



*For unto us
a Child is born.*

*Unto us a
Son is Given.*

Pastor's Study – The great promise of hope.

⁶For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.: (Isaiah 9:6)

When God gave His prophet Isaiah this great and wonderful promise of hope and everlasting peace for His people, it must have seemed “pie in the sky”, because the reality on the ground looked desperate and hopeless. The Assyrians had already swept over much of the region, including neighbouring Galilee, crushing all resistance before them, leaving every kind of desperate suffering in their wake. Nothing it seemed could halt this onslaught. The rest, as they say, is history. The Greeks came and then the Romans, empires rose and fell. Few held out that God would actually deliver on this and over 300 other Messianic prophecies of the Tanakh.

Then Jesus came. Of course, neither the humble baby born in Bethlehem, nor the carpenter’s son growing up in Nazareth, was recognisable as the one upon whose shoulders any earthly government might rest. But when we know His government was not earthly but universal, and his Kingdom everlasting, then the whole of this prophecy encapsulates all that Jesus the Christ was, and is, and is to come.

His name is indeed wonderful, a name above all names that calls every knee to bow in reverence before Him. His counsel is unique because Jesus lifts us from the suffering and grief of the here and now, to show us the will of God that leads to our eternal life in His glory, a glory beyond compare to even the greatest of trials we face in this life.

The prophesy then tells us that Jesus is the incarnation of Almighty God, our Everlasting Father, and closes with this last (but not least) title of “Prince of Peace”. The peace that every Christian knows is true peace with God. We are reconciled to our Heavenly Father, solely because Jesus went to the Cross to win forgiveness for our sin. It is that most wonderful Christmas present of all time: we can rise with Jesus to everlasting peace, just as God promised.

Pastor Robbie

Pastor's Diary: December 2019 – January 2020

It is said that hindsight is 20:20, implying we can all be wise after the event but seldom have a complete understanding of how events will work out beforehand. If only! I'm sure we have all experienced the truth of that in our own lives. Our perspective as Christians should be different, we serve a God who has perfect hindsight and foresight all of the time, and He calls us to step out in faith and trust in Him to be working His purposes out in our lives and work.

2020
VISION

Given that next year is 2020 and 20:20 is perfect vision, let us start the year by seeking afresh God's vision for us as a Church in the future, starting with this coming year. Let us be confident that everything is in His loving care and capable hands.

Romans 8:28 reminds us that "in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose". So when we face challenges, opposition and even heart-rending events that look like stopping us in our tracks, we need to keep sight of the vision.

We should see 2020 as our year for getting the Foodbank and Café Church up, running, and bringing real blessing to our community. There are challenges already and we can expect more, but it will happen if we pray on and press on. Pray especially that the design and installation phase does not drag on but delivers the detailed plan soon.

Another key vision for 2020 is to start a new work and ministry for our young people. We have a lovely group our youngsters and those with a real heart for leading and teaching them as a group. We should be in constant prayer for this.

Finally (for now) we'll have another go at fixing the leaks in the baptistry – and testing it again soon!

All blessings as always, **Pastor Robbie**

Reach out and be surprised.

A man called, Michael, tells us his story.

“It all started quite innocently. I worked in an office with large windows facing a busy overpass. One day a woman in a passing car looked up and made eye contact. Naturally, I waved. She looked back



trying to work out who I was. When work was slow I would stand in the window and wave. Passengers in buses and cars would look strangely at me - I would just laugh and wave. My stress would be washed away; and so would the stress of the whole office. Strange that!

Before long I had a following and waving became boring so I made signs - “Hello” “Be happy” and posted them on the window. I made paper aeroplanes and hats and tossed them in the air.

Christmas approached and job cuts were announced. Everybody were feeling low. Stress in the office reached an all time high. I made a funny Santa outfit, wore it to work, chuckled as only Santa can and they all chuckled back. One day the boss called me - ‘Santa’ - into his office; he chuckled too and said “Thank you, it’s been a long time since I laughed like that”.

