



St Paul's
Little Eaton Church

Parish Magazine



Christmas 2023

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THE VICAR'S LETTER

JAMES HUGHES



Dear Friends,

Let me begin this letter with an apology for what I am about to do. I'm about to introduce a Christmas song into your head, Mariah Carey's classic 90's song—*All I Want for Christmas is You*. As I say, sorry!

Why do this? To take some time to reflect on the song, as we think about Christmas. And it begins with Mariah saying what she doesn't need for Christmas. She doesn't need presents: *I don't care about the presents underneath the Christmas tree*.

What does she want? Just one thing:

*I just want you for my own
More than you could ever know
Make my wish come true
All I want for Christmas is you*

It's not so much that she doesn't want presents; she wants a *particular* present. And that's no great surprise, because over time, our desires and Christmas wishes change. We start off quite content with shiny wrapping paper, but then we come to what's inside, and then to the people we share Christmas with, and the joy of giving.

And maybe as we look forward to Christmas, we can echo Mariah's desire for a particular present. We may change what we want from Christmas, but we still often want a lot; it is a time when we hope that 'everything will be all right'. For Mariah—can you be that guy? Mariah is not asking for much, but she is also asking a lot. For

all of us—who can bear the weight of our desires? Who or what can meet our needs?

Christmas offers most of the good things we might try through life to make us happy. There is usually plenty of food and drink. We have time with friends and family. Romance is often in the air, perhaps related to the food and drink. There are gifts, given and received. We might even get snow.

And yet still, do we ever get all we want for Christmas? The good things I have mentioned are good, but they are not good enough to fully satisfy.

For that, we need to look somewhere else, and to someone else. And that brings us not to Christmas songs, but to the Christmas story. You are probably familiar with the basic story:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. (Matthew chapter 1 verses 18 and 19, esv)

Don't miss the wrinkle here. Jesus' birth was humble, and in complicated circumstances. Joseph knew the child wasn't his, and suspects what anybody would suspect.

Jesus enters into the realities of human existence with all its challenges. He was not born into a vacuum, but into an ordinary family in ancient Israel. Then we read:

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son

- *of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew chapter 1 verses 20 and 21)*

Joseph receives a revelation of the surprising truth of who Jesus is. Mary's child, by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus the saviour. He will save his people from their sins. There are many ways of thinking about sin—we can talk about wrongdoing, about the things we know we should do that we don't do, about the things we know we should do that we don't.

Another way of thinking about sin is this: sin is trusting in those things that cannot bear the weight of our desires. Good things, like family, friends, food, good health, and wealth. But things which do not ultimately satisfy. What the Bible calls idols. Jesus comes to save us from our sins. Finally from Matthew 1:

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). (Matthew chapter 1 verses 22 and 23)

Here Matthew starts to indicate how it is that Jesus can save. He is fully man, born into a human family. He knows what it is to be us. But he is also God with us. He can bear the weight of our sin, and of our desires.

There is more to tell of this story. More to reflect on as we think about what we really want for Christmas. Do join us at St Paul's over the festive period, as we reflect further on these things.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Every Blessing,



Café Church

Join us on the 1st Sunday of each month at 4:30pm in St Paul's church hall for our 'Café church'; a relaxed and informal café-style service with plenty of tea, coffee and cake available!

Sunday 7th January 2024
Sunday 4th February 2024
Sunday 3rd March 2024
Sunday 7th April 2024
Sunday 5th May 2024
Sunday 2nd June 2024
Sunday 7th July 2024
Sunday 4th August 2024
Sunday 1st September 2024
Sunday 6th October 2024
Sunday 3rd November 2024
Sunday 1st December 2024

Come for coffee; stay for Jesus



St Paul's
Little Eaton Church



CHRISTMAS

at St Paul's

Please join us this December for our
Christmas services:

- Sunday 3rd December – Christingle Café service, 4pm in the church hall
- Sunday 17th December - Carol Service at 4pm (in church)
- Sunday 24th December – Christmas Eve Crib Service at 4pm (in church)
- Monday 25th December - Joint Christmas Day Family Service, 10am, St Alkmund's Duffield
- Sunday 31st December - Joint Family Service, 10am, St Alkmund's Duffield

Please note the start times of these services.

