


Bethel Christian Fellowship



Vital Signs

December 2018





Christmas 2018 with Bethel Christian Fellowship

Sunday 2nd December - Children's Christmas Service, 3.30pm at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

Wednesday 5th December - Little Friends Toddler Group, 9.30am at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

Sunday 9th December - Christmas Cafe Church, 9.30am at Maltings Academy, Spinks Lane

Wednesday 12th December - Little Friends Toddler Group Christmas Party, 9.30am at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

Wednesday 12th December - Town Council Carol Service with music by the Bethel Band, 7pm by the Christmas Tree on Newland Street.

Thursday 13th December - Mince Pie Outreach, 1pm at The Well Cafe on Guithavon Street.

Saturday 15th December - Festive Songs & Fundraising for the Food Bank & Night Shelter, 7pm at the Bethel Building. Please buy tickets in advance, £4 pp from The Well or by emailing luke.taylor1236547@gmail.com.



Sunday 16th December - Bethel Family Carol Service, 4pm at Maltings Academy, Spinks Lane.

Thursday 20th December - Mince Pie Outreach, 1pm at The Well Cafe on Guithavon Street.

Sunday 23rd December - Sunday Morning Service, 10.30am at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

Sunday 23rd December - Christmas Service at Park View, 4pm at Park View Care Home, Kings Chase, Witham.

Tuesday 25th December - Christmas Day Family Service, 10.30am at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

Sunday 30th December - Sunday Morning Service, 10.30am at the Bethel Building, Church Street.

We look forward to seeing you!



Christmas Greetings from the Leadership Team
Chris Taylor (Pastor), David Cameron, Gary Fisher

To the dear folk of Bethel,

Unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given.
This Christmas may you know the love and kindness of
God our Saviour, who came to seek and save the lost.
Like the wise men of the story, may we seek Him and be
found in Him.



Happy Christmas. With love Gary and Shelly

To our dear friends at Bethel,

We pray that you will know God's blessing and
peace this Christmas.

Isaiah 9vs2 says "The people walking in darkness
will see a great light". Who can you share the
light and love of God with this Christmas?



With love from David and Mel Cameron

"He is the reason, for the Season"

Happy Christmas to all at Bethel and may this time
be a refreshing one as we focus on the birth of our
Saviour.



Love Chris, Suzy, Luke & Arran

THE GIFT (Colossians 1:19-27)

We refer to Christmas as the season of giving. Most of us try hard to find gifts that friends and family will like, but not all gifts are equal. Some gifts come with a subtle hint, like an exercise machine or a book about weight loss. Other gifts are those that the giver really wants for himself. But the best gifts come from someone who loves us and knows what we want.

This Christmas think about Christ's coming in another way. We know that Jesus was God's perfect gift to us (Romans 6:23), Jesus coming to earth could also be looked at as a gift that Jesus gave to His Father. Jesus loved His Father and knew that what He wanted more than anything else was for us, His creation, to be reconciled to Him. Through His incarnation, Jesus made it possible for us to be a holy and blameless present to God (Col 1:22).

Thinking of ourselves as a gift to God makes us want to be a present worth the cost, "fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (verse 10). God's highest gift should awaken our deepest gratitude.

From Our Daily Bread
Submitted by Brian Pease

*When life becomes challenging
Hold onto hope
In time pain will ease
Become bearable
You may not be the same person
Because of it*

*Acceptance is key
Don't be afraid
Reach out and ask for help
Remember you are never alone
Even when ebony skies cascade down
And you are so vulnerable*

*He will not forsake you
He cares unconditionally
He will send the Angels
To wrap you with love
You will be so joyful
Fit to burst*

*Release
Salvation
Peace*

*Challenging time
Hope
Reach out
Inspire those who
Suffer
Tainted with uncertainty
Messiah sends
Angels to
Save*

