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CONNECT

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*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men
Luke 2:14*

Dear Friends,

“... the angel said to her, *“Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”* - Friends, these words from the first Chapter of Luke’s Gospel are followed by a description of how Jesus will be called ‘Son of the Most High’, and how he will be given the throne of his ancestor David and reign over the descendants of Jacob forever; “and of his kingdom there shall be no end”.

During this coming month we will spend a lot of time preparing for the celebration of Christmas. Often this focuses on the coming of the Christ-child, the baby born in a stable and laid in a manger with domestic animals around. This romantic Nativity scene often appears on Christmas cards and in nativity arrangements with lovely figurines for our churches and homes. Which is a good thing and helps us focus on the Biblical account on Jesus’ birth. The alternative is “seasons greetings”, Santa Claus caught up in the Christmas tradition.

However, if we commit ourselves to exploring the Bible accounts, we rediscover the details, such as the titles of the coming Messiah: Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Son of the Most High, just to mention some. The angel’s message to Mary was not “just” about her “unplanned (unexplainable) pregnancy”, but also about the kingship of Jesus Christ, his coming to rule over the nations, the fact that he was and is the Son of the Most High – “and of his kingdom there shall be no end”.

As we look at the world, in which we live, do we not long for the coming of Christ to rule the nations of the earth? What sort of world would it be, if Jesus Christ ruled in every heart? Wars would cease; there would be an “equal sharing of the things that earth affords”, there would be true justice and lasting peace in the world. God’s kingdom would be here among us. This pandemic still might happen, but there would be no “vaccine war”, either. So, through “equal sharing” we would be a step closer to “taming this beast”. - If only the

peoples of the earth would listen to the angel’s message!

But we should not give up hope in despair. The Angel does not say “If everyone believes...” then these things will happen. Jesus has come into the world and will come again to rule the nations, whether the nations like it or not! His kingdom will have no end, whether we like it or not!

Let us spend this Advent preparing for the coming of Jesus - Son of the Most High, the one who has the throne of his ancestor David, the one who will reign over the descendants of Jacob, the one whose kingdom will have no end – and let us pray that we, and all people, will be ready to welcome him!

Have a Blessed and Merry Christmas! John

The Minister and his Family wish You All a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Christmas Lunch

Keeping all fingers crossed there are no lockdowns in the offing our Christmas Lunch will take place on Sunday 12th December after worship. The cost will be £8.00 per person and booking and payment must be given to Isabel no later than Sunday 5th December.

Invitations from Our Sister Churches

Argyle Morley:

Film Club Wednesday 7 December at 7pm - The Santa Claus the Movie (donation are thankfully accepted)

Carols by Candlelight Service - Sunday 19 December 6pm

Horfield URC:

Boxing Day Service - 26 December at 10.30am

Commitment for Life Prayer

A Prayer for Christmas

Ho! Ho! Ho! Dearest God, as we hear Santa's sleigh approaching this Christmas Eve, may the gifts under our Christmas tree be bigger and better than ever. Yes God, far, FAR bigger portions of food for the hungry! A much, MUCH better economic system - one that works brilliantly for the poor and really not-so-well for the super-rich! Much, MUCH more justice for the oppressed. Far, FAR bigger taxes on the rich. Huge windfarms and batteries that decimate fossil fuel companies, and not forests and lakes. Ah yes God, may this be the biggest, bestest Christmas ever! Ho, Ho, Ho – Amen

Kevin Snyman

Communion Offering for December

Wellspring provides affordable professional counselling for adults in North Somerset as well as donation-based counselling and low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for young people age 11-18.

The charity was established in 1994 by local church leaders and GPs to provide confidential help and support to people in the local community. We offer our services to all who seek help regardless of gender, ethnic origin or religious beliefs.

Many of the CBT sessions for young people take place in local secondary schools thanks to a grant from The National Lottery.

Clients all self-refer to Wellspring, often after being advised to come by their GP.

Wellspring currently has no statutory funding but receives grants and donations from many local town and parish councils in North Somerset as well as local churches, other groups, trusts, individuals and through fundraising events.

Wellspring Counselling is an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and abides by its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Wellspring is governed by a board of trustees. Currently, they have eight trustees who provide experience and expertise in a wide range of business and professional capacities.

THEIR MISSION STATEMENT:

Wellspring is a charity underpinned by a Christian ethos, which exists to provide affordable, professional and accessible counselling for the whole community.

Communion Offertories for 2022

As decided at our last Church Meeting the following charities were chosen for the coming year:

January/July	Commitment for Life
February/August	St. Peter's Hospice
March/September	Nailsea Leg Club
April/October	Southfield Road Church Food Bank
May/November	Caring @ Christmas
June/December	Minister's Discretionary Fund

Thank you everyone for all your support.

