



# CONTACT

*December 2025 / January 2026*

*Where strangers become friends*

## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

If you would like to find out more about the Church and its activities, more details can be found on our website:

[www.gasgreen.org.uk](http://www.gasgreen.org.uk)

or Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/GasGreenBaptistChurch](http://www.facebook.com/GasGreenBaptistChurch)

Alternatively, you may like to get in touch via any of the contact details given below:

### **Minister:**

Revd. Iain Hoskins

Tel: 01242 573386 / 07867 524262

E-mail: [minister@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:minister@gasgreen.org.uk)

### **Secretary:**

Tony Dymock

Tel: 01242 244594

E-mail: [secretary@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:secretary@gasgreen.org.uk)



### **Treasurer:**

Debbie Bonanos

Tel: 07835 608823

E-mail: [treasurer@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@gasgreen.org.uk)

### **Magazine Editor:**

Tony Dymock

Tel: 01242 244594

E-mail: [secretary@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:secretary@gasgreen.org.uk)

Articles for the Magazine to the Editor please - see back page for magazine deadline.

Weekly notices to Tony Dymock  
(Tel: 01242 244594 or

E-mail: [secretary@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:secretary@gasgreen.org.uk))

by Thursday evening at the latest.

Prayer requests to Debbie Bonanos

E-mail: [deborahbonanos@gmx.co.uk](mailto:deborahbonanos@gmx.co.uk)

by 12 midday Wednesday





## FROM THE MINISTER

Our Father, King of the heavens,  
Creator and sustainer of all things by your Word and your Spirit,  
In the depth of the oceans, You are holy,  
In the shade of the forests, You are holy,  
In the streets of our towns, You are holy.

Dear friends,

Lord, as we prepare for the coming of Christmas where is our heart? With our families, grandchildren, friends who have, or with the have nots? Are we people of mission or missional people? Are we people who believe in the mission of God or are we people who believe in sharing Gods mission in our street, workplace or the world in which we live daily?

Lord, we have seen and been a part of so many Christmases that they begin to mould into one. We remember various Christmases because of an argument, children a health disaster or death that took place over the period known as Christmas. What will make this Christmas any different? What causes you to think that this Christmas will be any less selfish than the last one? Have you any plans to be different this Christmas? I'm not just referring to Christmas day, Boxing Day neither does it mean all of December all we are being asked to be is different to the world in which we live in order to cause people to stop and think, why am I doing what I'm doing? Think about what the celebration is about. It could be you ask a friend or neighbour to the *Carol Concert* on the 7<sup>th</sup> December or you could invite them to one of the many activities being organised including *Journey through Advent*.

Jesus' arrival was to many undignified, quiet, invisible. It was the Angels who said, 'Oh no it isn't.' We want everyone to know what has happened in Bethlehem. They filled the skies with a host of Angels who sang, '*Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill to all men.*' They didn't ask permission to share the good news, the shepherds didn't ask permission of their boss, they did what the Lord inspired them to do at that moment. Let us take a lesson from those who have gone before and be inspired by the King of Kings to be different this Christmas to the point that friends, family, and strangers all say, 'well I never knew that Christmas was about the Saviour of the world. I thought it was to give presents, eat drink and be merry'!

Every blessing and I look forward to greeting you and your friends over Christmas!





We live in a changing world. Our social world is very much changing and this applies to Gas Green as much as anywhere. This change is currently reflected in the Deacons meeting which once upon a time was always an evening meeting is now a daytime meeting. Other meetings could also become daytime meetings or held at times not before considered. There are some who would like meetings in the evening after the bustle of the day is over at around 9pm. The current Home Group (Bible study) meets at 7pm but could equally meet at lunchtime or other convenient times releasing the evening for all and opening it up to others.

There are 13 (approx) who attend GG who are in employment full or part time or have the freedom to choose their hours. Gone are the days when work started at 8am home by 5/6pm out for meetings/activities always being at 7-30.

So, the deacons would like to have a meeting with the congregation to see what gatherings are wanted and when would be the best time to hold them.

**This gathering will be on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm**

In the church with cake tea and coffee



Einstein was a clever man by all accounts. Some might say I don't understand what he is saying.

However, he reportedly said, 'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.'

*Albert Einstein.*

Could this be a depiction of you and me? What has to change in order to get a different result?



# A JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT

The aim of the Journey through Advent is to take you on a journey of reflection on the road to Bethlehem. In the company of interesting guests we offer that most precious gift of all – that of time. Time to pause and think, reflect on the nature of the event that changed the course of the world for ever.

