What better combination can we have through life than friends who pray for us.

Eva prays -.

“Our Father, help us to see, as we come to the end of the year, an opportunity to look back and remember. We thank you for the friends that we have made in church and for bonds which grow more closely as the years go on. We thank you that our fellowship is a pillar of strength for all experiences of sorrows and shadows we have faced.

Forgive us for any disloyalty, selfishness and lack of understanding. Help us to go on walking the way of life together, facing the new year ahead with hope, giving a word of comfort to the sad in heart, a word of certainty for those with a doubting mind and a word of strength and grace for those wrestling with temptation.

Help us to be resolute in our desire to strengthen our church. May the Holy Spirit guide us to do more of your will assuring us that we shall have your presence and sustaining power in whatever we do in your name – the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We give Mrs Rosemary Rowe the very last word as she ushers in our New Year with good advice. The words encapsulate her year and her lifelong witness and faith in her Lord. Overcoming heart surgery has been her latest testing time and again she has come through firm in her faith, more fervent in her prayers and grounded in the love found in her Saviour, Jesus Christ who heals.

One step won't get you very far, you've got to keep on walking,

One word won't tell folks who you are, you've got to keep on talking.

One foot won't make you very tall, you've got to keep on growing,

One trip to Church won't tell you all, you've got to keep on going.

As we herald in the New Year two truths remain,
".. those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary.." Isaiah 40 v.31.

Some of us prefer to donate money to a chosen charity, instead of sending Christmas cards, but we could not miss out on the chance to pass on our best wishes to all of the Hope family...a big **THANK YOU** on behalf of all these charities for your kind donations!



Barnabas Fund Jean Richards
Athritis UK Maureen Turner
BMS Rev. Mike and Pam Weldon
Margaret and John Francis
Hannelie Jonas

Bible Society Edward and Anita Jones
Cancer Research Barbara Harris
Derrick & Norma King
Brenda Cadogan

Christian Aid Clive & Irene Griffiths
Eva Evans

Gideons Clarice Fewkes

In Appreciation of Hope Magazine Rhian & Russell Henderson

Mission Aviation Fund Philip & Rosalyn Hogg

Nazareth House Judith Jakob

SW Baptist College Adrienne Haines

Neuroblastoma UK Lynne & Phil Chamberlain

Crohns & Colitis UK Neil & Val Jenkins

Y Bwthyn Nyfain Pugh

Tools with a Mission Bob & Rosemary Rowe

Wales Air Ambulance Elizabeth & Huw Morgan

Geoffrey Hopkin

Nigel & Julie Brown

Noreen Parsons

Pam & Owain Jones

Water Aid Hilary & Don Thomas

OUR WEEK AT A GLANCE

For more information on any of our activities, please get in touch with the contact shown.

MONDAY:

Ladies Guild	2.30pm	Mrs P. Jones	(01656) 655142
Bible Study	7.30pm	Mrs. M. Denning	(01656 767381

TUESDAY:

Ladies' Prayer Group	9.30am	Mrs R Rowe	(01656) 654881
Women@Hope	11.00am	Mrs M Johnson	(01656) 656346

THURSDAY:

Baby & Toddler Group	9.30am	Dr D. Ware	(01656) 662948
Prayer Meeting	7.30pm		

SUNDAY:

Sunday'sCool	10.00am
Morning Service	10.30am
Evening Service	6.00pm

WHO TO CONTACT AT HOPE

CHURCH CONTACT:	hopebaptist@hotmail.co.uk	07866 746851
CHURCH PASTOR:	Rev. Robbie Hall	07787 551100
SECRETARY:	Rhonwen Miles	(01656) 654169
TREASURER:	Paul Evans	(01656) 661986
CARETAKER:	Seung Ho & Yun Hee Kang	(01656) 646911
USE OF PREMISES & SAFEGUARDING	Sally George	(01656) 668791
NEWSDESK:	mag4hope@yahoo.com	Rhonwen Miles Pam Jones

HOPE

BAPTIST CHURCH

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

(Church Meeting 010503)

We will EVANGELISE our community & beyond.

We will encourage people to become more Christ-like through
DISCIPLESHIP.

We are committed to meeting the needs of those inside & outside
our walls through MINISTRY.

We will value FELLOWSHIP, recognising that it is a divine gift to the
church.

We will come before the Lord in obedience to WORSHIP Him.

Hope Baptist Church operates a safeguarding children and
adults at risk policy.

www.hopebridgend.co.uk

[www.facebook.com/Hope-Baptist-Church-Bridgend-
1699576150319699](https://www.facebook.com/Hope-Baptist-Church-Bridgend-1699576150319699)

Hope English Baptist Church Bridgend

Affiliated to the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) & South Wales
Baptist Association

Registered Charity: No. 1133067

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