



Dear Friends,

It was US astronaut, James Irwin, who said, after returning to earth on Apollo 15 in July 1971 from having stood on the moon: “The most significant event in all the ages is not that human beings have stood on the moon, but rather that God as a human being has stood on the earth.”

Earlier in the morning on which I am writing this I took the infants’ assembly at Oak Lodge Primary School. I was talking about Advent Calendars and I asked the children what it was that Advent Calendars helped us to look forward to – a little boy in the Reception Class shot his hand up right away and (with far greater theological insight than I had anticipated in a five year old) immediately answered, “God’s birthday!!”

How right that little boy was, because Christmas is nothing less than the reality of the coming of God into the world in the human life we know as Jesus. The prophets of old anticipated that God would do something wonderful by coming himself to rescue his people:-

**“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: a virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel. (God with us)”
Isaiah 7:14**

I often remark about the mostly depressing news featured in the media, but in October the TV and newspapers helped the whole world delight and rejoice with the nation of Chile as the miners trapped underground for so long were rescued. The look of joy on the miners’ faces and the faces of their loved ones was wonderful as they emerged from the darkness into the light.

The rescue of the Chilean miners reminds us that without the light of God’s love in our midst though we walk on the surface of the earth rather than under the ground, we often still walk in darkness. This Christmas let us open our hearts to the radiance of God’s love for all humanity, shown in the Babe of Bethlehem, and walk in his light so that it may be reflected through us to the world.

**“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light
for unto us a child is born, to us a son is given.” (Isaiah 9:2 & 6)**

Whatever ‘darkness’ may be surrounding you at this time I pray that the light of God’s love, revealed in Jesus, will shine on you.

Marion joins with me in wishing you all a Christmas of joy and peace.

Shalom,



Secretary's Notes

Please come to **the AGM** on Tuesday 7th December to hear a review of the year's work and to find out who our **new Elders are**, serving for the next 4 years.

Christmas started rather early for me this year due to various reasons but at Emmanuel we are just getting underway. Our first Christmas event will be the morning Advent service on 28th November followed by Advent Praise at 6.30 pm on the same day which will be a CTWW united service. There will be carol singing in the High Street - part of the Christmas festival organised by local traders - on 3rd December. Our principal events in December events are as follows:

Sunday, 5th	10.30 pm	Our annual Toy Service and Parade for the Uniformed Organisations. Gifts for boys and girls and young parents, not wrapped, but paper is appreciated.
Saturday 18th	4 pm	Carols on The Green (see page 9)
Sunday 19th	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Family Festival Service (see page 11) Carols by Candlelight followed by refreshments
Friday 24th	4. pm 11.30 pm	No Coffee morning Crib Service (see page 10) Midnight Service with Communion
Saturday, 25th	10.30 am	Christmas Morning Family Service
Sunday, 26th	10 am	Morning Worship at ELMERS END (No morning or evening services at Emmanuel)
Friday 31st	10-12 noon	Usual Coffee Morning

We hope as many people as possible will join us to start the Christmas season in the best way. Leaflets will be put through local doors so if you see visitors at any of our services and other events, please make sure they feel welcome. Carols on the Green is a favourite one for local people.

Christmas Cards may be placed in the alphabetical racks or on the communal boards. Please make sure that individual cards have been taken by Christmas Day.

NB. The January edition of **Emmanuel Life** will be published one week later than usual ie, the 1st Sunday in January, not the last Sunday in December.

There will be no Church meeting in January but the Elders will meet on Wednesday 5th January.

Dawn Neighbour

Church Family News



We remember in prayer those of our members still experiencing health problems as we approach Christmas –

Jean Massbery is convalescing near her daughter Nina. **Harry** is back in Glebe Court. We send them our love.

Roy Hardy is waiting to hear of more hospital treatment, we remember him and **Ann**. Similarly we continue to uphold **Kenneth and Janet Hotten** as they await hospital dates.

We remember too **Doreen Packham** in hospital. **Evelyn Colbe** is back home after having a nasty fall while she was visiting relations in Northern Ireland, which left her with severe bruising and a broken wrist.

