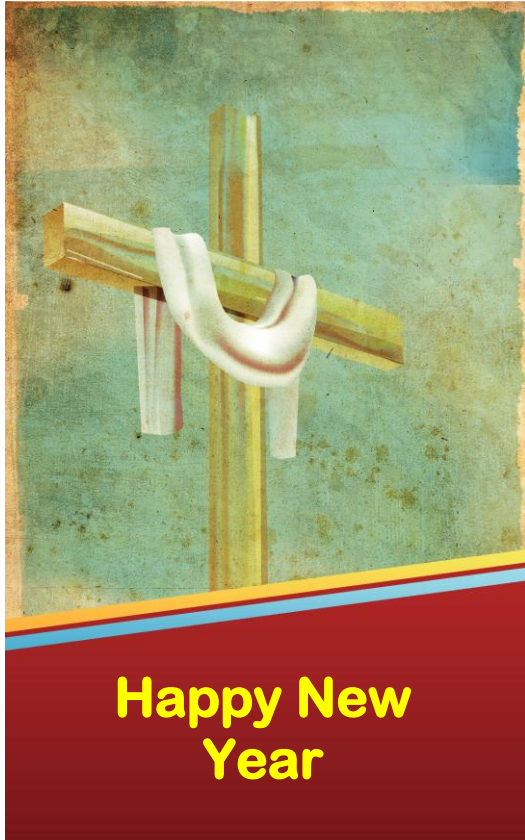


Longfleet United Reformed Church

NEWSLETTER



January 2010

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

Worship rota for January

- January 3rd - The Revd Bryan George
(Communion Service)
- January 10th - SERVICE CANCELLED (due to weather)
- January 17th - Mrs Mary Chipping
- January 24th - Mr Jeff Russell
- January 31st - The Revd Barry Cheetham

LECTIONARY READINGS

Epiphany 1 January 10th - Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29, Acts 8:14-17,
Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Epiphany 2 January 17th - Isaiah 62:1-5, Psalm 36:5 – 10,
1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11

Epiphany 3 January 24th - Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10, Psalm
19, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-
21

Epiphany 4 January 31st - Jeremiah 1:4-10, Psalm 71:1-
6, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Luke 4: 21-30

Welcome rota for January

Mrs Lorraine Russell



THE QUIET IN THE LAND

Christmas is a time for children, for noise, excitement and jollity. But Jesus' coming is for all ages. When Mary and Joseph brought Him to the Temple for the special service to dedicate a new baby to God, he was welcomed and nursed by two very old people. Many of the Jews were eagerly awaiting a mighty and magnificent king who would lead the people to glorious victory against their enemies. But there were others looking for a just and godly Messiah. They were known as the "Quiet in the land" for they spent their days in prayer and worship of God, waiting patiently for the day when he would send his chosen Saviour to earth.

Simeon and Anna were two of the Quiet in the Land. They had waited many years to see God's promised Messiah. As soon as they saw the baby Jesus they recognised him as God's Deliverer, and knew that their dreams were fulfilled. Luke's gospel tells the story.

The time came for Mary and Joseph to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord. "Every first born male is to be dedicated to the Lord" They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons as required by the law of the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good devout man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah. Led by the spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God. "Now Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your

servant go in peace. With my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples; A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel"

The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother". This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword will break your own heart."

There was a very old prophetess, a widow named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. She never left the Temple; day and night she worshipped God, fasting and praying. That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free."

Carol Service and Christian Aid

Mrs Jean Hunt, Church Secretary advises that a letter of thanks has been received from Christian Aid :

“Thank you so much for taking part in Christian Aid’s Big Christmas Sing. You raised £75 which is a fantastic amount. By joining voices this Christmas you have helped to change the lives of people living in poverty. Christian Aid hopes to raise over £100,000 from the Big Christmas Sing and this could not have been achieved without your generous support.”

Alison Gregory – National & Challenge Events Manager

We hope to shortly be able to make available extracts from the Carol Service on the Church Website so you can listen “online” !

Imagine ...

**... what life could be like if Jesus
influenced the whole
of your life, not just Sundays?**

**Churches Together in North Poole
introduce a day of discovery with
Mark Greene
(London Institute of Contemporary Christianity,
Spring Harvest, Christianity Magazine etc)**

**Saturday 6th February
9.30am to 3.30pm
Canford Heath ChURCh
(Mitchell Road, behind the Pilot Pub)**

Please arrange your own lunch (drinks will be provided)
There will be an offering to cover the Speaker's costs

Please contact the church if you would like to attend

Longfleet URC on the Internet

The Church now has its own website which can be found at :

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

Our Webmaster has advised that we had around 125 visitors during December and we average 20-40 new visitors to the site every week. The website has been publicised in many places and the resulting visitors send through enquiries about services and room hire.