Advent Books



Quite a few years back when my children were small, I was feeling overwhelmed in the approach to Christmas. We've all been there; so many things to be done, so little time etc, so I decided to make a real effort to 'put the reason back into the season', at least for myself. So, I started buying and reading Advent books—I have got quite a collection now!

The two that I have chosen to share with you are ***Because of Bethlehem*** by Max Lucado and ***The One True Story*** by Tim Chester.

Because of Bethlehem by Max Lucado

The blurb reads: *"It's easy to lose sight of the remarkable story of Christmas. We forget that a king ordered a census, Joseph was forced to travel, Mary bounced on a donkey's back, the hotel was full, the hour was late, and the event was one big hassle. Yet, out of that hassle, hope was born."*

In *Because of Bethlehem*, we are invited to look at the Christmas story from a different

STUDY GUIDE

ADVENT • DECEMBER

FOUR SESSIONS
FOR ADVENT

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MAX LUCADO

BECAUSE OF

Bethlehem

LOVE IS BORN

HOPE IS HERE

A REMARKABLE GIFT IN
AN UNREMARKABLE PACKAGE

A remarkable gift can arrive in an unremarkable package. One did in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago, no one expected God to come the way He did. Yet the way He came was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message.

In this four-session video Bible study, Max Lucado explores how the One who made everything chose to make himself nothing for us. He experienced hunger and thirst. He went through the stages of human development. He was taught to walk, stand, and wash his face. He was completely and genuinely human.

Because of Bethlehem, we no longer have marks on our record. . . . just grace. We have the promise that God is always near us, always for us, always within us—and that we have a friend and Savior in heaven. Long after the guests have left, the carolers have gone home, and the lights have come down, these promises endure.

The *Because of Bethlehem* Study Guide includes video discussion questions, Bible exploration, and personal study and reflection materials for in-between sessions.

Session Titles:

1. God Has a Face
2. Worship Works: Worship
3. God Guides the Wise
4. Every Heart a Manger

Discarded the use with
Discard of Bethlehem
He Gave the Most
100% 200%
07832-06744-1

Since entering the ministry in 1978, MAX LUCADO has served churches in Miami, Florida; Orlando, Florida; Dallas, Texas; and San Antonio, Texas. He currently serves as senior minister of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio. He is a frequent bestselling inspirational author with more than 100 million books in print.

Visit his website at MaxLucado.com

Facebook: facebook.com/maxlucado
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Twitter: twitter.com/maxlucado

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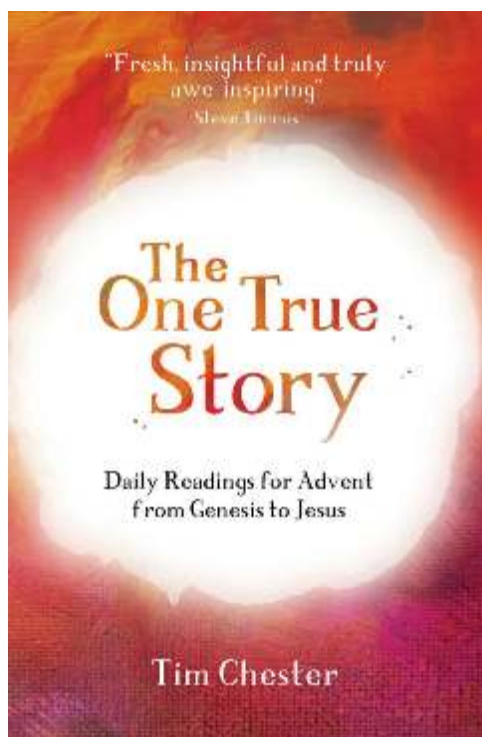
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perspective. We are reminded that Christmas is about more than a pretty tree with presents piled up underneath it. Christmas begins what Easter celebrates: the child in the cradle who goes on to become the King on the cross. Because of Bethlehem, we have a place on earth and a Saviour in heaven.