Please also continue to pray for **Isobel Williams, Audrey Grief, Doug and Dorothy Ross, Joan Green**.

We have heard that **Marion Arthurson** has moved to a new nursing home in Leamington Spa more in keeping with her needs and increasing lack of mobility. We send our love to Marion and her family. **We also send our love to all members and friends of Emmanuel living at a distance and those in care homes.**

Our sincere sympathy, love and prayers go to **Derek and Sue Richmond** on the death of Derek's mother, **Margaret**, a long standing member of Emmanuel. We also extend sympathy, love and prayers to **Betty Scadeng** on the sudden loss of her son **Iain**. Our hearts go out to Betty and Iain's wife **Valerie** and his brother **Andrew and family** at this time of bereavement.

It is with sadness we recently learned of the death of **Arthur Johnson**, who was a stalwart of our Friday coffee mornings. Arthur's humour and good cheer will be greatly missed; we extend our deepest condolences to his wife, **Pam and family**. His funeral will be at Beckenham Crematorium at 3 pm on Thursday 2nd December

We also remember the family of **Stella Harvey**, a former member, who died recently. Her funeral will be at Beckenham Crematorium on Thursday, 9th December at 2 pm

On a happier note we congratulate **Matthew Harris** of our Scout Group on being selected to represent the Scout District at the World Jamboree in Sweden in 2011. Matthew will be joining **Katie Lord** in this memorable adventure. I am sure we at Emmanuel will be happy to support both Katie and Matthew as they raise funds for their trip. *(continued on page 4)*

Last but by no means least it is with great joy we welcome the following friends into church membership on Advent Sunday, 28th November:-

Sue Beynon, Derek Jefferies, Ian and Mark Legg and Frances and Stephen Thornton.

“The Lord bless you and keep you.”

Women's Fellowship

After Half-Term we listened with rapt attention to **Mrs Marion Bowman**, who took us on her recent visit to the Holy Land making the numerous places and attraction on the tour come alive in the James Todd room.

The following week members brought objects and related stories beginning with **the initials V & U**. An amazing array of items were featured including Veil (as in Wedding) and the Victoria Cross.

One week on **Winston and Clementine Churchill** visited us by courtesy of Mr. Reg Coleman who gave us a most interesting talk about their lives from childhood to death.

During December we have just one meeting - on the 7th the **Kent Gate Women's Institute Choir** will entertain us once more.

Our regular meetings will resume on **4th January**. These are held at **2.15 pm on Tuesdays and all ladies are welcome to join us** .

Renée Bond

East Croydon United Reformed Church & South Norwood – Interim Moderator

The Revd. Chris Parker, minister of East Croydon URC and South Norwood URC, is moving in December to take up a new pastorate in Wigan and I have been asked by Synod to fill the role of Interim Moderator during the time they will be without a minister.

The primary role of an Interim Moderator is to guide the churches in finding a new minister. I am agreeable to assist with this and have the support and agreement of the Elders of both Emmanuel and Elmers End. I have advised Synod that my participation in leading worship and pastoral care in East Croydon and South Norwood will be minimal as my main priority is to EEFC and Emmanuel. This, I understand, they accept.

Thank you in anticipation of your support in this ministry to the wider church.

Bill



From the Treasurer

Extract of Accounts.

Enclosed with this issue of Emmanuel Life is an extract of our Annual accounts for 2009/10 and a forecast for 2010/11. Church Members should bring this extract with them to the AGM. The Statutory Accounts for the Year to 30th September 2010 are displayed in the Vestibule and Grove Entrance.

Freewill Offering and Envelope Scheme.

At this time of year Janet Knott is handing out books of envelopes for the Freewill Offering Scheme for 2011 to existing members.

Those who use the FWO envelope scheme help the church to forecast its income, and where a Gift Aid declaration has been signed it means that tax on giving can be recovered.

If you would like to join the scheme for 2011 please speak to Janet Knott or me. The scheme is administered confidentially and, although most people give a regular amount each week, there is no obligation to do so if circumstances do not allow this.