The Church can now also be found on the popular where you can view contact details and photos.



... and finally

A big “thank you” to those at www.biblequizzes.org.uk for allowing us to continue to reproduce their quizzes on the website and here in the Newsletter.

There now follows the answers from last month’s Newsletter together with a crossword to keep you amused !

The Real Christmas Quiz - Answers

Just “simply” answer True or False for the following :

- Q1. The Bible says that Jesus was born in December ?
FALSE - The Bible does not mention when Jesus was born. The most likely date is not 25th December, with the best evidence pointing towards the end of September or early October. The shepherds were still tending to their flocks in the fields, but practice was that the shepherds would only keep their flocks in the fields from April to October, taking them back home to shelter them over the winter months.
- Q2. Jesus was not born in 0 A.D. ?
TRUE - Jesus could not have been born in the year 0 A.D. as it doesn't actually exist historically - our calendar jumps straight from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. with no intervening year zero. Also, Dionysius was commissioned to establish the year of Christ's birth and due to insufficient historical data he arrived at a date which was a few years late. The birth of Christ is generally accepted to be around 5 or 6 B.C. as Herod died in 4 B.C.
- Q3. We are told that Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey ?
FALSE - Although perfectly possible that she rode upon a donkey, the Bible says nothing about how Mary entered Bethlehem and there are various other possibilities. The Bible only says that she came with Joseph.
- Q4. The angel said “Peace on earth to all men” ?
FALSE - The angel said “on earth peace, goodwill toward men”. The word ‘peace’ from a biblical sense does not mean the absence of war or strife between people, but rather a ‘peace with God’, a peace that Jesus was to make with God at his sacrifice. Goodwill looks back to the Hebrew *ratzah* , which is often associated with acceptable sacrifice, thus ‘goodwill toward men’ means reconciliation through the greatest of all Days of Atonement – Jesus’ sacrifice. The alternative textual reading of: ‘to men of goodwill’, means the same thing: ‘peace to men who know

themselves reconciled to God through Jesus'. (Luke 2 v 14)

Q5. The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus ?

FALSE - The Bible does mention magi coming to visit Jesus, but does not say how many or that they were kings riding camels. There were at least two as the word magi is plural, but there could have been many more. The Bible simply mentions three gifts, but does not imply that there were three of them or that they were kings. There is no mention of camels either. (Read Matt Ch 2)

Q6. The tradition of giving presents at Christmas comes from the wise men presenting gifts ?

FALSE - In pre-Christian Rome, the emperors compelled their most despised citizens to bring offerings and gifts during the Saturnalia festival (in December) and Kalends (in January). Later, this ritual expanded to include gift-giving among the general populace. The Catholic Church gave this custom a Christian flavour by re-rooting it in the supposed gift-giving of Saint Nicholas.

Q7. 25th December was originally the date of a Roman festival ?

TRUE - The original significance of 25th December is that it was a well-known festival day celebrating the annual return of the sun. 21st December is the winter solstice (shortest day of the year and thus a key date on the calendar), but 25th December is the first day that ancients could clearly note that the days were definitely getting longer and the sunlight was returning. On this day the Romans worshipped the 'Unconquered Sun' or Sun god. The date for Christmas was chosen by the Roman Catholic Church. Because Rome dominated most of the "Christian" world for centuries, the date became tradition throughout most of Christendom. So, why was 25th December chosen to remember Jesus Christ's birth? Since no one knows the day of his birth, the Roman Catholic Church felt free to choose this date. The Church wished to replace the pagan festival with a Christian holiday. The psychology was that

is easier to take away an unholy (but traditional) festival from the population, when you can replace it with a good one.

- Q8.** The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus ?
Ooops ! Duplicate question – see above !
- Q9.** The barn animals miraculously spoke the night Jesus was born ?
FALSE - The barn animals talking is an ancient myth that has absolutely no biblical grounding whatsoever
- Q10.** The star led the wise men straight to Jesus ?
FALSE - The star led them first to King Herod, after which they saw the star again leading them to Jesus, but they were two separate sightings of the star and not continuous (see Matt 2 v 2, 9)

Having got the simple questions out of the way 😊 let's try some a little harder :

Q1. Which prophet said, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son" ?

Isaiah

Q2: What does the name *Emmanuel* mean ?

God is with us

Q3: Who sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" ?

