



BARKING BAPTIST CHURCH

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**Editor: Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex,
IG3 9DU.**

**E mail grahamhedges96@outlook.com or
clissecretary@gmail.com**

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Christmas is coming (in case you hadn't noticed) and we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus in various ways during the coming weeks. We will be holding our annual Christmas **Family Service** on **Sunday morning 15 December 2019** with our friend Pastor **Florin** from the **Genesis Church**, as our guest speaker. One week later, on **Sunday 22 December 2019**, we will be holding a **Carol Service** with our former member, **Mick Mednick**, as speaker. On **Christmas morning, Wednesday 25 December 2019**, we will be meeting for a service at 10.30. a.m. and **Fred Olabsi** will be speaking. Please note these details now and plan to be present as we commemorate the Nativity.

Plans are still to be finalised for a **New Year's Eve** service on **Tuesday 31 December 2019**, so please listen out for announcements of the details as they become available and plan to join us as we welcome in the new year of 2020.

CHANGE AT INSTANT APOSTLE

Manoj Raithatha, has taken up a new role as minister in training at the **Pinner Baptist Church** following a couple of years in which he has had pastoral and teaching responsibilities at our own church here in Barking. With the increased ministry and study commitments that this will entail Manoj is passing over much of the leadership of his **Instant Apostle** publishing company to his colleague **Nicki Copeland**. Nicki, who has spoken at our church in the recent past, has been with **Instant Apostle** since the earliest days and has been responsible for overseeing the publication and editorial processes. She also serves as a trustee of the **Christian Book Promotion Trust**, the registered charity sponsoring the **Speaking Volumes** scheme which gives grants to buy Christian books for libraries of all kinds. .

GOOD NEWS FROM SPURGEON'S COLLEGE

The **Office for Students** (OfS), the official regulator for the higher education sector, has accepted an application to register **Spurgeon's College** after an earlier rejection. The OfS had turned down an earlier registration application from the college over concerns about its financial viability. The college had feared that this decision would have created hardship for students because registration with the OfS is required if students are to be eligible to receive support from the **Student Loans Company**.

Spurgeon's College has been a training centre for Baptist ministers for the past one hundred and sixty three years during which time it has trained a number of past ministers of our own church. You can find more information at <https://www.spurgeons.ac.uk>

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HOME SWEET HOME

Recent additions to our church library include Jo Swinney's book **Home: the quest to belong**. You can read my review of this book on the **Evangelical Alliance** web site at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/book-review-home-the-quest-to-belong>

The author describes herself as a “*third culture kid*” who has lived in many different towns and cities in various countries and continents. Her book describes her struggles to feel at home in different countries, different cultures, different churches, and different workplaces. She also tells the story of King David who was a shepherd, musician, soldier and outlaw before fulfilling his destiny as King of Israel. **Home** is published by Hodder and Stoughton, RRP £14.99, ISBN 978-473648654.

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Recent events involving Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, have re-opened long-standing debates about the freedom of the press and the individual's right to privacy. As Christians we should defend the principle of a free press while recognising the right of people in the public eye to a degree of personal privacy. It may be that we have a special responsibility to support both the Royal family and the news media in prayer. You can read my recent article “*Some moments of privacy, please*” on the web site of the **Evangelical Alliance** at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/some-moments-of-privacy-please>

LEWIS AND ANTI-LEWIS

C. S. Lewis' classic children's story **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** has been adapted for the stage on several occasions and the latest version is currently being performed at the **Bridge Theatre, Potters Fields Park, London, SE1 2SG** where it will run until 2 February 2020. Lewis' story of four children who stumble into the land of Narnia through an enchanted

wardrobe can be interpreted in multiple ways and Sally Cookson's inventive production, first seen at the **Leeds Playhouse** two years ago, emphasises that this is a story about a family of evacuees confronting the perils of wartime.

Interestingly, the **Bridge Theatre** will also be staging a theatrical adaptation of **La Belle Sauvage**, the first volume in the **Book of Dust** trilogy by C. S. Lewis' great nemesis Philip Pullman. This is scheduled to run at the theatre between **11 July – 10 October 2020**. You can find more details about both productions, including ticket prices and performance times, on the web site <https://bridgetheatre.co.uk> or by telephoning 0333 320 0052.

RESOURCES FOR WORKING LIFE

Routed is the title of a new course developed by the **London Institute for Contemporary Christianity**, in co-operation with the student organisation **Fusion**, which is intended to help Christian students make the transition from college or university to the world of work. Over four sessions participants will discover that all of life matters to God, that we should be faithful in our work, that we should choose work wisely, and navigate change well. You can find more information on the web site www.licc.org

Thank God it's Monday by Mark Greene, (Muddy Pearl, RRP £9.99, ISBN 978-1910012574), has been published in a revised fifth edition. The author is LICC's Executive Director and this is a classic text on Christian faith in the workplace which is recommended as essential reading for all Christians in working life. You will find a copy in our church library.

CHRISTMAS READING

Earlier this year I attended **Christian Resources Together**, a retreat for members of the Christian book trade held at **The Hayes** conference centre at Swanwick, Derbyshire. One of the attractions of this event is the opportunity to meet well known Christian writers and to receive signed copies

of their books. At this year's event I was especially pleased to meet writer and broadcaster Brian Sibley. Brian is probably best known as the script writer for the BBC radio adaptations of **The Chronicles of Narnia**, **The Lord of the Rings**, and, more recently, T. H. White's **The Once and Future King**, but he has written books and radio scripts on many other subjects.

Brian's latest book is **Joseph and the Three Gifts** (Darton, Longman and Todd, RRP £9.99, ISBN 978-0232534160). The publishers suggest that although we are all familiar with Joseph from the Christmas story, and countless Nativity plays, for many he remains a shadowy figure about whom we know very little. Brian Sibley's story, imagined as it might be told by the archangel Gabriel, helps us to understand who Joseph was and the part he was called to play in the story of Jesus. **Joseph and the Three Gifts** follows Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to Egypt, and a return to his work as a carpenter in Nazareth. As the story progresses Jesus grows from boy to man to Messiah. The story also suggests what Joseph might have done with the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh presented to the infant Jesus by the wise men from the east.

Joseph and the Three Gifts is described by its publishers as "*a wonderful story for all ages*" which would make perfect reading for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter.



This issue of the Newsletter comes with best wishes and Christian greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

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