That evening and every evening of the Christmas Season I stood proudly in the window and waved at my fans. Bus people waved back – they loved my Santa outfit. I had friends who were looking out for me.

That Spring we were expecting our first child. I wanted the world to know! Less than a month before the birth I posted a sign in the window.

“25 DAYS UNTIL B DAY”. My fans on the bus shrugged their shoulders. But each day the sign went up. The days rolled by.

One day a sign went up in one of the buses, “WHAT IS B DAY?”

The next day my sign read, “8 DAYS UNTIL BABY DAY”.

They got it!! It was plain to see that all the passengers were excited! The excitement grew - my sign read ZERO! Only to be followed the next day, "BABY DAY ONE DAY LATE".

14 days later I appeared at the window. My work colleagues were ready with the banner they had made. Standing at the window they unrolled it, "IT'S A GIRL". The cars slowed down and everyone waved back.

Finally, the bus from the docks made its turn on to the overpass. I opened my window, the bus was directly in front of me when it stopped - in heavy traffic. Every person stood with their hands in the air. Then it happened; a sign popped up.

"CONGRATULATIONS". I had tears in my eyes.

Those people must have carried that sign - unrolled - for the last 14 days. Everyday they had unrolled the sign and then rolled it back again, disappointed that my sign had no news of our eagerly expected baby. Their joy for me just blew me away. Yes, I had tears in my eyes". Michael.

We all have the ability to smile, it may lie deep inside us at times but when **we** find **our** smiles **others** find **theirs** – much to their surprise and the surprise of everyone around them!



There have been many times when you have been that man in the window – times when you reached out and cheered someone. The moment may have passed in a flash but unknown to you the effect was long lasting.

Jesus smiled – a lot. His smile drew the young and old to His side. They were healed and loved unconditionally. The poor who were ignored, the haughty who did the ignoring; the thieves who exploited the system and those who lived honest lives and groaned at the taxes they had to pay. Jesus saw them all. With great patience and love He tore every barrier down.

How did He do that? Because He is the Radiance and brilliance of God's glory that gives us.

enough hope to keep you happy.

A day of days

Just call me a 'villager', an ordinary, simple man living in Nazareth. You don't need to know my name only the name of my friend, Joseph. He's a carpenter by trade: strong in body and spirit, kindly in manner and wise in judgement. It was no surprise to me when he declared his love for Mary, the daughter of Anna and Joachim; obedient, hardworking and beautiful Mary who had a quality about her that defied definition. Hers was the smile of an angel. Well, I can only say that 'it takes one to know one' – for one day Mary met her angel who told her, "Mary, you have found favour with God. ..You will be with child ...He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High...."

That is why I am lifting her on to the little donkey as they prepare to journey 70 miles to Bethlehem where he is to be born. The prophet said it would be so. Absorbed with a 'check list' Joseph had little time to notice the concern – no, the fear that is in my eyes.

Jerusalem is in the grip of both Jewish revolutionaries and Roman rule. Violence and murder, the legacy of Herod the Great are gathering momentum. I don't need a prophet to warn me of the dangers ahead.

They are waving goodbye and I haven't said a word - my greatest fear is, will I ever see them again. Much will happen – for Mary's baby is going to face opposition – as every man of God has done down the centuries. Will they see Him for who he is – that is my question.

Do I believe in angels, you ask? Yes I do...especially Mary's angel.

Will the angel's words come true? Yes they will. God will save His people. People like you and I – ordinary simple people, living simple lives as well as the wealthy and powerful. He will achieve His purpose to bring us – His people – back to Him. Don't ask me how – all I can see is Mary, heavily pregnant, serene and trusting riding the little donkey ...with Joseph by her side. "Shalom – may God be with you". Please come back to us soon.

We are all on a journey – we had better believe in angels who bring us good news even today - news that is personal, intimate and life changing.