**Refreshments 7pm-8.30pm**



## Meet Our Guests and Speakers

### **26th November: Sarah Turner**

Sarah is passionate about supporting our ethnically diverse community and helping to build respectful cross-cultural relationships that enable smooth integration into life in the UK. Having previously volunteered in Afghanistan, she now serves as a Cross-Cultural Community Worker in Gloucester. Her desire is to share the love of Jesus with people from the Middle East, Asia, and other war-torn regions — welcoming the stranger and the foreigner to our land. Sharing life over good food is always at the heart of what she does!

### **3<sup>rd</sup> December: Jason Boyd**

Originally from Canada, Jason came to the UK in 1993 to study theology for a year — but life took an unexpected turn when he met and married Viviane in 1997. They now have three adult children and also foster children. Since 1994, Jason has served in four Congregational Churches and continues to do so with dedication. His passions include making music, running, and crocheting.

### **10<sup>th</sup> December: Jennifer Silverston**

We are delighted to welcome Jennifer Silverston, Chair of the Cheltenham Synagogue, who will be sharing her reflections on Joy. Jennifer brings deep insight and warmth to all she does, and we look forward to hearing her thoughts and experiences.

### **17<sup>th</sup> December: Andy Grice**

Andy serves as Pastor at Salem Baptist Church in Cheltenham. He grew up in West Yorkshire, studied Biochemistry, and later trained for ministry in Bristol. Andy is married to Linda, and together they have three teenage children. He enjoys good food, watching rugby, and cheering on his kids in whatever they're involved in.



*Wishing all my friends a very happy and blessed  
Christmas and peaceful New Year. Debbie H*

*Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to all.  
Enjoy the Saviour's Day!  
Love Tina, Brian, Harriette, Amy, James and Isabella  
xxxxxx*

*Pete and Olive wish all a Very Happy Christmas  
and a Healthy and Happy New Year 2026.*

**CHRISTMAS CRACKER**

**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Gas Green Baptist Church  
Russell Street  
10-00 – 13-00

Games, Christmas Crafts, light lunch  
All primary school children welcome

Book your space: email  
[sharonkedward@yahoo.com](mailto:sharonkedward@yahoo.com)

## Symons Family Update



*We live in Zambia, where Andy is working relationally with church leaders to help grow their Bible handling skills in their context, and Rachel is working with our church*

Hello

Greetings from us here in Zambia. We realise that we almost always start this with a weather/climate update! So why change that: it's hot still and we've had just one tiny bit of rain, which has simply added humidity to the heat! The meteorological guys tell us that the rains should start sometime this month. We hope so!

### Rachel's Counselling Studies

John Lennox rightly says our world, this side of Christ's return, has beauty and barbed wire. And every one of us feels the cuts of the barbed wire. As a result of meeting many people walking through the wounds of life, Rachel has been wanting to do some studies in counselling people as a Christian for some time. The opportunity to do so came up earlier this year with a South African based course, and so she has taken it!

She is studying what's called *Biblical Counselling*, which is linked to the *Christian Counselling Educational Foundation*. The set up is that the online course is broken into modules, some compulsory, which when complete can be followed by electives, which focus on counselling in specific areas. Each module is about 10 weeks long and for each there are 3 start dates in a year. So it's very flexible.



She has been watching lectures online, been doing lots of assigned reading, writing regular assignments and then joining a Zoom group every so often.

She's now 5 weeks into the first module, called *Dynamics of Biblical Change* and is very much enjoying the challenge and growth in thinking and practice from what she is learning



## Visitors and an engagement!

We had the joy of Andy's nephew and his girlfriend visiting us for 2 weeks in October. Andy's nephew popped the question to his girlfriend whilst they were with us, and so we had the pleasure of sharing in the happiness of their engagement with them! Haydn and Daniel especially loved having their oldest cousin and fiancé with us, and we all enjoyed showing them where we live and doing some fun things together.

Thank you for your prayers and care for us.

With much love in Christ,

*Andy, Rachel, Haydn and Daniel*



## Things to pray for the month ahead:

- Thank God for the opportunity and time for Rachel to be able to study.
- Ask that Rachel will be a continued blessing to people she meets with, particularly in waling with them through the challenges they are going through.
- Thank God for visitors and being able to share in their joy.