By Angela White



Braintree Area Foodbank Reverse Advent Calendar



Day One  Cereal 750g box of cereal	Day Two  Tinned Tomatoes	Day Three  Packet Soup	Day Four  Instant pack Mash potato	Day Five  Pasta Sauce	Day Six  Tinned Veg
Day Seven  Tinned Sponge Pudding	Day Eight  Tinned Meats <small>(hot and cold)</small>	Day Nine  Tinned Fish	Day Ten  Tinned Fruit	Day Eleven  Rice Pudding <small>(1x Standard Tin)</small>	Day Twelve  Bag of sugar (500g)
Day Thirteen  Biscuits <small>(1x small pack)</small>	Day Fourteen  Bag for Life <small>(to put the food in)</small>	Day Fifteen  Pasta (500g)	Day Sixteen  Tea / Coffee <small>40 bags/small jar</small>	Day Seventeen  Toilet Rolls	Day Eighteen  Fruit Juice <small>(long life 1 litre carton)</small>
Day Nineteen  UHT MILK <small>(500ml/1 litre carton)</small>	Day Twenty  Chocolate Bars <small>(Kit Kat/Penguins)</small>	Day Twenty One  Packet Custard	Day Twenty Two  Assorted Toiletries <small>(including toothbrushes)</small>	Day Twenty Three  A jar of Jam <small>(reduced sugar if possible)</small>	Day Twenty Four  Packet Rice (500g)



Merry Christmas



Donations for Witham Foodbank on the first Sunday of each month at Bethel. Food or cash accepted.

#foodbanksunday



Advent calendars have become big business! They have grown from originally just revealing a seasonal picture behind a door, to chocolate, and now to hidden beauty products and alcohol.

Instead of receiving a gift via an Advent calendar this year,

the Braintree Area Foodbank are hoping that you will give instead. Follow their *Reverse Calendar* and collect the item featured on that day to donate. You can download the calendar from their website and can also find on there the full list of places where you can donate aside from Bethel.



On behalf of all our visitors we thank you for your generosity.

We ask for small packs as larger packs do not fit in our boxes making it difficult for our clients to carry home. Also, we are unable (for hygiene reasons) to split large size or catering packs. We follow the standards set by the Food Standards Agency. We can only accept donations of unopened and undamaged goods that are still well within their “use by” date (no less than six months if possible). Items which do not meet these requirements cannot be used and your donation may be wasted.

Please be aware that the Foodbank warehouse will be closed 24th December so no deliveries or collections will be made on this date.

Please visit the website for more information.

www.braintreearea.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/winter-appeal/



"GLORY TO GOD AND PEACE TO MEN": (LUKE 2:14).

The Christmas story of God breaking into this world is both true and incredible. God taking on humanity is a story that speaks of God's glory and also speaks of a new peace that's given to the world. But it raises the question: How do I enjoy the Christmas peace of God right now, personally?

'Peace' doesn't simply mean the absence of conflict or animosity, but the presence of *joyful tranquillity*, and as much richness of interpersonal communication as you're capable of; a richness and sweetness, open, free, face to face peace.

The key is keeping together what the angels kept together - "Glory to God, peace to us". If you say "I don't have any interest or love for God - I just want the peace" then you won't get it, as you can't separate the two. God's purpose is to give you peace by being the most glorious person in your life.

Five times in the New Testament God is called the God of Peace. If you say "I want the peace, I don't want the glorious God; I want the peace but I don't want the sovereign Jesus", then you won't have the peace. He is our peace by being our God: the angels have it right. If we want peace to rule in our lives, God must rule in our lives.

So the key to peace is glory to God and peace to men, together. **A heart intent upon showing the glory of God will know the peace of God.** And FAITH holds these two together. Believing the promises of God that were bought by the blood of Jesus when He died upon the cross of Calvary. The Bible says in Romans 15:13: "*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing*". I don't think it could be much clearer.

Peace with God is foundational to all other peace. If you try to make peace with your mind and your heart, you may achieve

some brief superficial measures, but it won't last, especially into eternity. All peace inwardly and outwardly is based on the vertical experience of: Do I have peace with God? Is it open and clear between me and God? Are we friends? Another key Bible verse is Romans 5:1: "*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith [believing], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*". By being justified by faith, and trusting Him and all His promises to me, I gain peace.