Enough happiness to keep you positive.

Shepherds

“Do you ever stop to wonder what we shepherds do all night? Do you think it’s easy looking after sheep –especially the ones who must be perfect for sacrificing in the Temple. Sheep are stubborn creatures at best. Perhaps you think of us just sitting around the fire in the dark with nothing to say! Wrong! There is plenty to discuss and argue over! It’s quite funny really. Nobody ever asks for our opinion ... so we just care for the sheep, care for each other and keep our counsel.

Until that one night. It was so dark, the fire wasn’t giving nearly enough light. Without any warning it was as if someone had opened a door in the heavens ... out poured this wondrous light... it lit the whole hill side ... then came the angels, a host of them, all singing, “Today a Saviour has been born to you ... Glory to God in the highest”

They told us, (there was no one else around) to hurry down to Bethlehem where we would find a baby lying in a manger. We went, and there he was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

What puzzles me is - why didn’t Mary and Joseph laugh when we told them our story about angels praising God and telling us of this wonderful happening right on our doorstep in Bethlehem!

Mary just smiled. Mary and Joseph knew and now we knew that God had come to earth. The longed for Messiah had been born.

Months later. Three wise men travelled from the East in search of a King. They also found Him and worshipped Him. Where was the common ground? Each bypassed intellect! It played its part.

Each bypassed personal safety and each listened to their hearts as Mary had listened to the angels.

What a simple yet foolproof way for us today to listen to God’s voice, the voice of forgiveness and unconditional love, not found anywhere or in anybody on this earth.

Would I have loved to have heard Jesus preach 2,000 years ago?

Would I have gazed in amazement at the purity of His touch, His smile, His healing power. Heaven itself had come down to earth.

Yet today, his heartprints become footprints taking us into another new year.



The Light shines in the darkness..... *John 1:5*

I often listen to Star Radio, a New Zealand Christian Radio Station (at star.net.nz) and recently heard the comment, “where there is a shadow, there is always a light”.

My thoughts turned to Psalm 23:4 “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” Why would the psalmist fear no evil in such a dark place? He gives the answer, “for you are with me”. We know from v1 that the psalmist is referring to the Lord as his shepherd.

In Psalm 27:1 the psalmist sings “The Lord is my light”. So in the darkest of places, in the valley of the shadow of death, the psalmist says the Lord is with him – the Lord who is his shepherd and his light. Where there is a shadow there is always a light, even in the darkest of places.

Jesus himself claimed, “I am the light of the world”, John 8:12. It is said of him in John 1:9 “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world”. It is also said of him, “The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”.

For an awful day or two, it seemed that darkness had triumphed; for Jesus, the light of the world, lay dead in the darkness of a tomb. His bruised, and battered, and nail-pierced body wrapped tightly in a shroud. But on the third day He rose from the dead; came back from the darkest of places, gloriously alive. Light shining as brightly as ever, even today. Can you believe that?

When news broke of our pastor’s illness, it seemed as though a dark shadow, a dark cloud, swept over the fellowship, didn’t it? Something difficult to comprehend now confronted us. There was, and is, no escape. How could the Lord let this happen? Where is God in all this? Is there light in the darkness?

My recent experience is similar, though not on the same scale. Earlier this year a dark cloud settled over Pam and me as we learned that I had myeloma, a cancer for which there is no cure, though there is treatment. My limited movements, and restricted mobility are constant reminders of the damage to my back; and the bouts of pain are regular reminders of my fractured bones.

Where is God in all this? Is there light in my darkness? I have had many a sleepless night, often but not always, as a result of steroids. In many of those sleepless nights the words of Psalm 103:2 have come to mind: “Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits”.

I made myself look back over my life and recall the many blessings and benefits I have received – answered prayers, opened doors, impossible situations turned into amazing opportunities, apparent let-downs by God working to produce unexpected benefits. Those sleepless nights became windows into the grace and favour of God shown to me over the years.