Mary

Q4: The angel said to Mary that Jesus would reign over the house of which Old Testament character?

Jacob

Q5: What was the name of the old prophetess who saw Jesus in the temple when he was presented to the Lord after his birth ?

Anna

Q6: Who said, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and glory of thy people Israel," when he saw Jesus ?

Simeon

Q7: Which prophet said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" ?

Hosea

Q8: How long did Jesus remain in Egypt ?

Until the death of Herod

Christmas Wordsearch

Did you find the following words and phrases ? :

Advent

Bells

Carol singing

Christmas pudding

Elves

Holidays

Mince pies

Party

Reindeer

Santa Claus

Snowman

Turkey

Yule log

Angels

Birth of Jesus

Chimney

Christmas tree

Family

Holly

Mistletoe

Presents

Robin

Scrooge

Star

Wise men

Baubles

Boxing Day

Christmas cake

Crackers

Food

Ivy

Mulled wine

Queens speech

Rudolph

Shepherds

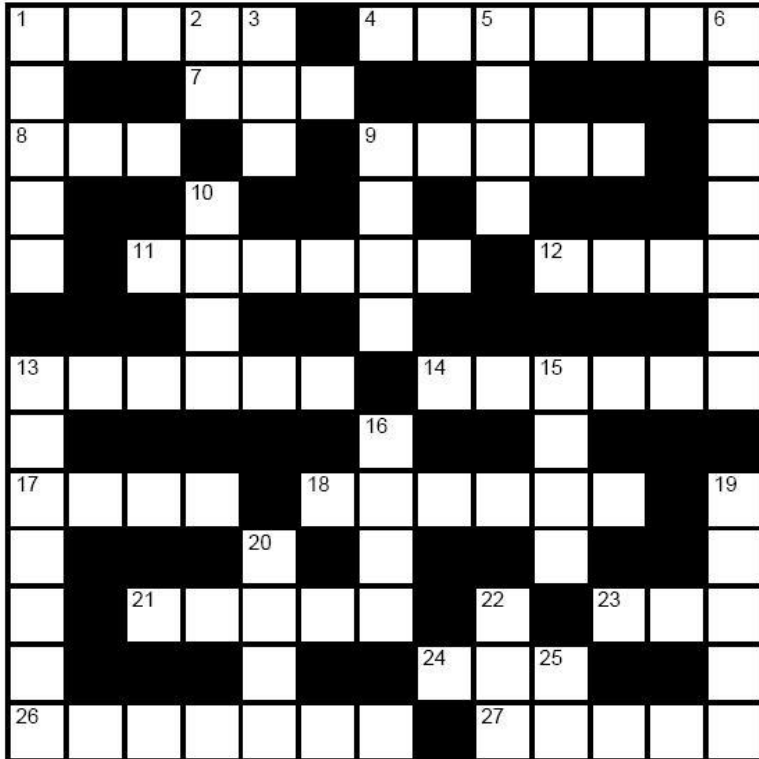
Tinsel

Wrapping paper

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE CROSSWORD

Books of the Bible Crossword

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Our thanks to the people at www.biblequizzes.org.uk for allowing us to reproduce this.

Clues :

Across

- 1 A book of books (5)
- 4 Shortest book in the Old Testament (7)
- 7 The number of chapters in Philemon (3)
- 8 This testament contains 39 books (3)
- 9 Jesus' brother, who wrote a letter (5)
- 11 In authority before the kings (6)
- 12 His epistle contains one chapter (4)
- 13 Successor to Queen Vashti (6)
- 14 David wrote many of these, set to music (6)
- 17 Wrote about the restoration of the temple (4)
- 18 Originator, writer of a book (6)
- 21 Number of letters written by John (5)
- 23 Number of chapters in 13A (3)
- 24 Galilee, Dead, for example (3)
- 26 Paul wrote many of these (7)
- 27 He prophesied the birthplace of Jesus (5)

Down

- 1 There are 66 of these (5)
- 2 Behold (2)
- 3 Revelation comes in this part of the New Testament (3)
- 5 Donation of money to the poor (4)
- 6 This letter lists the faithful (7)
- 9 He prophesied of the 'day of the Lord' (4)
- 10 A faithful Moabitess (4)
- 13 He foretold the regathering of Israel in prophecy of dry bones (7)
- 15 A prophet who was a herdsman (4)
- 16 One of the gospel writers (4)
- 19 A prophet, reluctant to go to Nineveh (5)
- 20 Adam and Eve ate from this in the garden (4)
- 22 The border of a garment (3)
- 25 Joshua writes about this city near Bethel (2)