The URC daily devotions

The URC daily devotions can be accessed via devotions.urb.org.uk
These are approx 5 minutes long. The Sunday service can be accessed from the same site.

Angels

My sister June was ten years older than me so this happened before I was born. When she was a little girl not yet five years old, my parents lived in rented rooms in a house that was not in the best of condition. My sister was asleep in her own room when she was awoken by a voice telling her to go into her parents' bedroom and stay there because the ceiling wasn't safe.

She told her parents she had to stay with them because a voice had told her the ceiling wasn't safe. Mother told her, "You must have been dreaming," and took my sister back to bed. The ceiling was a sloping one so Mum stood on the bed and pushed on the ceiling to see that it was firm. "It's fine," she told my sister, "now go to sleep; you are safe."

The next night my sister heard the same voice telling her the same thing; "Go into your parents' room and stay there, the ceiling isn't safe." Once again Mum took her back to bed, tested the ceiling and told her she was safe.

On the third night my sister was woken again and the voice told her to go into her parents' room and stay there as the ceiling wasn't safe. Only this time the voice was very insistent, telling my sister that she must stay in her parents' room and she must not let her Mum take her back to bed. My sister refused to be taken back to her room and kicked up a fuss, so Mum and Dad let her into their bed. In the middle of the night there was such a crash; the ceiling of my sister's room had fallen down on top of my sister's bed, but she was safe with Mum and Dad.

Was it an angel's voice? Was an angel watching out for her? My sister died three years ago aged 79 but she was always convinced an angel had spoken to her.

What do you think? Do you believe in angels?

Yvonne Baggallay

Dolly clothes

I am going to send some Barbie/Sindy dolls to little girls in Sri Lanka. Each doll will be dressed and have a spare outfit and accessories in a jiffy bag strapped to her back. To this end I am crocheting/knitting/sewing some clothes. The dolls are a most odd shape. If you use disposable face masks please could you cut off and save the elastic for me. I also want old-fashioned "poppers", the type that you sew on - any size, any colour.

BRIGHT HOUR meeting in the hall

"Christmas table decoration" by Sue Irwin
Tuesday 30th November at 2pm

"Christmas carol singing" followed by Christmas cake and mince pies
Tuesday 14th December at 2pm

All are very welcome

Children's Hospice South West

We have received a very grateful thank you letter from Tamara Downes head of fund raising at Charlton farm

Communion retiring offerings 20/21 amounted to £141.50

Picnic hamper recipe booklets and other donations raised £26.80

So total £168.30 Thank you all for your support

Sally and Isabel

CHURCH EVENTS DIARY - December 2021		
SUNDAY 5TH	SUNDAY WORSHIP with Mrs Stella Patterson	11.00AM
SUNDAY 12TH	COMMUNION WORSHIP with Rev.d John Gray	11.00AM
SUNDAY 19TH	SUNDAY WORSHIP – CAROL SERVICE	11.00AM
SUNDAY 26TH	NO SERVICE	11.00AM
SUNDAY 2TH	SUNDAY WORSHIP	11.00AM
Communion - 12 th December		

Door Rota

We need volunteers to welcome our friends to church and hand out our Order of service and Connect. Please speak to an Elder if you are able to help

Wally and the Christmas Play

What to do with Wally? Wally was an awkward and shy child who belonged to the church kids club. It was time to hand out roles for the Christmas play, but what role should the teacher give Wally? She decided on the inn-keeper. It was an important role, but required Wally only to shake his head and say one line "Sorry, we've no room." Wally grinned from ear to ear when he learned of his important role and he couldn't wait for the big night.

It arrived soon enough, and the play was proceeding according to plan. Mary and Joseph had travelled to Bethlehem and come to the door of the inn.

Now the boy playing Joseph was a particularly confident child, and while the script called for he and Mary to turn away at this point, Joseph decided to exercise some dramatic licence. "But, sir" he said to the innkeeper, "My wife is about to have her baby and we need somewhere to stay. Couldn't you find us a room?" Wally's face went white - this was not planned for! - and he paused before repeating his line. "I'm sorry, we've no room."

"But sir" replied Joseph, "We've travelled such a long way and we've nowhere else to go and my wife is very tired. Surely you can find us somewhere." Wally bowed his head, shook it sadly and said, "I'm sorry, we've no room."

Forlornly Joseph and Mary started to walk away. Wally, now fully into his role, felt ashamed and saddened. A tear trickled down his cheek. Then his voice was heard calling out, "Wait! Please come back. You can have my room."

It may not have been according to the script, but at that moment Wally gave perfect expression to the Christmas story. Making room for Jesus requires effort on our part. We have to rearrange our priorities and discard anything that would get in the way of His coming. So let us all welcome Jesus this Christmastime with arms wide open, and echo Wally's words:-

"You can have my room, Jesus."