Praise and thanksgiving filled my heart, and mornings dawned to find me refreshed and blessed. OK, I haven't been healed; the pain and limitations are still there; but I have found that the light of our Lord is still shining as brightly as ever. Yes, in human terms there is a dark shadow, a dark cloud, still hanging over me. Where is God? Right here, with me.

For us as a fellowship, in this time of a dark shadow, let us keep our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 11:2). He is our light. We pray with love and concern for our pastor and his wife, of course we do. We pray for one another too. We don't know the whys and wherefores, but we do know and believe that the Lord is with us, don't we? We do know and believe he is working out his plans and purposes, don't we?

There is an old hymn which goes,

Sometimes when my faith would falter,
and no sunlight I can see,
I just lift my eyes to Jesus,
and I whisper “Pilot me”.

“Fear thou not for I am with thee,
I will still thy pilot be,
Never fear the tossing billows,
Take my hand, and trust in me.”

May you have a happy and light-filled Christmas and New Year!
God bless,

Rev. Mike Weldon



Month of Sundays...

	1 st December	8 th December	15 th December
DUTY DEACONS	Rhonwen Miles		
	Dr. Meirion Evans Gift Sunday	Rev. Robbie Hall	SUNDAY'SCOOL NATIVITY
	Mr. David Drew		CHRISTINGLE CELEBRATION
	Barbara Harris	Maureen Turner	Rhonwen Miles
 AM PM	Lynne Chamberlain & Elaine Jenkins	Yvonne Matthews & Rhyl Coleman	Rosalyn Hogg & Val Jenkins
	Pam Jones & Rosalyn Hogg	Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman
	COMMUNION PM Prep: Alison Evans		

Readers: December 8th Mrs. Irene Griffiths
22nd Mrs. Helen Hall

Deacons' Communion Rota

December 1st Margaret Francis/Philip Hogg
22nd Paul Evans/Maureen Turner
John Ware/Mary Johnson

22 nd December	24 th /25 th December	29 th December
Maureen Turner		
Rev. Robbie Hall Carol Service	24th – 6pm Candlelight Communion Service	Mr. Vaughan Richards
	25th – 10.30am Christmas Morning Service only	No Evening Service
Mary Johnson		Brenda Cadogan
Mary Johnson & Rosemary Rowe	NO TEAS	
Pam Jones & Rosalyn Hogg		
COMMUNION AM Prep: Delyth Ware		

Tuesday@Hope

3rd Rev. Robbie Hall

10th Mr. Derek Slark

Month of Sundays...

	5 th January	12 th January
DUTY DEACONS	Mary Johnson	
	Rev. Robbie Hall	TBC
	Pam & Owain Jones	
 AM PM	Eva Evans & Madeleine Drew	Enid James & Pat Fairfax
	Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh	Pam Jones & Rosalyn Hogg
	COMMUNION PM Prep: Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh	

Deacons' Meeting: 15th January

Readers: January 5th Mrs. Madeleine Drew
 12th
 19th Mrs. Clarice Fewkes
 26th Mrs. Val Jenkins

Deacons' Communion Rota

January 5th Mary Johnson/Philip Hogg
 19th Margaret Francis/John Ware
 Maureen Turner/Rhonwen Miles

	19 th January	26 th January
DUTY DEACONS	Mary Johnson	
	Rev. Robbie Hall	Rev. Robbie Hall
	Margaret Morton	Brinley & Pat George
	Lynne Chamberlain & Elaine Jenkins	Yvonne Matthews & Rhyl Coleman
	Margaret Francis & Rhyl Coleman	Alison Evans & Nyfain Pugh
	COMMUNION AM Prep: Rosalyn Hogg	

Tuesday@Hope

21st Welcome back

28th Rev. Robbie Hall

FAMILY NEWS

Happy Birthday to **BMS Birthday Scheme Members - December**

16th Rhiannon Henderson 20th Enid James
29th Lexie Jones

January

1st Noreen Parsons 5th Pam Jones
6th Christine Davies 22nd John Francis
27th David Ware 29th Rosalyn Howells

It is always a challenge to do justice to all that has happened during the past year – within just two pages of our magazine.