Freewill Offering 2011

Finally, you will note from the accounts that we are forecasting a decline in FWO for 2010/11. The work of the church needs to go forward, and any increase in weekly giving which you are able to make will be greatly appreciated and put to good use.

Thank you,

Ian Scott - Treasurer



Focus on Faith

December's Focus will be on Thursday 16th December at 8pm in the James Todd Room. As is traditional at our December meeting we shall have a time of refreshments and a light hearted quiz. If you have never been to Focus before this may well be a good time to start. You will be very welcome.

Advent Sunday 2010 sees the Vision4Life 'Year of Prayer' become the 'Year of Evangelism.'

Evangelism is a word which scares many people. Even in the church, it conjures up images of knocking on doors, 'a la the Jehovah's Witnesses' or massive rallies like those associated with Billy Graham. Evangelism is also often wrongly categorised along with Biblical literalism and fundamentalism.

The term evangelism comes from a Greek word meaning simply 'Good News.' The old English word for 'Good News' is 'Gospel,' derived from 'Godspell' as in the musical!! St Francis of Assisi told his fellow monks to "preach the gospel without ceasing, if necessary – use words."

That to my mind is evangelism; it is living your life in a gracious, welcoming and loving way in which the good news of God's love in Christ shines through to light up the lives of those around us.

Let us adopt with enthusiasm the URC's vision for evangelism this year and think how best we as a church and individuals can share the 'Good News.'

Bill.

Vision4 Life – Charter for evangelism

We share faith through the Holy Spirit.

We share faith with prayer.

We share faith in hope.

We share faith with joy.

We share faith in sharing our stories.

We share faith without guarantee of results.

We share faith by being vulnerable.

We share faith in different ways.

We share faith by affirming what we do already.

We share faith by encouragement.

December 2010 Services

(All services led by The Revd. Bill Bowman unless stated)

- 5th** **10.30 am** Parade and Toy Service *(Please bring a gift for needy families)*
6.30 pm Evening Worship.
- 12th** **10.30am** Family Service led by Mrs Jean Pogose
6.30 pm Evening Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Bryn Thomas.
- 18th** **4 pm (Sat)** Carols on the Green *(followed by refreshments).*
- 19th** **10.30 am** Festival Service led by the Junior Church and HYPER.
6.30 pm Carols by Candlelight *(followed by refreshments in the Richmond Hall).*
- 24th** **4 pm (Fri)** Crib Service *(followed by refreshments)*
11.30 pm Christmas Eve Communion Service
- 25th** **10.30am (Sat)** Christmas Morning Family Service *(Children, please bring one of your Christmas presents to show)*
- 26th** **10 am** Joint Family Service at **Elmers End Free Church**, Goddard Road, Beckenham BR3 4AD

“Our Greatest Need”

If our greatest need had been information
God would have sent us an educator;
If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist;
If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist;
If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer;
But our greatest need was forgiveness,
So God sent us a Saviour.

Dorothy and Douglas Ross would like to express their deep appreciation of the kindness of the church family during Douglas' illness and stay in hospital. Things are now getting better and we are delighted to be able to come to church more or less regularly.

Douglas and Dorothy



Christmas greetings from the Moore family!

Dear Friends,

“It’s a baby”

What better title for a Christmas play, and this is what the Junior Church at our church* is putting on in a few weeks time. Sourced from England (just like the hymnbook – yes we were surprised to find “Rejoice and Sing” in the pew racks!), but to be performed with a variety of accents both local, American, British and a few others no doubt.

It’s hard to feel Christmassy yet for us – not just the seasonal signals from the nights drawing in or the weather, but there’s very little hint in the shops even until the last couple of days. Maybe it will all ratchet up in the next 4 weeks! A cultural shock, like the many others we have had so far.

A big thank you to the many friends who have sent us messages by post or email in the last 3 months. It is good to feel in touch and cared for, even with many thousands of miles between us.

With our love and best wishes

Ian, Marion, Kieran, Heather

* See www.unionchurchhk.org

PS Marion is keeping a Facebook page going with a more regular flow of news if you are interested.



