

# Tuckingmill Baptist Church, Camborne



## December 2020

It seems to be that all over the country, Christmas decorations are going up earlier than usual.

And I can't say that I'm at all surprised. For many people it has been a particularly bleak year, and the continuing restrictions to combat Coronavirus have dragged on and on. Fears have been voiced over the last couple of months about how unrestrained revelry over Christmas itself might undo much of the hard-won headway in this battle.



So if we only get five days of only even then *semi-normal* Christmas, *of course* we will insist

on getting our Christmas trees and lights up early. We *will* get into what we can of that "festive spirit" for as long as we possibly can.

It certainly has been the strangest of years. With so many of my regular meetings cancelled, for the first time ever I've been keeping up with my "Daily Dose of Greek" and "Daily Dose of Hebrew" studies, ever since that first Lockdown - and even caught up a bit with some from further back.

And yet, curiously, I have got rather behind on reading the monthly *Evangelicals Now*. And it has been rather fascinating reading the reports of the *growing* crisis, now looking back with some months of hindsight.

I remember saying, back at one of our earliest "Zoom church" meetings, that it might be *as late* as Christmas when we finally got back to normal.

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For a while, after that first, and far more severe, Lockdown of March and April, and the daily numbers coming down, I was starting to get vaguely hopeful that there might not even be that “second wave” ... that only now our second Lockdown and controversial Tiers system is starting to turn around again.

And now ... with this news about vaccines developed in record time (it really has been one of those all-in, full-on efforts that I had only previously associated with war-time developments), there is a very definite “light at the end of the tunnel”, almost growing in size day by day.

So one of the lines from one of our traditional carols really strikes home at present. Just like the first sight of the Christmas lights as you drive around at night remind you (if you *needed* reminding, that is) that it is indeed that season, for many, the *sound* that introduces the season is an oh-so-English choir - possibly from King’s Chapel - singing “O little town of Bethlehem”.

The particular line that has been drawing my attention this year has been the one about “the hopes and fears of all the years”.

A year ago, although there were those increasingly concerning news reports from China, I suspect that many of us were steeling ourselves for a 2020 that *still* managed to feature heavy coverage of Brexit negotiations. I wonder if any of us thought or even said, *What would I*



*give for a 2020 without Brexit on the news every day!* Well, they do say, don’t they, be careful what you wish for ... because you might get it!

So there were those early fears of 2020, as the news reports rolled in of China, and then Italy ... and surely, if this virus gets out of China, then it *will* inevitably get everywhere, won’t it? There were those emergency constructions of giant hospitals, for fear that our NHS could be overwhelmed. Fears that the virus would get into nursing homes, despite the heroic efforts of the front-line care and medical staff, initially without all the PPE that was being advised.

Some of those fears were realised. And some, fortunately, weren’t. Which, of course, has been the same with hopes, too.

Hope that it could have been contained in a remote part of China (well, remote to us, but a city of 10 million!). Hope that it would actually turn out to be something more like a common cold. Hope that things would be back to normal by summer. I suspect there is, underneath it all, a hope that the virus will declare an amnesty for Christmas, and that all these rules of re-

cent months can be ignored over Christmas week without consequences.

And then there are the hopes that these newly developed vaccines are giving us - though, will we be patient enough to continue to behave sensibly as it starts to be rolled out?

There is the hope of just history, generally, that things far worse than Coronavirus have struck the world and this country in centuries past. And horrific beyond our conception that those years must have been, they passed, and time moved on, and normal life gradually resumed. And so it will happen again, even with the *global* upheaval of a *pandemic*.



But "Little Town of Bethlehem" talks about bigger hopes and fears than even those. Not just "the hopes and fears of 2020-21". Or even the fears that there might be other, and far more virulent, pandemics out there waiting to strike in the future.

Something bigger, even, than Global Warming, Plastic Pollution and Mass Extinctions - whatever you make of the seriously alarming predictions that are in circulation. No, we are not talking

about the hopes and fears of merely the century ahead, but

*The hopes and fears  
Of ALL the years*

And it's not even just the fears about physical things, like climate and environment. There is more to our existence than that.

It's more than just the future of nations and societies and communities. Not that our relationships to our "fellow men" are trivial, no, I'm not at all trying to say that.

But the biggest hopes and the biggest fears have to relate to God, our Maker, God, our Judge. Could there be any bigger concern for every individual human being, or the whole race collectively, than that? If we get *that* most fundamental relationship wrong, what can set us right again?