I start by thanking Our Lord for the year of blest ministry that Robbie, our Pastor, has given us. His diligent preparation has blest us all. Seven have been baptised, a huge encouragement to both pastor and people. Our Pastor has been instrumental in us becoming a distribution point for The Food Bank Project. Robbie is also part of the team of clergy at the Princess of Wales Hospital who respond to ‘end of life’ emergency calls. Through him Hope has done much in the community of late with plans ahead to further our witness in our town In 2020.

At present Robbie is having to battle against his illness which he will overcome with our prayers, faithfulness of attendance and love of Robbie, our pastor called by God to shepherd us, here at Hope.

As Robbie and Helen have given ‘without counting the cost’ so must I highlight the unbelievable generosity shown by all who have given this past year. We resist from itemising all the charitable institutions that we have supported – it is amazing. I just thank everyone and especially those who take the responsibility of arranging the collections.

However, the giving doesn’t stop with monetary gifts. The most precious gifts involves service which demands time and effort. We cannot thank our caretakers enough for the work they do for us. always going that extra mile with a humility and delight which is ours to emulate. They are true servants of God. Please know Seung Ho and Uni that you are loved and cherished by us all.

Time plays a big part as our musicians serve Sunday by Sunday. Paul, Huw, Rhodri, Steve, Phil and Mel are a good team and are delighted that Ann has joined them as she plays her cello not forgetting Hee Chan when he comes home from Oxford. Your choice of music is God blest.

It has been good to have Sally every Sunday. She and Steve understand the sound system and all its intricacies. They are grateful to Clive Griffiths and the

whole Denning family for standing in and making it 'look easy'. The Denning talent abounds.

We also say a thank you to you, Sally, for manning the church telephone. As the first point of reference you deal with many queries and are able when necessary, to shield our pastor, not forgetting your children's stories! Thanks to Steve for arranging CD availability for our Pastors sermons. A reminder that they are available on-line. Thank you both for all that you do in other ways re. safeguarding expertise.

The Staff of our Sundays'cool deserve our deepest gratitude and our year long prayers. What a responsibility they have – shouldered with diligence and loyalty. Our children enjoy their time – that is evident for they too are as loyal as their teachers. Sunday'scool is fun and God delights in each one. Hope wants you know how much we value your calling.

As each meeting is held and the whole picture of 'Hope Life' comes alive, we realise just how much we mean to one another. You have reached out and been friends in requisite hours of need. You have allowed our pastor and others into that sacred ground of your lives. As a result joy has been multiplied and sorrows divided into endurable parts. I cannot start naming all who have suffered much this past year. You are all prayed for – that is truth and comfort. Bereavement has asked much but once again our love as a fellowship has shone through. I have endeavoured to mention you each month in the magazine. Which leads me into voicing my deep gratitude to Pam who is my rock. She guides me through the preparation every month with great patience, sound advice and prayers for us both!

Building committee – A heading covering hours of work. God sees all efforts.

As time and ageing robs us of doing far more than we would wish to do we rest in the knowledge that our Lord makes His presence very real. What lifts my spirits is the number of times I have heard people comment on the warmth of the greeting given them I note here the deacons and all who have taken door duties to heart.

I thank you the deacons, Paul, our Treasurer and to each one as they have supported our Pastor in dedication and prayer.

This is purposely an 'umbrella' of heart felt gratitude to **everyone**. I look forward to a New Year. Our Pastor will lead us with Helen at his side. We will work together – a family for our Lord and Saviour.

"And He will arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord in the Majesty of the name of the Lord, His God. And they will remain because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth.