The One True Story by Tim Chester

This is a book of daily readings for Advent, working through the Bible from Genesis to Jesus. Showing how the birth of a Baby in Bethlehem is the culmination of many other stories. For 24 days there are short readings followed by ideas for reflection, prayer and application. Often the words for reflection were from carols, which I found easy to remember and think on during the day.

The blurb says: *"As you prepare for Christmas, get a fresh insight into the full script of the nativity, the story of our world, and the plotline for the rest of your life..."*



"Tim Chester peels away the layers of familiarity that hinder us from seeing the babe of Bethlehem in all his glory. This book will draw you into the gospel story and help set your heart on Christ during this Advent season."

Becky Childs Howard, author and blogger

Everyone loves the Christmas story. But the story of the baby in the manger is the culmination of a thousand other stories. It is the focus of the story of the Bible and the story of human history.

This book has 24 short meditative readings for Advent opening up Bible stories from Genesis to Jesus. Each day includes ideas for reflection, prayer and application, designed to excite you about the gospel message in the run-up to Christmas day.

As you prepare for Christmas, get a fresh insight into the full script of the nativity, the story of our world, and the plotline for the rest of your life...

~D~

Tim Chester is a pastor at Grace Church, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire, and a tutor with the Acts 29 Oak Hill Academy. He is the author of over 10 books, including *Exodus For You*, *You Can Change*, and *The One True Light*.

the goodbook
COMPANY



Christmas Life / Devotional / Holidays / Christmas & Advent

Every year there are new books for Advent and I am sure that this year will bring more, so keep looking out for these or follow up one of the above. If you would like me to get an Advent book for you, please contact me through the church office.

Ruth

WORDSEARCH

In this grid are hidden the names of 27 people found in the Bible. To make it more difficult some are upside down, some back to front and some diagonal. See how quickly you can find them all. If you need a bit of help there is a list of the names you are looking for elsewhere in the magazine. Good hunting.

A	R	J	O	H	N	S	A	S	A
S	D	O	O	T	H	J	B	O	J
H	A	A	B	E	D	O	R	L	E
A	V	B	M	L	L	N	A	O	S
K	I	I	S	A	I	A	H	M	U
E	D	S	L	O	T	H	A	O	S
B	C	A	A	S	I	T	M	N	B
E	V	E	B	L	T	U	H	A	M
R	E	T	E	P	U	R	H	E	R
T	S	A	L	I	S	A	U	L	W

Simeon Meets Jesus – A Promise Fulfilled

This is the story of an amazing event that happened to an old man at the time Jesus was born. His name was Simeon.



“My faith in God had got stronger as I got older. I understood more of the scriptures and did my best to keep the laws of God – the 10 commandments. Some said I was a devout man, but if I was, it was because of God showing me how to live and behave. Some time ago, an amazing thing happened to me. God revealed to me that even though I was old, I wouldn’t die until I had seen the Messiah that long ago God had promised He would send to earth. This was a promise made to Abraham over 2,000 years earlier, so it was difficult at first to believe I would be there to meet him. But God reminded me that He always keeps His promises and that anything was possible for him to do.

“I knew that this special King when he came would rescue people from their sin – bringing the offer of salvation to all people, not just one tribe or nation. This promise was exciting, but I had to be patient. Then one morning, I felt deep within me that I should go to the temple straight away. Looking back, I believe that was God prompting me to go to where he wanted me to be. Why? Because a couple came in with a young baby to make an offering to God, as was the custom. My heart started turning somersaults. I asked if I could hold the baby called Jesus in my arms. His parents probably thought I was mad, but deep down I knew that this baby was God’s messiah King. I sensed God whispering in my ear: ‘He is the one you have been waiting for.’ So, I had to praise God immediately. I couldn’t help it.