Ask for energy over the next month for all of us, as it is the last term for the boys before the end of their academic year, a pause in Andy's work as the rains come and the same for Rachel.

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# Happy Birthday!



to BMS Birthday Scheme members celebrating their birthday during the coming weeks:

January 13<sup>th</sup>

Marian Lee

Are you one of the 10,000 members of the Birthday Scheme? You will receive a lovely birthday card. and in return you are invited to make a donation to the work of BMS, and support projects around the world. Every year more than £250,000 is raised in this way. Please talk to Marian, our Mission Treasurer, about what is involved, and become a part of this scheme.

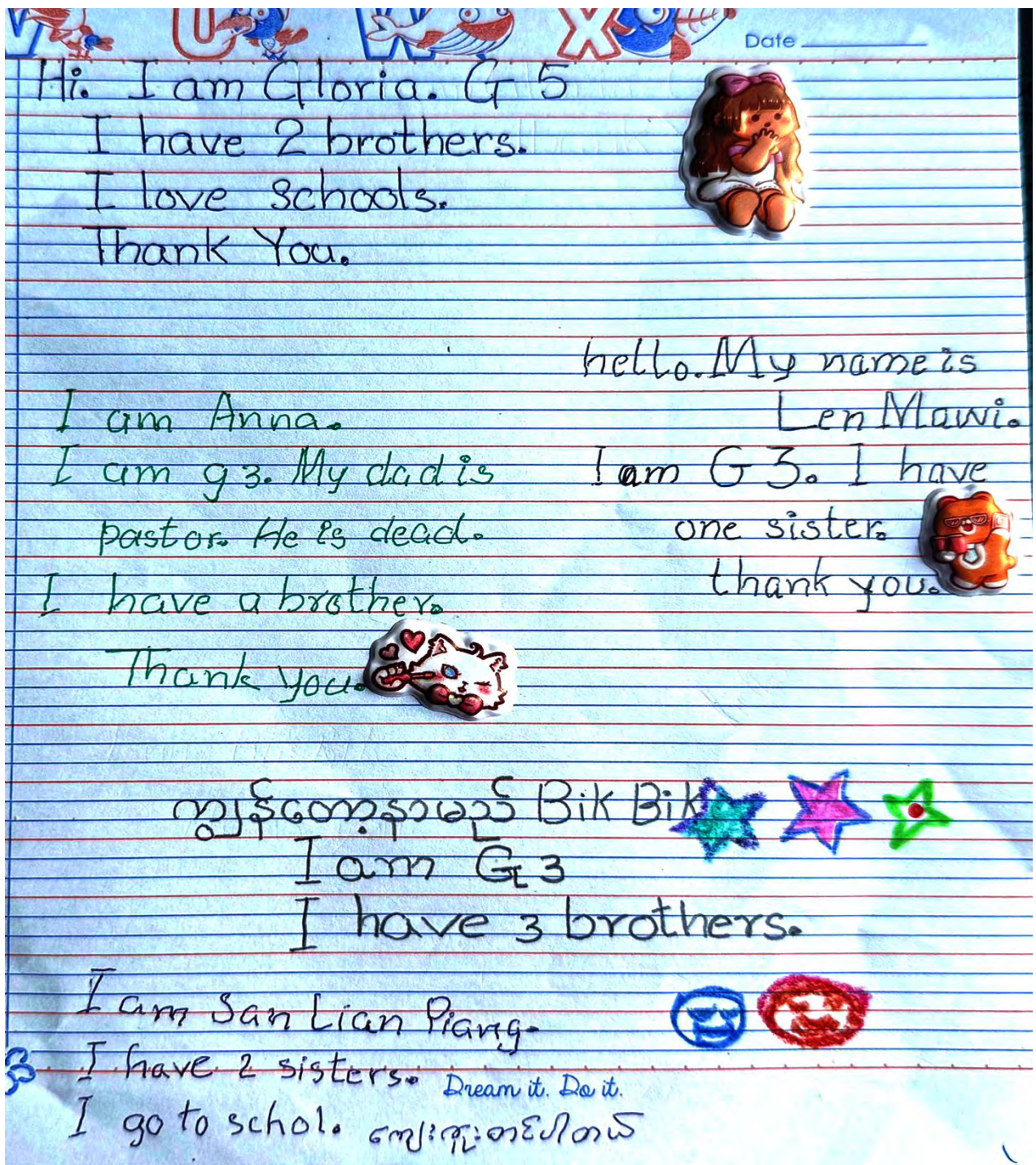


## THANKS FROM 5 CHILDREN IN MYANMAR (BURMA)

As many readers will know, for some years we have been financially supporting a group of needy children in the church in Burma led by Rev. Robert Thang, who worshipped at Gas Green whilst studying for his Ph.D. at the University of Gloucestershire. We send regular gifts to help with their schooling, and also an additional gift at this time of year to buy them Christmas presents.