This one will be our Peace." Micah 5 v4-5

Enough faith to work against all odds

WHAT'S OCCURRING!

The marriage of Jordan Brown and Becky Severn took place on Saturday, 16th November 2019 at St. Andrews Church, Cullompton, Exeter. A wonderful day was had by all. Jordan was grounded in faith here at Hope. We send them both loving prayers and many years of happiness.



SUNDAY'SCOOL NEWS

We have given Advent Calendars to the children this year from the Real Chocolate Company which includes a booklet of the Christmas Story. We are now preparing for our Nativity service which will be on the 15th December and are again using materials provided by The Bible Society. There will be no Sunday'scool on the 29th December but look forward to seeing the children again on the **5th January**.

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 for Andrea and Mark in Bardai. We want to thank you all for your newsletters, which enable us to pray specifically for your pressing needs. This we do. "We hold your people in our hearts". Christmas blessings to you all.

Pam Jones

BIBLE SOCIETY

Many Thanks again this year for all those who supported our "coffee and cake" event at our home. With cakes and donations the final total came to £56. I will be sending this on to Bible Society with our blessing on your behalf. The amount of just £5 purchases one Bible.

Last year an appeal went out to the churches to bring in spare Bibles ie say if the print is too small, these are then collected by Book Aid to be shipped out to West Africa. Included in the appeal is the need for Christian Books (nothing in Welsh). Let's be part of the greater campaign to facilitate the Word of God to those hungry for the Word in other countries.

Rosalyn Hogg (Bible Society Secretary)

MISSION HOME & AWAY - SASRA

A big **Thank you** from the Mission Home and Away team for your generous contributions towards our appeal for the Soldiers and Airmen's Scripture Reading Association. A total of £420.00 including Gift Aid was donated for which SASRA HQ will be delighted to receive. God bless.

Neil Jenkins

We wish to thank all who saved with us throughout the year. Many thanks for your donations to the Minister's Emergency Fund. We begin saving for next Christmas on **5th January**. Please join us. **Angela and Jean**

NB:-

CHRISTMAS CARDS - No later than **8th December**, please

CAMBRENSIS "Promise of Christmas" on the **7th December** at St. David's Hall

SUNDAY'SCOOL Nativity and Christingle are on the **15th December**. Please make every effort to support both these services

BRIDGEND CHRISTMAS - THE STORY 2019 is starting on **2nd December** and will continue until the **7th December** 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 .



**MATERNAL HARMONY
CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2019
7.00 PM

HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH
STATION HILL, BRIDGEND, CF31 1EA

ADMISSION: £5.00 ADULT / CHILDREN FREE
INCLUDES REFRESHMENTS

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED THROUGH CHOIR MEMBERS OR ALTERNATIVELY CAN BE PAID ON THE DOOR

RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE WITH FANTASTIC PRIZES

THERE MAY EVEN BE A VISIT FROM A VERY SPECIAL GUEST!

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO BRIDGEND AGAINST HOLIDAY HUNGER
FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE, TWITTER PAGE OR INSTAGRAM PAGE



Enough success to keep you eager

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!



BMS Rev. Mike and Pam Weldon
Hannelie Jonas

Cancer Research Barbara Harris
Christian Aid Clive & Irene Griffiths
Eva Evans

Gideons Clarice Fewkes
In Appreciation of Hope Magazine Rhyl Coleman
Margaret & John Francis

Mission Aviation Fund Philip & Rosalyn Hogg
Neuroblastoma UK Lynne & Phil Chamberlain

Crohns & Colitis UK Neil & Val Jenkins

Y Bwthyn Nyfain Pugh

Tools with a Mission Bob & Rosemary Rowe

SASRA Maureen Turner
Rhian & Russell Henderson
Adrienne Haines

Wales Air Ambulance Brenda Cadogan
Elizabeth & Huw Morgan

Geoffrey Hopkin
Nigel & Julie Brown
Noreen Parsons

Pam & Owain Jones
Cleft Palate Society Hilary & Don Thomas



It was just a small white envelope

stuck amongst the branches of the

Christmas tree.

