

MRBC

CHURCH MAGAZINE—FEBRUARY 2024



Mansfield Road Baptist Church

Message for February from Hazel O'Connor



The Day after Christmas Day

After the joy of Christmas Day, the following day felt like a let-down. Families stayed overnight but hadn't slept well. We are not the only ones who've felt low after Christmas Day whether it's from excessive eating or drinking or dancing etc, or the carols suddenly disappearing from the radio, or the fact that the gifts we bought last week are now on sale half price. The magic of Christmas Day can quickly dissipate.

The Bible never tells us about the day after Jesus' birth. But we can imagine that after walking to Bethlehem, scrambling for accommodation, Mary's pain in giving birth and having shepherds drop by unannounced (Luke 2: 4-18), Mary and Joseph were exhausted. Yet, as Mary cradled her new-born, I can imagine her reflecting on her angelic visitation (Luke 1: 30-33). Elizabeth's blessing (Luke 1: 42-45) and her realisation of her baby's destiny (Luke 1: 46-55). Mary pondered such things in her heart (Luke 2: 19) which must have lightened the tiredness and physical pain of that day.

We all have bad days, perhaps even the day after Christmas. Like many, let's face them by pondering the One who came into our world, forever brightening it with His presence.

Dear Jesus,

I praise and thank you for entering our dark world and forever brightening my days with your presence.

Amen



CHURCH DIARY for FEBRUARY

Sunday Service each week at 10.30am with groups for the children and young people.

There is a **Prayer Meeting** at 10.15am in the Boulevard Room every week before the Sunday Service All welcome.

For those who would like to receive prayer, there will be two people after the Sunday Service at the front of the church offering prayer.

Shalom Fellowship—Sunday 4th February 2.30 pm.

Toddler Group—10.00 to 11.45am on Mondays 5th, 19th, 26th February

Renew Wellbeing Café— Each Thursday—1.30 to 4.00pm

Church Members Meeting—18th February after Sunday Church

PRAYER POINTS

- 1) Pray for MRBC through this time of change and seeking a new Minister.
- 2) Pray for families of those who have experienced bereavements.
- 3) Pray for the World in Conflict. May those in power leave behind violence.
- 4) Pray for Young People that they will feel God's presence and His peace, hope and joy.

Christmas Donations

Over the period of Advent and Christmas a number of members and friends donated coins, as had been the tradition at MRBC for many years. It is wonderful that there are still those who faithfully save up their small change to donate every year! The money was sent, along with the cash donations received at the Christmas Day service, to the charity SHELTER, a total of £170.

In addition, a collection was made for the BMS (Baptist World Mission) from members and friends who gave Christmas cards to the church family. £80 has been sent. Thanks to Joan Sheppard for organising this.

DOUBLE CONGRATULATIONS to Eunice Campbell-Clark

Eunice stepped down as a Bulwell Forest councillor in May last year and in November was formally declared an **Honorary Alderwoman of Nottingham** during a civic ceremony at the Council House.

Then in January she was included in the **King's New Year's Honours list 2024**. Eunice has been awarded an **OBE** (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) for Services to Local Government.

We offer Eunice our sincere congratulations on these two awards.

As reported in the local press, among her notable achievements are:

- Championing Black History Month in Nottingham and raising the profile of black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) issues across the city
- Driving forward the environmental agenda following the passing of her husband Alan, who led on climate change and green policies
- Overseeing the planting of thousands of trees in Bulwell Forest ward
- Pushing for the installation of a Changing Places toilet in the city centre, which made a huge difference for disabled people
- Setting up the Black Achievers Awards in 2011
- Leading on the installation of two memorial benches in Bulwell
- Promoting the Hear Me Now campaign in Nottingham from 2013 to tackle the issue of prostate cancer in black men – a group which disproportionately suffers from the disease

David Mellen, Leader of Nottingham City Council, said: "I'm absolutely delighted for Eunice and would struggle to think of someone more deserving of an honour such as this. We've been colleagues for a great many years in Nottingham and I've seen first-hand the remarkable dedication and commitment, both to her Bulwell Forest constituents and also to the city of Nottingham more widely."

Mel Barrett, Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council, said: "I'd like to offer my warmest congratulations to Eunice on receiving this hugely-deserved accolade in the New Year's Honours. She dedicated 36 years of her life to public service in Nottingham – an incredible achievement for which we should all be grateful. There is no doubt that her time in office has led to a great many improvements in people's everyday lives."

"I know there were significant challenges in the early days of her career that nobody should have to face as a woman from the BAME community, but she worked tirelessly and bravely to overcome these. We're proud and thankful for all she has done for our city."

Our Stained Glass Windows (part 1)

The photo on the front cover of the magazine is the window at the front of the church known as the Cox memorial window. On 19th June 1913, when our church was opened and dedicated for public worship, the widow of Dr Samuel Cox unveiled this window at the rear of the chancel. Dr Cox had been a previous minister of Mansfield Road Baptist Church and one of the foremost preachers in the country during the second half of the nineteenth century. The window was the gift of Mr Alfred Bradley, one of the Deacons, who had laid the Foundation Stone.

