

the 'once a year' relatives in distant towns and cities up and down the country this week. Pray for harmonious visits and travelling mercies.

Saturday 29th

The New Year party will start early for many this year. Please pray for those who have to deal with the effects of alcohol. These include: doctors, nurses, police, fire crews, Street Pastors, family members and many more.

Sunday 30th

On this the last Sunday of 2012, give thanks to God that the year has contained some tremendous events at an international as well as local level. Ask God to point to new events to bring glory to Him in 2013.

Monday 31st

New Year's Eve: please pray for all those New Year resolutions, some of which may be kept & help to make a difference in people's lives.

Contributions for the prayer diary should be sent to john.stansfield5@btinternet.com or left in the pigeonhole in the foyer by 7th of the month.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

Every story has to start somewhere and at some time. Some stories take a few seconds or minutes to happen, like a car crash, and take ages to tell afterwards. Other stories take longer to happen and can be told relatively quickly. A tsunami hits Japan and eighteen months later the debris starts to wash up on the west coast of America. Some stories can become favourites and be retold over and over again, like Icelandic sagas, others do not have any interest beyond a few days of the event to which they refer. The best stories are written down so that many people can hear them over and over.

The Christmas story is an example of a story that is retold over and over again, generation after generation. What makes a story worth retelling once the players and events have passed into history? Could it be that the story portrays values which can make life better today, like romantic heroes of old, deeds of kindness and daring-do or generous gifts? Stories can also serve as warnings of how not to behave and the possible consequences for those who follow suit.

The Nativity story fits lots of these categories, a generous gift from God to the world of Jesus, heroic deeds by Joseph and Mary fleeing Herod's persecution and an arduous trek by the Wise Men to deliver their gifts. Whatever the merits of the story please enjoy the retelling again of the tale of Christmas; and remember to pray for those who may not be as fortunate as you are this festive season.

Happy Christmas, John Stansfield

tabernacle : penarth

purpose : to reflect God's love in
our church, community and world

prayer diary : december 2012

"Those who are too lazy to plough their fields at the right time will have nothing to harvest." Proverbs 20:4

Most of us are aware by now of the need for the church to move from an agenda of maintaining what we have in church to mission that seeks to bring the Good News to our neighbours. This year will see church closures in Penarth, and we need to understand that as churches we no longer have the luxury of just providing services which those who are already in church enjoy!

December is a brilliant time to be mission minded. Many people who would not normally come to church will come for a Carol Service, Crib Service or midnight communion. These are times of 'sowing' when we can show people what a modern church is really like, show them a warm welcome, and maybe sow enough interest that they will come back again in the New Year. Who will you be inviting to a Christmas service this year? Let us not be lazy, but sow good seed at the right time so that there might be a great harvest later!

Pastor Roger

Saturday 1st

Do you keep short accounts with God? How about burying the hatchet with that irritating person who has bugged you for years? Ask God for grace to tidy up unfinished business which is spoiling your relationship with Him.

Sunday 2nd (Advent Sunday)

Today is the start of the church year when 'The Advent' or coming of Christ is prepared for by God's people. Please pray for an appropriate response from the people of Tabs today.

Monday 3rd

Please think about the Christians in Nigeria who have been subjected to vicious attacks by fanatical Islamic fundamentalists in recent months. Ask God to sustain the faith of people in the face of this violent persecution. Also pray that the Nigerian Government and State will fight such terrorism to protect all the people of Nigeria.

Tuesday 4th

Please remember the homeless at this time of year. Pray for the work of Home Access as they seek to help those without somewhere to live. Pray for the staff, (Claire Grafton and Jan Booker), plus Committee and Trustees.

Wednesday 5th

Please pray for the work of those who broadcast the gospel into the Middle East. Some countries are now so repressive this is the only succour which some Christians receive as meeting together is too dangerous.

Thursday 6th

There will be lots of young people doing nativity plays and getting very nervous in the next couple of weeks, please remember all small performers.

Friday 7th

Friday evening sees lots of teenage young people in Tabs for youth meetings. Please pray for this vital ministry, the leaders, the children their parents and all involved, for good fun, good ministry and a safe club each week.

Saturday 8th

Please remember the families of people in prison today. Please pray for prison chaplains, visitors and Prison Fellowship as they try to improve the lot of those who have got themselves into bother.

Sunday 9th (Second Sunday in Advent)

Today the second Advent candle will be lit in the morning service. Please pray for those who officiate at all services today.

Monday 10th

The people of Syria will not enjoy much of a Christmas this year because of the war that has engulfed their country. Ask God to bless and provide for the people of Syria this Christmas.

Tuesday 11th

Think of someone who may appreciate a visit, phone call or other contact. Perhaps pray about inviting someone to join in on Christmas Day.

Wednesday 12th

Please remember someone you care about who is not a Christian, please pray for them today.

Thursday 13th

Please pray for expatriate families who will not be at home this Christmas. Think of those in remote locations for mission, working on development programmes, or just away on holiday. Please remember any people who you may know living abroad.

Remember the Douglas family in Nepal.

Friday 14th

Please pray for Roger Grafton, Jonathan Bugg and other ministers who have to be on duty at Christmas. Remember the extra burden each one faces as demands from needy people appear.

Saturday 15th

Please pray for the other churches around the district who will be celebrating Christmas. Ask God to bless their outreach, ministry and witness.

Sunday 16th (Third Sunday in Advent)

Prayer for the Sunday services needs to be explored and taken to a new level. Pray that

people will want to spend time upholding the ministry of Tabernacle as the word of God is proclaimed every week.

Monday 17th

The old, sick, lonely, housebound, homeless, refugees, poor, destitute, societal rejects and all who need a touch from God should be of concern in prayers today. Jesus made special efforts to encounter such people, yet as His followers can we claim to do the same? Please pray for those in need today, whatever that need may be.

Tuesday 18th

Small churches do sterling work in sometimes isolated, rural areas as well as towns and cities. Please pray for the ministry of a small church you may know about.

Wednesday 19th

Please think of those who serve in the armed forces of many nations who will not be home for Christmas. Pray for troops and support units stationed in Afghanistan and other trouble spots around the world.

Thursday 20th

Today many of the church fellowship and small groups will be holding parties and jollies, please pray for wholesome fun and joy at said events.

Friday 21st

Please pray today for those people who have lost loved ones around Christmas. New bereavements are hard to bear when everyone is bent on having a good time, but the passing of years can sometimes not dull such pain. Pray particularly for anyone you know in this situation.

Saturday 22nd

There will be a rush to get the last minute shopping done today and it could be the busiest Saturday in the year. Please pray for those involved in the retail trade, particularly anyone you know, for patience and tact today.

Sunday 23rd

Please pray for the Carol Service held tonight. It is a service where we get a lot of visitors. Pray especially for Pastor Jonathan who will be preaching.

Monday 24th (Christmas Eve)

There are special services today in the afternoon and communion at 11.15 pm. Please pray for Jesus to be at the forefront.

Tuesday 25th (Christmas Day)

Give thanks for all God's good gifts today.

Wednesday 26th (Boxing Day)

Boxing Day is traditionally celebrated as the feast of St Stephen, the first martyr. Please pray for the families of martyrs who have died in 2012 for their faith.

Thursday 27th

Please pray for someone special to you today.

Friday 28th

Many families will be doing the annual visits to