We have recently received the following "Thank You" message signed by the children concerned themselves.

If you would like to contribute to this cause, please see Marian Lee.





## 26<sup>th</sup> December - Look out for Wenceslas

Most of us probably know that on 26<sup>th</sup> December (the Feast of Stephen) 'Good king Wenceslas' looked out....' We probably also know that the snow lay round about, 'deep and crisp and even'. Beyond that, he's just someone in a carol that's not often sung nowadays.

However, Wenceslas was a real person, a duke, and effectively king of Bohemia in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In modern terms, he was Czechoslovakian. He was known as a generous and kind monarch, deeply Christian and given to good works. So, the story in the carol by the Victorian hymn-writer J.M. Neale, while possibly fictitious, is at least in line with his recognised character. 'Page and monarch' braved the 'bitter weather' and the 'cruel wind's wild lament' to take food and fuel to a poor man living rough.

Neale's carol was enormously popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, because it perfectly expressed Victorian Christian ideals of benevolence and almsgiving. Christian men of 'wealth and rank' are urged to help the poor, and so 'find blessing'. Ignoring the 'wealth and rank and men' bit, it's still good advice, at Christmas or any other time.



**Carol Singing in Gas Green**  
**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 6pm**

Followed by hot chocolate, marshmallows, cuppa soup, tea or coffee

**Come and join us for the fun of Christmas**

Everyone needs to wear Christmas lights powered by batteries. You can buy them in many places. When you come Carol singing on the 19<sup>th</sup> wear your lights.

Go soon and don't be disappointed. We will be a walking illumination of God's gift to the world.



## 1st Cheltenham Company THE BOYS' BRIGADE & **THE GIRLS' ASSOCIATION**



**Our Annual Re-Enrolment Service took place  
on 3<sup>rd</sup> October**

Our annual Re-Enrolment service took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, held once again as part of the Friday evening programme, in order to encourage more members and parents to attend. Members were presented with their membership cards for 2025/26, and made their promises to serve as loyal members for the coming year.

Battalion activities have now resumed for the new session. Members of both the Junior and Company Sections took part in the 5-a-side football competition at Tewkesbury School.

It is good to report that numbers in all age groups have been increasing slowly but steadily. We now have well over 30 regular members, with an average attendance of around 25 on most Fridays. However, more new members are always welcome.

Our final Friday evening meeting before Christmas will this year taken the form of a "Chocolate Bingo" evening. Parents and friends are also warmly invited to come along, on 12<sup>th</sup> December at 6 pm for a 6.30 pm start.

We re-start after the Christmas break on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January – a busy weekend which also includes our annual visit to the Everyman pantomime on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>, and our first church parade of the new year on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>.

*Tony Dymock*

**Chocolate**

**B I N G O**

**Friday**

**December 12th 6:00-9:00 PM**

**Help support the 1st Cheltenham Boys Brigade to raise much needed funds!**

**(At Gas Green Youth centre)**

**B 14 I 21 N 37 G 52 O 74**

**Arrive at 6pm for a 6.30 start!**

**Bring your friends and family along, and be in for a chance to win one of our chocolate prizes!**



## Children's Ministry

Mystery surrounded the latest holiday club which took place in October. The mystery was due to Tony being in hospital we had no idea if the invitations for the holiday club had been sent out-and if they had the responses would have gone to Tony!

Thus, we had no idea how many children to expect!

God is good -23 children arrived, and we had a great morning. Those of you in church on the previous Sunday would have guessed that the story was about Zacchaeus as Sharon had constructed a very large tree. We told the children the story and then acted it out using the tree. Lots of craft items associated with the story were then made including money boxes and a very popular catapult aiming to hit Zacchaeus in the tree with a marshmallow.

Ruben brought an amazing bit of kit that made mini trees! We are grateful that the Bennington Hall Trust provided money so each child took home a book with the story of Zacchaeus in and also grateful that Tesco provided much of the lunch.