Mike hated Christmas not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspect of it; the overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute. A tie would have to do for Uncle Wilfred and handkerchiefs for grandma, they always come in handy – don't they?? Both gifts chosen in a wave of desperation.

One evening we all went to see our son play football. Their easily won victory was somewhat dampened for we couldn't help notice the state of the kit of the opposing team. Their boots were kept on more by the laces than leather and not a shin pad in sight – there was obviously no money in their sports kitty.



My husband said, "I wish they had won. They had no chance really. But did you notice that they played with such pride". We all nodded ...

The next afternoon I went to the local sports shop and bought a variety of shin pads and boots in a couple of sizes and sent them anonymously to the club secretary, gifts for the boys we had played (and lost) against us.

On Christmas Eve I placed an envelope, on our tree "To Mike with love.x". The note inside explained what I had done adding that it was my Christmas gift to him.

Life has moved on but there is always a white envelope on our Christmas tree. It has become the highlight of our Christmas gifting. It was always the last thing to be opened and still is. It has become a family tradition. Today there may be several envelopes as our children chose to give where there is greatest need. . (Nancy W Gavin)

"And do not neglect doing good and sharing .for with such sacrifices God is pleased". Hebrews 13 v16.

The Place of Recognition.

This must surely be the biggest ask of all for each one of us.
From infant days children world wide have given voice to this Mystery,

Away in a manger no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.

The saddest thing of all is that so, so many have stopped singing. It is hard to keep singing at times: hard to keep going. What of Mary and Joseph? They reached Bethlehem trusting in God to watch over them and keep them safe.

In the fullness of time ...

... those who were filled with hope, faith and love heard the sound of Heaven touching earth as angels sang and a star shone brilliantly in the sky. As shepherds ran down a hill and wise men crossed desert sands so we are asked to make similar journeys of our own. We all write our own tale for each life is a mixture of success and disappointments, the highs of happiness and courage alongside sadness and fears of the unknown. But we keep on never once giving up on life itself.

Maya Angelou gives us the wisest of truths,

“A bird doesn’t sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song”.

Surely that prompts us to find our own song. A song that will light up the path before us. It will be a song from heaven itself and our star will shine as brightly as any other in the sky.

We have to learn to see beyond our earthly state and glimpse the ‘edge of eternity’. What will it take for us to live beyond ourselves ..

God leaves the footprints of his love scattered across the pages of the world but most importantly in our lives.



Decorations come down.

Stars are packed away – have all God’s promises gone with them?

Candles – all burnt down – no light left in them...Who lights our path?

The Wreath can look sad a symbol of love that never ends – hold that thought.

Candy sticks that look like shepherds crooks – are we gathered together?

The presents!! What has happened to those, I wonder? Re-gifted ... re-cycled ... abandoned for another year?

“Well, don’t make me feel bad!” I hear you say. “The scarf was the wrong colour, the sweater didn’t fit, I don’t need more socks and I definitely loathe dark chocolate...”

But what about the hours of deliberation of walking the shops, the cost, the packaging – all that planning....

We listen to what we have said and remember the truth.

“For God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have Eternal life”.