“I thanked God for keeping his promise to me, and said that I could die happy now I had held the saviour of the world in my arms. The one bringing God’s offer of salvation to all people – forgiveness for sin and the opportunity to have a relationship with God broken by sin restored.”

Read the story of Simeon in Luke 2 vv25–35.

Andy Hardwick

Children's Work Autumn 2023-2024



The United Benefice of
Duffield and Little Eaton



Adam Heaton

**Our Children & Youth
Workers**



James Munro

Here at St. Alkmund's and St. Paul's, we have lovely and welcoming groups of young people exploring the Bible and Christian life together. Everyone is invited and questions are warmly encouraged. Here's what's happening:

SPARKS



CHILDREN'S CHURCH - 10:30AM SUNDAY FOR AGES 3-11S

Starting in the new school year if you're between the ages of 3-11, come along and join us at Sparks (replacing Sunday Club), as this term we are delving into the story of God's promise in Exodus and the Israelites' journey from being slaves in Egypt to God delivering them to the Promised Land. You meet every Sunday 10:30am during the morning service in the hall and get stuck into the Bible with the help of themes, crafts, games, and helpful discussions all linked with our passage that week.

EXPLORERS



ST. PAUL'S CHILDREN'S CHURCH - 4:30PM SUNDAY FOR UNDER 14S

Our church family in Little Eaton welcomes you in a group for children under the age of 14 who are eager to find out more about the Bible and what it means for their own relationship with God.

This term we are following the same content as we are in main church services, to allow our results and children to engage in active discussion after the service on the same topics. With sessions focused on the first 8 chapters of Matthew including Jesus' early life and the Sermon on the Mount, we are excited to get stuck into the Bible and push our understanding further.

Family Events



EVENTS FOR WHOLE CHURCH FAMILY - 4-12 TIMES TERMLY

Once or twice a term we arrange events to bring together adults and children with the goal of welcoming and searching time as a church family. Some of these events might include: Holiday Club, Quizzes, Storytelling nights, Musical Mystery Events. These events give us a chance to welcome newcomers to a church event, they might not normally come too.

This term we are excited to have Family Harvest - An evening of fun evening at 20th November starting at 5.00pm. More information can be found by contacting James Munro via the email

IGNITION



Wednesday Night Youth Group for those in High School & College. If you're in year 6-13, we would love to see you at Ignition. We meet from 7.30-9pm in Duffield on Wednesdays in term time for games, deeper discussion, and fast and furious ping pong. And on the first Sunday of the month, we catch up over pizza at St. Cuthbert's, 5.30pm. Look out for our new Autumn programme, and do speak to Adam or James or drop us an email if you have questions or would like to be involved in any of the above.

ASSEMBLIES



PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES AND SERVICES

If you attend William Gilbert Primary or Little Eaton Primary, we look forward to seeing you each Monday as we explore Bible, starting with the Kings of Israel before uncovering Jesus in the book of Hebrews over the course of the next term. Our assemblies offer a great chance for learning not just the narrative of the Bible but also developing an understanding of the biblical concepts.

PATHFINDERS



BI-WEEKLY WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME CLUB

We are so excited to start up a new group this term focused on getting those children who are curious about exploring the Bible further and want a space to ask questions a place to meet and talk directly with our Children & Youth Worker James Munro. Pathfinders will be starting in September 2023 in Little Eaton Primary to begin with, as we open up "The Jesus Storybook Bible" in a whole overview alongside games, crafts and other activities, concluding with an open question time for the kids.