Churches Together in West Wickham – Café church

The date of the next meeting has been moved from Sunday 12th to Saturday 11th December at 6 pm in Starbuck’s in the High Street. The evening is entitled,
“Carols and Mince Pies.”



Carols on the Green

Join us to sing your favourite Christmas Carols by a warm fire outside, followed by hot drinks and mince pies inside.

at 4 pm on Saturday 18th December.

Everyone's Welcome

Bring your family and friends

Did you know that -

- Over 13,000 men and women work in the UK's toughest and most dangerous peacetime occupation; deep sea fishing.
- They face death and injury daily. On average 68 fishermen are killed or seriously injured every year and 25 boats are lost. *Mission port staff and volunteers provide emergency support and work to promote sea safety.*
- Many of the 50,000 retired fishermen and their dependants **live in hardship** with inadequate income, savings and large debt. *The Mission provides immediate material, emotional and pastoral support as well as providing expert guidance through the benefits' system and sourcing long term grants.*
- The Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen is a much needed Christian Charity. It is our Community Support Committee's chosen charity for Christmas. Half of Emmanuel's Christmas Day collection will go to it (the other half will be for The Leprosy Mission (see page 12).



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

Christmas Crib Service



Bring your pre-school children, friends and family to celebrate the joyful Christmas story told in nursery rhyme and familiar carols round the crib. Grown-ups are also most welcome. The service will be followed by refreshments.

**At Emmanuel, Friday,
24th December, 4 pm**

Burns Supper 5th February 2011

Preparations are well in hand for the second Elmers End and Emmanuel Burns Supper scheduled for 5th February 2011.

This is to give advance notice that tickets, priced £12, will be available from 1st January from Jennifer Scott (8777 6286). There is likely to be high demand for tickets which are restricted to a maximum of 96 for catering purposes, so to avoid disappointment please buy your tickets as soon as possible.

The evening will again be chaired by my good friend Bruce Tannock and the entertainment programme will look like this –

Address to the haggis - Bill Bowman

The Immortal Memory – Bill Bowman

Toast to the lassies – Charles Sebestyen

Response – Valerie Mackenzie

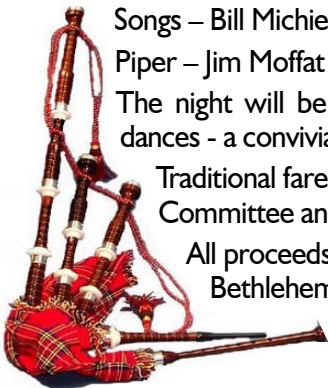
Songs – Bill Michie and Valerie Mackenzie (accompanist Cath Brown)

Piper – Jim Moffat

The night will be rounded off by a programme of popular Scottish dances - a convivial evening is guaranteed!!

Traditional fare will be prepared by the Emmanuel Catering Committee and HYPER and friends have agreed to wait at table.

All proceeds will go to the SOS Music Therapy Centre in Bethlehem where Palestinian children with severe learning difficulties are helped through music.



Bill



Sharing Christmas

Elsewhere in the magazine I have included the Vision4Life's Charter for Evangelism.

In this there is a 'clause' "**We share faith with encouragement.**"

With this in mind there could be no greater **encouragement** to our **Emmanuel Lights and HYPER** members and leaders than for your support at the **Festival Service on the morning of 19th December.** Those of you who recall last year's service on the theme of "Grandfather's Wigwam" could not help but be inspired by this thoughtful and uplifting adaption of the Christmas story into a Native American setting.

I have no doubt that this year's Festival Service will be equally memorable and be a source of great blessing to all. I **encourage** you to come along and support our young people and those who lead them.

Bill



Quest



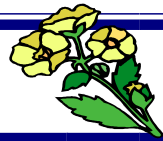
Quest meets on Wednesday 8th December at 2.15pm in the James Todd room when we shall enjoy seasonal refreshments and festive chat!! All are welcome.

From Valerie Scadeng.....

The Scadeng family would like to thank all friends at Emmanuel for the kind thoughts, cards and messages received on the death of Betty's son, Iain. We have been touched by the love and kindness shown to us during this difficult time. A special thank you to Bill for his care, love and prayers and for conducting the funeral and thanksgiving service.