And so the most significant date for us this year is not 25th December 2020. Or the New Year which will hopefully dawn with a brighter horizon (and I don't mean simply because of our disentanglement from the EU, either!).

No, the key date was the "tonight" of the carol - even if, curiously, we don't know that precise date. The significance is *that* it happened, far more than precisely when.

But the location in the carol, I think, could be improved upon. "Met in thee tonight". Shouldn't that

be a capital T? Because the “place” where human beings can now meet with God is no longer a place: not a temple, not a church building, not even in that “little town of Bethlehem”. Instead, it is in a person: Jesus Christ. The “hopes and fears” of this and every year are met not in a manger, but in that Baby in that manger.

*Saviour and King,  
we worship Thee!*



*Lo! Within a manger lies  
He who built the starry skies*

At Christmas time in this strangest of recent years, may our response be precisely the same as ever:

Peter Ham

You can contact Peter Ham, TRBC’s pastor,  
by phone on (01209) 212442 or (07818) 078135.  
You can also e-mail [peter.ham@live.co.uk](mailto:peter.ham@live.co.uk),

**Church website:**  
[www.tuckingmillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.tuckingmillbaptist.org.uk)

**Zoom meetings - “online church”:**  
maintaining the times we have become used to  
over the previous months,  
but possibly with *some* people able to meet at the chapel  
Sundays: 10.30 and 6.30  
Thursdays 7.00

	<b>10.30 a.m.</b>	<b>6.30 p.m.</b> (cafe church)
13 <sup>th</sup> December	A Christmas that I can believe in: <i>Joseph</i>	Drive-in service at Morrisons’ car park (6.00)
20 <sup>th</sup> December	<i>Elizabeth</i>	DIY carols by candlelight
25 <sup>th</sup> December	<i>Mary</i>	(no meeting!)
27 <sup>th</sup> December	<i>Herod</i>	(no meeting)
3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Phil Willetts	Video

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### General rules for Christmas (etc) left-overs

**EGGS:** When something starts pecking its way out of the shell, the egg is probably past its prime.



**DAIRY PRODUCTS:** Milk is spoiled when it starts to look like yogurt. Yogurt is spoiled when it starts to look like cottage cheese. Cottage cheese is spoiled when it starts to look like regular cheese. Regular cheese is nothing but spoiled milk anyway and can't get any more spoiled than it is already. Cheddar cheese is spoiled when you think it is blue cheese but you realise you've never purchased that kind.

**MAYONNAISE:** If it makes you violently ill after you eat it, the mayonnaise is spoiled.

**FROZEN FOODS:** Frozen foods that have become an integral part of the defrosting problem in your freezer compartment will probably be spoiled - or wrecked anyway - by the time you pry them out with a kitchen knife.

**EXPIRATION DATES:** This is NOT a marketing ploy to encourage you to throw away perfectly good food so that you'll spend more on groceries. Perhaps you'd benefit by having a calendar in your kitchen.

**MEAT:** If opening the refrigerator door causes stray animals from a half-mile radius to congregate outside your house, the meat is spoiled.

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**BREAD:** Sesame seeds and poppy seeds are the only officially acceptable "spots" that should be seen on the surface of any loaf of bread. Fuzzy and hairy looking white or green growth areas are a good indication that your bread has turned into a pharmaceutical laboratory experiment.

**SALT:** It never spoils.

**FLOUR:** Flour is spoiled when it wiggles.

**TINNED GOODS:** Any canned goods that have become the size or shape of a football should be disposed of. Carefully!

**CARROTS:** A carrot that you can tie a clove hitch in is not fresh.

**RAISINS:** Raisins should not be harder than your teeth.

**POTATOES:** Fresh potatoes do not have roots, branches, or dense, leafy undergrowth.

**UNMARKED ITEMS:** You know it is well beyond prime when you're tempted to discard the Tupperware along with the food. Generally speaking, Tupperware containers should not burp when you open them.

**GENERAL RULE OF THUMB:** Most food cannot be kept longer than the average life span of a hamster. Keep a hamster in or nearby your refrigerator to gauge this.



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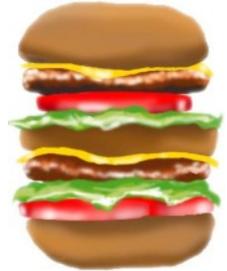
**Please DON'T notice these notices!!**

*If ever there was a call for careful and thoughtful proof-reading, it was the church magazine or church notices. These are all reputed to be for real notices or announcements!*

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.'

The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'



Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.



Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.



Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.



The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.



The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM.. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