We had a much younger group this time including a set of 4 year old triplets. This is the e mail we received from their mum

*Hello Tony,*

*Thank you so much for having the boys for Messy Church. They were a little apprehensive at first but the excitement when they came out reminded me of the first time I left William (Perkins) with you. They had a wonderful time and it was lovely to hear from Sharon and the others how good they had been.*

*I appreciate they are only 4 at the moment but could I put them on the list to start Boys Brigade when they turn 5 next July please? I went through Girls Brigade and my brother through Boys Brigade and I would love for them to have the same experience.*

We had Mike and Julie Meredith helping on the Messy Monday for the first time so what a brilliant connection made for these three boys to want to join. So good to be able to work together so that we can share God's love with the children.

Next holiday club is December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

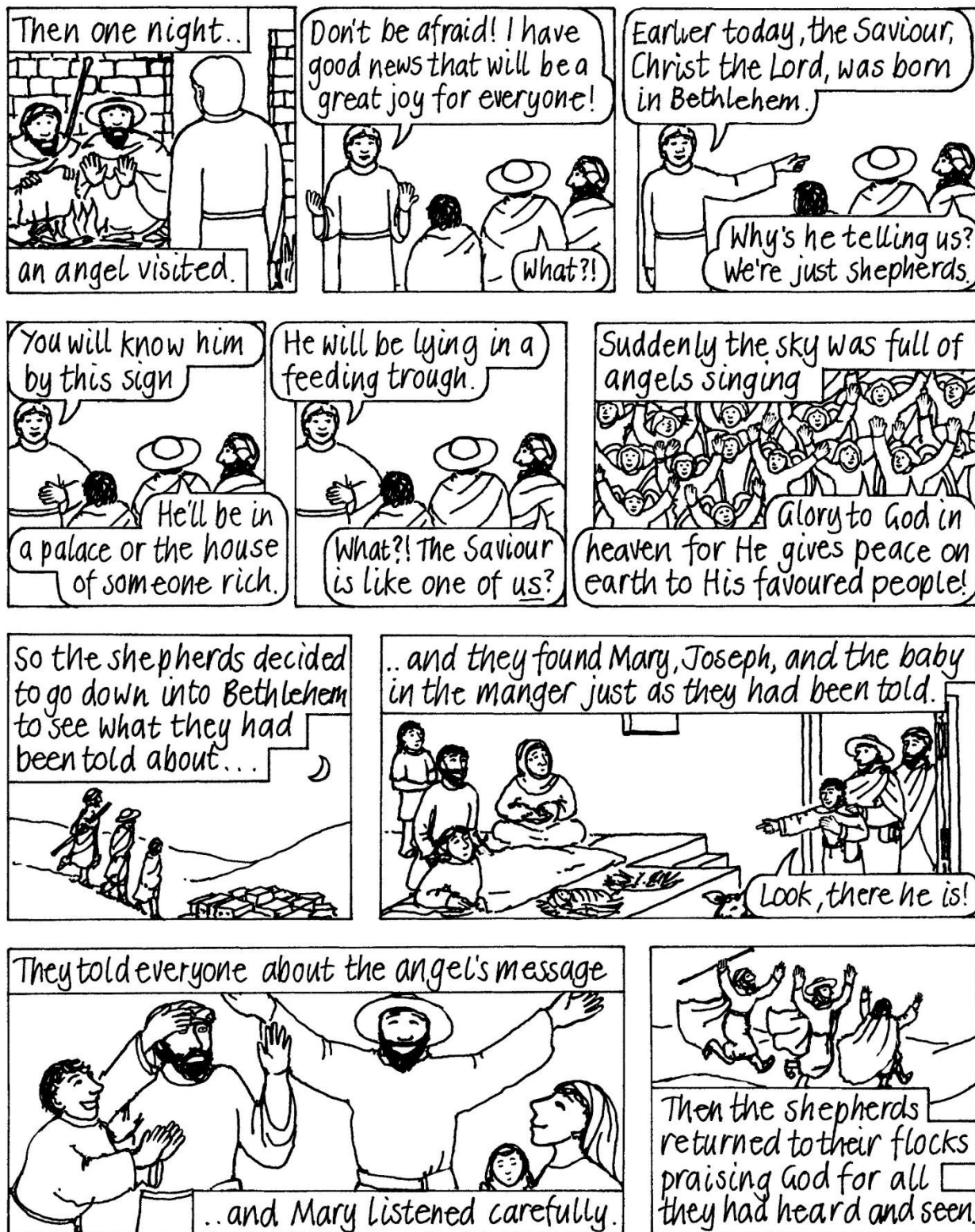
*Val Hoskins*

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in  
Luke chapter 2 verses 8 to 20

Shepherds were paid to look after the flocks out on the hillside. Uneducated and rough, they were usually avoided, or overlooked.