The first window on the left as you enter the church is in memory of Rev James Amos who was minister here from 1916 to 1930.



Summary of the December Prayer Letter of Pippa and Toby Vokuhl

www.bmsworldmission.org/ptvokuhl

IMMANUEL - BEYOND THE NOSTALGIA



This newsletter was written in December, at the beginning of Advent. Toby began by reflecting on the season, and asked if it still really speaks to us, or is it “mostly linked to feelings of nostalgia, the warm glow of the known and the retelling of a story we know only too well?” He explained that, in Nepal, the Hindu festival of Dashain and Tihar had just ended and the lights removed from homes. Toby didn’t expect to see many symbols of Christmas, the coming of Immanuel.

But does that mean it is less real? Where do we look for, and where do we find the Almighty at work in the here and in the now?

Toby reminded us of his previous letter which touched on the monsoon damage to houses and infrastructure. He thanked all those who had prayed for the work Christians undertook in relief. Since then, another natural disaster had taken place, being a very natural disaster prone country.

A few weeks ago on the 3rd November, news of a significant earthquake in Nepal’s Jajarkot/Rukhum area once again spurred international and national bodies into action. Thank you to all of you who enquired after hearing the news of the earthquake. This quake and some aftershocks could be felt here in Kathmandu, and as far away as Delhi, but there was no damage or reports of injuries here. However, in the affected areas there has been devastation. At least 157 people died at the time, with many more injured. Latest reports are that over 26,000 houses have been completely destroyed, with a further 35,000 houses damaged. As is often the case, the poorest of the poor are the most affected – the most damage was to traditionally built buildings inhabited by poorer sections of the community, rather than the more earthquake resistant concrete framed buildings built by those with more funds.



Our agency INF alongside other local Christian partner agencies have been engaged in providing relief for those affected, supplying tarpaulins and tents, food packages and warm clothes, as well as healthcare, working closely with the municipality to prioritise the most needy. The services of Nepali INF Engineers may be used, once the reconstruction phase commences.

Please pray for

- the many families who will be living through the winter in tents and corrugated sheet shelters. IMMANUEL - God with us. We pray for this to become a known and understood reality for the tragedy-affected individuals.
- a continued and prayerful Christian community response to key social needs around them.
- the wellbeing and full recovery of Pastor Grishma's son, who is recovering from a heart operation (our former Pokhara neighbour and church pastor.)
- those assisting with rescue, recovery, and re-integration into society of Nepali girls and teenagers who have suffered from exploitation.
- staff and managers within INF, for energy, for vision, and for strategy, so that the organization will be effective and relevant for years to come.

It is my desire and prayer that all of us - in new, and maybe different ways - comprehend that God entered into the unpleasant, the dirty, the uncategorised, the unsolved, and the painful aspects of our lives and our worlds to be IMMANUEL, to be found among us, to be found with us.

Much love from us all, Toby, Pippa, Jakey, Ella, and Millie

NB As always, this is a much shortened version of Toby's letter. The full length version can be found on the BMS website, or you can read the paper copy available from the church office.

Wollaton Hall—Miniature Masterpieces Exhibition



You are perhaps like me and only visit museums on holiday? But last month I was amazed when visiting the exhibition of Dr Willard Wigan's micro-miniature sculptures in Wollaton Hall. The detail he can get into the eye of a needle is mind-blowing. The twenty sculptures are well presented to be viewed through microscopes and there is an interesting video of his life story too. The exhibition finishes in April. It is free (although you have to pay to park). Quite astounding. You can't quite believe what you are seeing. I recommend a visit. *Susan Bye*

About our Church

If you are new to the church or just visiting, you may find this page helpful.

You can expect a warm welcome and a friendly group of people of all backgrounds and ages gathering to learn more about God.

We meet every Sunday at 10:30am for our Sunday Service. During school term time groups for children and young people from 3 - 18 are held downstairs, with a crèche available for under threes. Stewards in the Welcome Hall will be happy to show you where to take your children.

The Shalom Fellowship meets on the first Sunday every month at 2.30pm for worship and teaching in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu.

Toddler Group meets Mondays during term time from 10.00am to 11.45am. Parents, grandparents and carers are warmly invited to bring along the children in their care to enjoy play and activities.

Renew Wellbeing Café meets Thursdays from 1.30pm to 4.00pm. Join us for activities, chat and refreshments.

For specific dates of the above activities please see the Diary section of the magazine. If you would like to get in touch with someone at the church office please use the contact details below.

Room Hire Different rooms are available for hire. Please contact the church office for details.

Phone: 0115 9604304 during office hours—Mon-Fri 9.00am-2.30pm

Email: admin@mrbc.org.uk

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A big “thank you” to all contributors this month. Please continue to furnish us with YOUR news, YOUR pictures, YOUR poem, YOUR story, any articles of interest to others. Please give to Susan Bye or Sharon Joddrell at church or post or send by email to susan@msbye.co.uk, to arrive by 15th February for the March edition

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Website: www.mrbc.org.uk