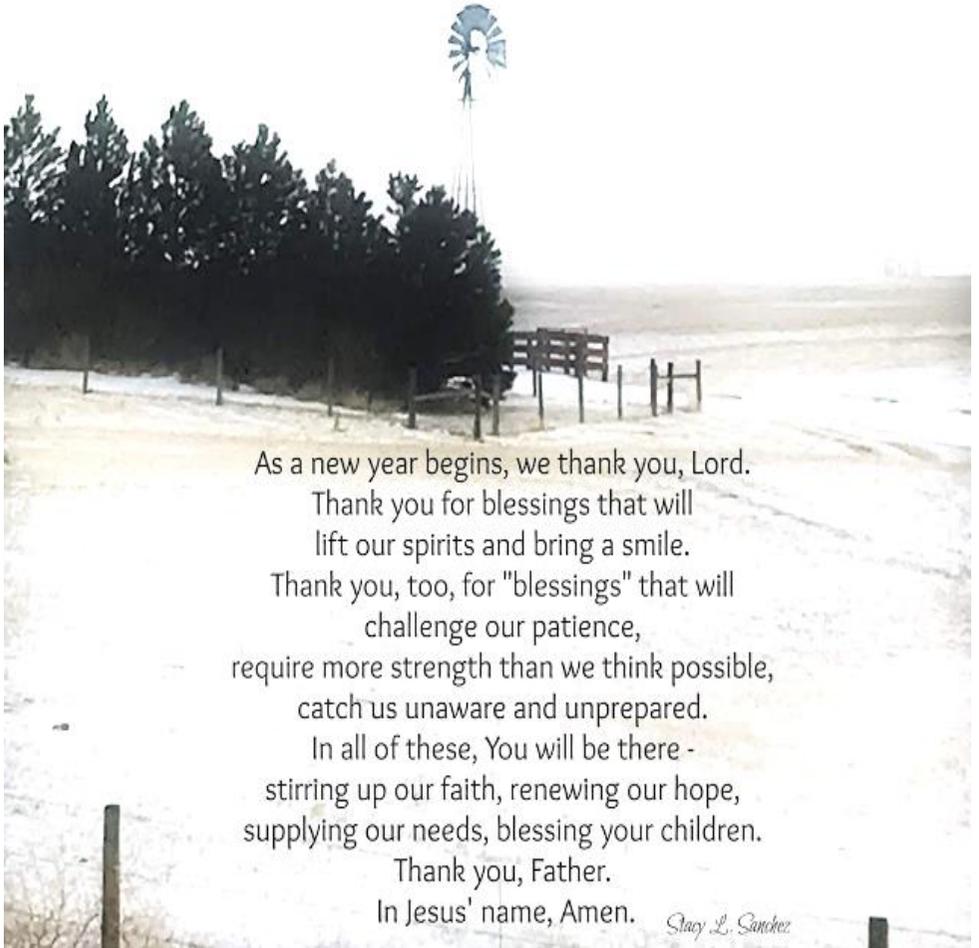
Re-wind ... A promise made - the Light of Heaven touching earth, bringing Love that never ends. Each a gift all gathered into a tiny stable, a tiny manger bed and a Baby, God’s own Son.



Eva prays....” Our beloved Father, as we approach the end of the year, let us, in this church, be thankful that our fellowship has been a pillar of strength for the sunshine and shadows we have shared. Let us go on walking the way of life together with hope in our hearts.

When the festivities are over and the journey of 2019 is ended let us see the New Year as a new beginning.

Rhonwen



As a new year begins, we thank you, Lord.
Thank you for blessings that will
lift our spirits and bring a smile.
Thank you, too, for "blessings" that will
challenge our patience,
require more strength than we think possible,
catch us unaware and unprepared.
In all of these, You will be there -
stirring up our faith, renewing our hope,
supplying our needs, blessing your children.
Thank you, Father.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Stacy L. Sanchez

As this year draws to a close, I thank you for all the love and support given to Helen and myself since my Induction day.

I have been humbled to share your testimonies and faith and privileged to serve you in many ways, not the least being in baptism.

We have heard your prayers for our family and been strengthened, especially in these last few months. We pray God's blessing on you all this Christmastime and His peace in your hearts in 2020.

Robbie and Helen

OUR WEEK AT A GLANCE

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

TUESDAY:

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

WEDNESDAY:

"Busy Fingers" Group	2-4 pm	Mrs. H. Hall	{01656} 224015
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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	07866 746851
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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