## WORDSEARCH: SILENT NIGHT

This much-loved carol comes from Austria, where it was first sung as *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht* on Christmas Eve, 1818. It was written by Father Joseph Mohr, a young priest at St Nicholas parish church, in the village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg. As Christmas 1818 approached, he asked the local schoolmaster, Franz Xaver Gruber, to compose a melody for his carol. Gruber was organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and so was happy to oblige. On Christmas Eve they presented the carol to the church during the midnight mass. The carol went on to become loved world-wide; and the version sung by Bing Crosby is the third best-selling single of all time.

Words to find: Silent, Night, Loved, Carol, Austria, First, Sung, Stille, Nacht, Heilige, Christmas, Eve, Father, Joseph, Mohr, Young, Priest, Organist, Midnight, Mass, Melody, Single, Bing, Version, Third.







*A Christmas Evening*

**WITH MAXINE  
& ROGER**

Tickets Available  
£10 (Family) : £5 Single  
(Buffet included)

**SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER  
18:30PM**

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**GAS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH**

Russell Street, Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire, GL51 9HJ

For more information  
Email: [minister@gasgreen.org.uk](mailto:minister@gasgreen.org.uk)

# DIARY FOR Dec. 2025 & Jan. 2026

***EACH WEEK UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED***

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>10.00 am PRAYER (In Vestry)</b>
	<b>10.45 am MORNING WORSHIP,</b> <b>with SUNDAY SCHOOL for Children</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>10.00 am LUNCH CLUB</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>5.00 pm onwards BEAVERS, CUBS, SCOUTS</b>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>7.00 pm HOME GROUP or PRAYER &amp; PRAISE</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>5.45 pm onwards BOYS' BRIGADE &amp; GIRLS' ASSOCIATION</b>

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENTS & PREACHERS: DECEMBER
Wednesday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7.0 pm	Journey through Advent 2: Jason Boyd
SUNDAY	7 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Rev. Iain Hoskins ( <i>Communion</i> )
		6.30 pm	A CHRISTMAS EVENING with Maxine & Roger <i>Including refreshments. Tickets £5/£10 from Iain</i>
Wednesday	10 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 pm	Journey through Advent 3: Jennifer Silverston
Friday	12 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	Chocolate Bingo in aid of BB/GA
SUNDAY	14 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Debbie Hunt
Wednesday	17 <sup>th</sup>	7.00 pm	Journey through Advent 4: Andy Grice
Friday	19 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	CAROL SINGING in the community <i>followed by hot drinks and snacks</i>
SUNDAY	21 <sup>st</sup>	10.45 am	SCRATCH NATIVITY for young and old
		6.30 pm	CANDLELIGHT SERVICE with Communion
Monday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.00 am	CHRISTMAS CRACKER Holiday Club for primary school children. <i>Book with Sharon Kedward</i>
Thursday	25 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP
SUNDAY	28 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Rev. Iain Hoskins ( <i>Infant Dedication</i> )
DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENTS & PREACHERS: JANUARY
SUNDAY	4 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Debbie Bonanos ( <i>Communion</i> )
Monday	5 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Lunch Club re-starts after Christmas break
		6.30 pm	BB/GA Leaders Meeting
Wednesday	7 <sup>th</sup>	10.30 am	Death Café
		7.00 pm	Home Group Conversation ( <i>In Church</i> )
Friday	9 <sup>th</sup>	5.45 pm	BB/GA re-starts after Christmas break
Saturday	10 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Visit to Everyman Pantomime
SUNDAY	11 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Rev. Iain Hoskins ( <i>BB/GA Parade</i> )
Wednesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Deacons Meeting
		7.30 pm	Church Meeting
SUNDAY	18 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Rev. Iain Hoskins ( <i>Communion</i> )
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	2.30 pm	Death Café
SUNDAY	25 <sup>th</sup>	10.45 am	Rev. Iain Hoskins

**The Feb/March issue of "Contact" will be published on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January. Articles for inclusion to Tony by 11<sup>th</sup> Jan. (written) or by 18<sup>th</sup> Jan. (by email)**