If you're interested in joining us at Pathfinders ask James Munro or come and try it out. **Wednesday lunchtimes.**

For any additional information or
questions, email us:

adam@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk

or

munro@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk

Cranberry and white chocolate flapjack

250g butter, plus extra for greasing
200g golden syrup
100g soft brown sugar
250g oats
100g plain flour
150g dried cranberries
100g white chocolate



- 1** Preheat the oven to 170C/gas 3. Lightly butter a 23 cm square baking tin and line the base with baking parchment.
- 2** Melt the butter, syrup and sugar in a saucepan over a low heat, stirring occasionally, until the butter and sugar are melted.
- 3** Put the oats, flour and cranberries in a large bowl, then add the butter mixture. Tip the mixture into the prepared tin and press down. Bake for 25–30 minutes, then allow to cool completely.
- 4** Melt the white chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Spread the chocolate over the flapjack and leave to set. Cut into squares and remove from the tin.

Sue Nicholson

TOTs continues!

Following the recent flooding of the hall and church at St Alkmund's in Duffield, we've had a slightly unexpected start to TOTS this half term; however we've been very warmly welcomed by St Paul's Little Eaton into their church hall, which is warm, and more importantly, dry!

If you are in charge of a little one (preschool age) on a Friday morning 10am until 12 noon, you would be more than welcome to come and join us. We have hot drinks & snacks for grown-ups, and toys, tasty treats, a craft, a story and lots of cuddles for the little ones.

Do come along on a Friday morning, you would be most welcome.

Emma Rollin



The United Benefice of
Duffield and Little Eaton

TOTS Group
Friday Mornings
10am - 12 Noon



St Paul's
Little Eaton Church

What's happening at St Paul's in the New Year?

Hope Explored

In January 2024 we're running 'Hope Explored'; a three session course about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, highlighting that Christianity is about real hope: a joyful expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which changes everything about the present. Do join us on Tuesday 9th, 16th & 23rd January, in Little Eaton church hall. Please email the church office - office@stalkmundsduffield.co.uk - if you'd like to attend.

HE HOPE | EXPLORED



Padley Centre Donations

Whether at Christmas or any other time of year, it's always good to remember those in need, and so as a church we're collecting dried and tinned goods and toiletries throughout the year to donate to the Padley Centre in Derby. A box for donations is available in the church or the hall.

Caroline Walker



At a loose end?



Little Eaton Ladies Craft Group meets on the last Saturday of each month in the Church Hall, 2-4pm

Bring your knitting, sewing or other crafts, or simply join us for tea, cake and chat

Starts again on January 27th

Bible Names in the Wordsearch—Abel, Abraham, Adam, Ahab, Asa, David, Eli, Eve, Ham, Isaac, Isaiah, Jesus, Joab, Job, Joel, John, Jonah, Lot, Matthew, Peter, Rebekah, Ruth, Saul, Shem, Silas, Solomon and Titus.

A reason to celebrate

**It's that time of year again
where gold, red and silver lights
shine through windows to brighten
our village streets, lanes and roads.
The interiors of houses and shops
like a beautiful Christmas grotto,
laden with so many festive delights.**

**Presents in boxes tied with bows,
bottles of fancy drinks with shiny labels.
Chocolates and marzipan, jars of preserves
all lined up in their Christmas finery.
Assorted cakes and mince pies,
many of which fill our festively decorated tables.**

**But are we so busy with preparations
and celebrating, we forget the reason why?
It is the birth of Jesus, who grew
and responded to the many challenges
of his time with inspiring humility and love.
His care, devotion, and all his kindness
we should endeavour to live by.**

Anne Palmer





St Paul's Little Eaton Church

Vicarage Lane, Little Eaton, Derby DE21 5EA

You are very welcome to join us for our 4.30pm afternoon services, either in the church building, or alternatively online, via our Benefice YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUnitedBeneficeofDuffieldLittleEaton>

Contact St Paul's at:

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www.littleeatonchurch.co.uk



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