Being justified means God declares me just, God declares me right, righteous, pure and acceptable. **In the pidgin translation of the Papua New Guinea Bible it says "God say 'Him okay'"**. How? It's through faith in Jesus, the Gospel, the Good News. When I believe in Jesus, I'm united to Him, and God looks upon His righteousness as mine. In spite of all my sins, God is my friend. This is the difference that it makes when

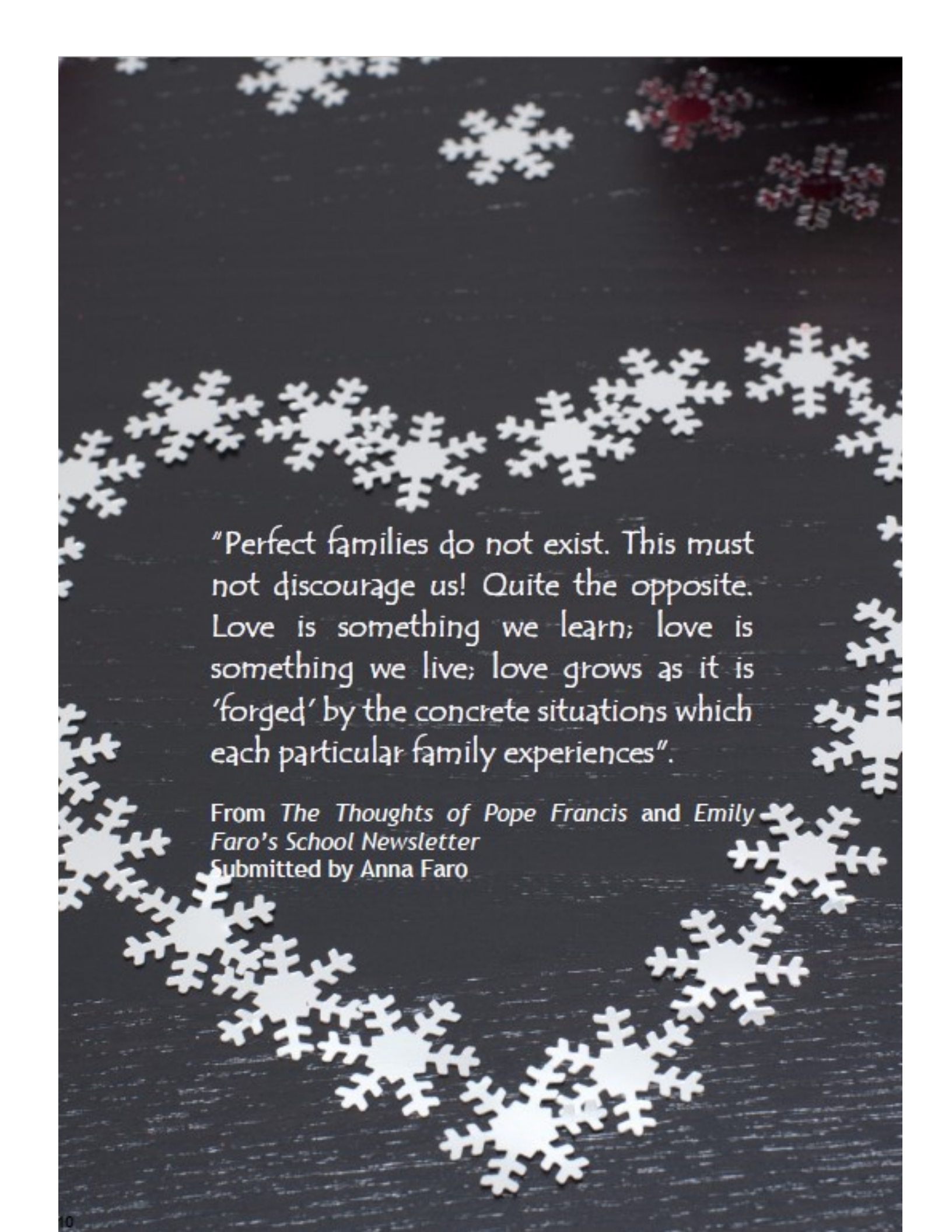
Christ comes into the world and dies for our sins. He provides our perfection - we believe, we trust Him and God says "Justified, peace".

