

Thursday 28th

If you enjoyed a good Christmas, give thanks to God today.

Friday 29th

Give thanks today for someone who has been a good friend to you. Give them a call, text or email, even write a letter. Let that person know how special they are to you. Pray for someone who is not a Christian, be a friend to that person.

Saturday 30th

Consider spending some time in prayer about what New Year resolutions you will make this year. Pray for guidance from God about such matters.

Sunday 31st (New Year's Eve)

In the grand scheme of things saying 'thank you' does not rate too highly. But it is always good to be thankful for every blessing. Give thanks for whatever is appropriate to man or God today.

Contributions can be sent to
john.stansfield5@btinternet.com or left in the pigeon hole before 7th of the month.

Thought for the Month

Getting the Message Out.

Messages for Christmas and New Year come thick and fast at this time of year, mostly they are like water off a duck's back, and have minimal effect. Getting noticed is part of the art of communication, like having something to say and targeting the audience being addressed. Considering how the most successful communicators do it can be enlightening. President Trump uses Twitter, and has millions of followers all round the world. Pontiffs and Bishops use TV, as does Her Majesty the Queen, others write to the Times or stand on a street corner and shout at passers-by. When God decided to communicate He did not turn to technology, instead He sent some angels to a few obscure people in a backwards province of the Roman Empire. Those folk went to see a baby in a manger, strangers came from 'the East' to look for the same child. From these beginnings a young man grew up and spent 3 years wandering around the same backward province. From that man a worldwide movement grew up with the most revolutionary message which has ever been conceived in human history. The communication of that message went round the world and revolutionised whole societies and countries. Today the same message of hope is being promulgated by more media channels than any other communication before it. Pray that God will maintain that premier position for His message.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our readers.

tabernacle : penarth

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

prayer diary : december 2017

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

A few days ago Claire was reading the works of Julian of Norwich for an essay she is writing. Julian is most well known for the quote, "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well". What is less well known is that this line is part of a prayer: the next bit is roughly, "So, God, why isn't everything well? Why isn't everything all right? If you love us and want the best for us, why is there sin and suffering in the world?"

You may remember how a year ago, just before Christmas, the Manse caught fire and we were made homeless. A few days later I deployed overseas with the army and left my family behind. It now appears that I may have damaged my lungs in the fire, and will have to live with the consequences of that. At the time the whole thing was awful, and it was easy to ask, "God, why is this happening? Where are you". However, twelve months on we can look back and see how God was journeying with us and caring for us through the bad times. The church was loving and generous. Steve Roberts and the maintenance hub worked hard to sort the house out, and members made sure we were provided for in all things. A year on, we can look back and say "all manner of things are well".

Christmas is the time when we celebrate that God became one of us in the flesh of Jesus. He lived and worked, suffered and died as one of us. There were times in his life when everything seemed to be going wrong. However, at the end of the Gospels we are able to look back and see how God was working good, even in the times of struggle and suffering. Believing that God is with us in difficult times requires faith: But Christmas is the reminder that Immanuel, God with us, is here even in those difficult times. One day, we will be able to look back and say, "Even when life was hard, I know that all was well and all manner of things were well. Because Immanuel was there."

Pastor Roger

Friday 1st

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. Pray for good fun, good ministry and a safe club each week.

Saturday 2nd

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Since 1990, more than 146 million children in over 150 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child. Pray about those which have now been sent out, and resolve to pack one ready for next year.

Sunday 3rd (First Sunday in Advent).

The Sundays of Advent remind Jesus' followers that preparation for His arrival is very important. Not just the Christmas gifts and trimmings, but also thinking about who Jesus is and what happened on Christmas night.

Monday 4th

Please remember young people doing Nativity Plays and Christmas Concerts in the next couple of weeks.

Tuesday 5th

Please remember those in Small & Alpha groups who will be having Christmas functions in the next few weeks. Remember to invite those who maybe do not fit in too well.

Wednesday 6th

Please pray today for people who are sick, those who will be in hospital over Christmas, and anyone you know who is ill.

Thursday 7th

The Paradise Run takes place every evening with different churches providing supplies and volunteers. Remember the volunteers from Tabs out tonight.

Friday 8th

Families with members in prison have a real hard time at Christmas. Please pray for prison chaplains, visitors and Prison Fellowship seeking to minister to prisoners. Pray for children of prisoners missing their absent parent.

Saturday 9th

Please pray for those families and individuals who will be overseas for Christmas. Send a card or write a letter today.

Sunday 10th

Everyone has a request to bring to God. Pray for something for yourself or your family this Christmas.

Monday 11th

Who could you give a special treat to this Christmas? Do something extra ordinary for someone less fortunate than yourself this season of goodwill.

Tuesday 12th

Please pray for those who have lost loved ones this year, for whom Christmas will be particularly difficult.

Wednesday 13th

In this run up to Christmas pray that members of Tabs will be generous with their shopping, and add in a few extra goodies for the Food Bank.

Thursday 14th

Please remember the Pastoral Visitors who go to see the housebound and infirm, pray they will have some extra cheer this Christmas.

Friday 15th

Pray for the church in Syria and Iraq, still embroiled in war. Ask God to bring peace to these places.

Saturday 16th

Remember to pray for the other churches in Penarth. Ask God to bless their outreach and services over Christmas.

Sunday 17th

Please pray about how you can give thanks for the gift of Jesus, how it effects your faith, who else can you pray about or with today.

Monday 18th

Pray for members of the emergency services this Christmas. Some people expect to be "rescued" from their own stupidity, pray for those faced with such selfishness this Christmas, ask God to give them an extra helping of grace.

Tuesday 19th

Sometimes grievances can fester for years. Take the initiative and get that old score settled once and for all this Christmas. Pray for anyone who you know who carries such mental baggage in their life.

Wednesday 20th

Please pray for the food distribution and breakfast club held at Arcot House each Wednesday.

Thursday 21st

Pray for someone you know who is planning to give up their Christmas to serve other people. Give thanks for their generosity and self-sacrifice.

Friday 22nd

Please pray for those suffering for the gospel in places around the globe. Ask God to bless them just like you expect to be blessed this Christmas.

Saturday 23rd

Spare a thought for shop workers, for whom today will be the busiest day of the year. Commit anyone you know who works in the retail trade to God today.

Sunday 24th (Christmas Eve)

Please pray for the Crib Service and the Midnight Service being held today.

Monday 25th (Christmas Day)

Today is the day to give thanks to God for your faith, for the eternal life He promises each person who believes on His name. Give thanks for the gift of Jesus today.

Tuesday 26th (Boxing Day)

Please pray today for old people, those who live on their own, the foreign person who has no friends in the local area, think of anyone who needs a touch from God today.

Wednesday 27th

Pray for everyone who will be travelling today, visiting the relatives, and renewing family ties.