Valerie

Church Flowers



Our grateful thanks for the flowers in November to:-

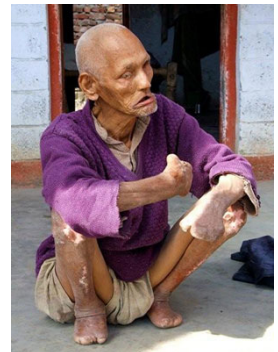
	Communion Table	The Grove Entrance
7th	Mrs. J Bacon	Mrs. L Sutton
14th	Revd. & Mrs B Bowman	Mrs. L Stock
21st	Mr. & Mrs. P Thomas	Mrs. J Knott
28th	Mrs. D Packham	Mrs. Renée Bond

Joan Green

Sally Richards, Audrey Castle and Joan Green wish to thank all those who contribute towards the flowers on the communion table and the Grove Entrance. Your generosity makes it possible to have flowers every Sunday. Any extra money that is given pays for the floral displays at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Did you know that -

- Leprosy vanished from Britain in 1798, but
- It is still an active disease for millions in the world,
- There are still some 600,000 new cases a year,
- If left untreated it destroys nerves, causes deformity, ulcers, incurable blindness and results in social exclusion in many countries,
- There is no vaccine but with the right medicines it can be treated or stabilised.



- The Leprosy Mission is a Christian charity with the aim of helping to defeat leprosy,
- Inspired by Christian love, it helps sufferers regardless of religion and ethnicity,
- It works with partners in 30 countries and brings hope, help and a future to millions of sufferers.

The Leprosy Mission is the Mission Committee's charity for this year. Half of the Christmas day collection will go to the Mission. (The other half will be for the Fishermen's Mission (see page 9))

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

Men's Fellowship



It was particularly heartening to see so many old scouts at our evening meeting in November when **Mike Gilbert** took us through the early days of scouting with an excellent library of projected photographs. Mike has been compiling this record for many years and, although it pre-dated the scouting service of our members, it certainly brought back memories of patrol camps in the rain and coming home with that ever-pervading smell of wood smoke.

Our speaker next month (14th December) will take us on a journey to another world when Peter Ayhurst will tell us of his experiences:

“On being a Test Pilot” in the James Todd Room at 7.45 pm for 8 pm.

This is an opportunity to hear about a job that stretches the powers of man's ingenuity and courage – remember: *all are welcome*.

We trust that all who came to our **Annual Quiz Night** in November enjoyed the evening and didn't suffer from an over taxing of their little grey cells. Eighty people joined in the quiz and the sum of £400 was raised on the evening. We would like to thank all who took part. **John Matthews**

From Margaret Outerson....

I would like to send all my friends at Emmanuel a very belated thank you for all the letters and cards I received with good wishes in my new home. It is lovely to receive Emmanuel Life and keep up with all the news. . Love and Best Wishes to all.

Margaret

From Joan and Maurice Green,

We would like to say a big Thank You to all our friends at Emmanuel for their cards and phone calls; we were overwhelmed by your kindness. Bill and Marion were so good with their visits to me in the PRUH after my fall and subsequent stroke that required an operation at King's College hospital. It was really nice to receive flowers from the church and sweets with a verse from the children. Also, thanks to Beryl Clinton and others who took on my various jobs - I'm most grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Maurice and Joan

Christmas in Scotland ?

I stumbled across this little gem of an American view of a Scottish Christmas on the internet.

I quote, "Christmas is not widely celebrated in Scotland. Some historians believe that Christmas is downplayed in Scotland because of the influence of the Presbyterian Church (or Kirk), which considered Christmas as a "Papist" or Catholic event. As a result, Christmas in Scotland tends to be a sombre affair.