Lots of people go to church over Christmas who don't usually do so. They're not necessarily interested in Christ, the Bible, salvation or justification, but Christmas peace with God is only through Jesus. It's not by our deeds, by baptism, by church membership, by being pious, or by parentage - it's by faith alone.

This is the core of our Gospel. Christ died in our place, Christ provided righteousness for us and Christ bore our punishment. He offers it to every single human being all year long - and it's received by faith alone. When that faith happens, we're united with Him, His righteousness is ours and we gain peace with God. And there isn't anything better.

Keith Taylor





"Perfect families do not exist. This must not discourage us! Quite the opposite. Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences".

*From The Thoughts of Pope Francis and Emily
Faro's School Newsletter
Submitted by Anna Faro*



The Well Coffee Shop,
1 Penhaligon Court, Guithavon
Street, Witham, CM8 1BQ
Open 10am-2pm, Mon-Sat

The Well at Christmas

Our new Christmas menu is now being served! Come and enjoy a ham, cheese & cranberry toastie or a brie, bacon & cranberry toastie for £3.75; or a cheese & cranberry toastie for £3.50. All served with crisps and a garnish.

We have mince pies, warm or cold, for 60p and with cream for 90p! And don't forget a warming gingerbread latte for just £2.00!

We look forward to seeing you up to Saturday 23rd December and once we re-open in the New Year on Wednesday 2 January 2019.

Mary, the mother of Jesus

Jesus is, of course, the central character of the Christmas story but Mary perhaps comes a close second. She was puzzled, surely shocked, when God's messenger appeared and greeted her as the 'favoured one of the Lord'. What could he mean? And the proof? She is to conceive and bear a son and call him Jesus who is going to be great and reign over an eternal kingdom?

Let us note Mary's reaction to this mind-blowing news. It's one of obedience and acceptance. 'Behold I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word.' The word 'servant' actually translates back to 'bondservant' or 'slave-maid'. We need to know that at that

time servants were not owned but were employees, paid and free to leave if they wished. Slaves, alternatively, were owned and thus could not just leave. Here is Mary equating herself as a slave of God: owned and still willingly serving.

Mary could not have known fully what she was submitting herself to in the future but she was still willing. Mary's example challenges us about the level of our commitment and how we would respond in times of testing when God leads us in paths we might not have chosen left to our own devices. Would we say 'Not me, Lord, I'm out of here' or, be with Mary, 'Let it be to me according to your word'?

Alan Battley

Christmas Greetings

To all in the fellowship. May love and peace shine down on you over this Christmas and New Year. From Paul Brooks.

Pat and Keith Taylor wish every member of our Bethel family a very blessed Christmas and New Year enjoying the special favour of God.

Christmas Blessings to New and Old friends,
from John and Mary Appleton.

We would like to wish all our Brothers/Sisters a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year, God Bless, Brian and Pauline Pease.

Merry Christmas to all our Bethel friends. Here's to a fantastic 2019. All our love and blessings, from Amanda, Pete, Poppy and Grace Harrison.

Happy Christmas and a very blessed new year to all at BCF. Emmanuel: God with us: good news for everyone! From Mary and Tim Pooley.

Gordon & Liz send their love, greetings and best wishes to everyone at Bethel this Christmas.

Bethel Christian Fellowship meets:

- * at 9.30am on the second Sunday of the month for a café service and
 - * at 10.30am on all other Sundays
- at
Maltings Academy, Spinks Lane, Witham.

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bethelwitham@googlemail.com
01376 520705
Facebook: @bethel-witham

Church office at The Well Coffee Shop, Guithavon St, Witham.