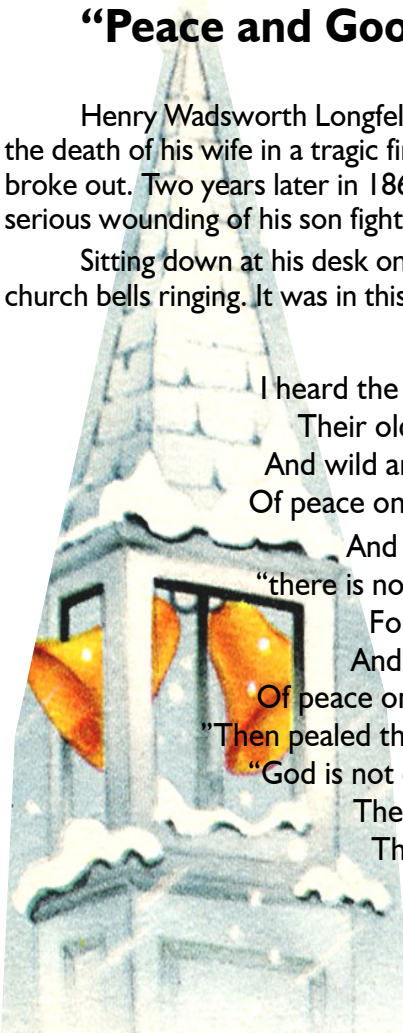
"Yeah, right!!!"

Bill

"Peace and Goodwill"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the American poet, was heartbroken by the death of his wife in a tragic fire in 1861, the year the American Civil War broke out. Two years later in 1863 Longfellow was saddened further by the serious wounding of his son fighting in the Union Army.

Sitting down at his desk on Christmas Day 1863 Longfellow heard church bells ringing. It was in this setting and background he wrote:-



I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet words repeat
Of peace on earth, goodwill to men!
And in despair I bowed my head;
"there is no peace on earth," I said;
For hate is strong
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth goodwill to men
"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep.
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fall,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth good will to men!"



Church Diary for December

1st	Wednesday	8 pm	Elders' Meeting
3rd	Friday	10 am to 12 noon	Drop-in coffee morning
5th	Sunday	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Toy and Parade service led by The Revd. Bill Bowman - see page 7 (coffee afterwards). Evening Worship led by The Revd. Bill Bowman
7th	Tuesday	2.15 pm 8 pm	Women's' Fellowship (page 4). AGM & Church Meeting (page 2)
8th	Wednesday	2.15 pm	Quest (page 11)
10th	Friday	10 am to 12 noon	Drop-in coffee morning.
12th	Sunday	10.30 am 12.30 pm 6.30 pm	Family Service led by Mrs Jean Pogose (coffee afterwards) . Lunch for those who live alone (see below) Evening Worship with the Sacrament of Holy Communion led by The Rev. Bryn Thomas. (page 7).
14th	Tuesday	7.45 pm	Men's Fellowship (page 13)
16th	Thursday	8 pm	Focus on Faith (page 5)

Lunch for those who live alone



Sunday, 12th December, 12.30 pm
To book phone Janet Thomas



Church Diary for December (continued)

18th	Saturday	4pm	Carols on The Green (page 9)
19th	Sunday	10.30 am 6.30 pm	Junior Church Festival Service led by the Junior Church and HYPER -page 11 (coffee afterwards) Carols by Candlelight led by The Revd Bill Bowman.(page 7)
22nd	Wednesday		Last day for items for January Emmanuel Life
24th	Friday	4 pm 11.30 pm	The Christmas Eve Crib Service (page 10) Christmas Eve Midnight Communion
25th	Saturday	10.30 am	Christmas Morning Family Service led by The Revd. Bill Bowman - page 7
26th	Sunday	10 am (note time!)	Joint Family Service at <u>Elmers End Free Church</u> led by The Revd. Bill Bowman. (No service at Emmanuel) - page 7
31st	Friday	10 am to 12 noon	Drop-in coffee morning



The Traidcraft Christmas Catalogue, featuring a wide range of products and gifts is available from the Traidcraft

stall in The Grove Entrance. The stall also offers quality coffees, teas, raisins, confectionery and more. Please help the underprivileged in the third world by buying Traidcraft goods.

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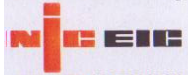


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