

Dumfries Baptist Church

Worship | Grow | Reach | Serve

December 2023

Outlook



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The angel said to him; "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard; your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John." – Luke 1:13

I love this Scripture verse and the part it plays within the Christmas story. In Luke 1:5-25 we are told about Zechariah the Priest and his wife Elizabeth. Zechariah was called by God to serve in the Temple to represent the people before God. He was a man who spoke to God about the people and then spoke to the people about God. Zechariah was grieved over the Roman oppression that he and his people suffered under and longed that they would all be set free. Zechariah remembered and believed the promise given through the prophets that one day the Messiah (the Promised One) would come and set his people free.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children, because Elizabeth could not conceive (v7). People within their culture would have viewed her as being a second class citizen. The gossip perhaps would be that she had done something terrible, committed some kind of sin in her past and as a result she had been cursed with barrenness. Zechariah was probably pitied by other men, shame brought upon him because his wife could not bear children. No doubt they had longed for a child of their own, a son, to carry on the name and to provide security for Elizabeth in case something happened to Zechariah and he died. Within their culture having a son would guarantee that Elizabeth would be looked after in her old age.

As a man and a Priest when Zechariah prayed in the Temple he would have no doubt prayed earnestly for a child, a son, but perhaps he had given up hope long ago and stopped praying this prayer (v18). His focus was wholly upon praying for a Messiah to come and deliver his people. Despite all the years of disappointment and heartache Zechariah and Elizabeth had remained true to God, both of them were upright in the sight of God, and observed all of the Lord's commands and regulations blamelessly (v6-7). Into this scene the Angel of the Lord appears to

Zechariah bringing good news; *"Do not be afraid, Zechariah, your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John."* (Luke 1:11-13). And what an amazing gift John (the Baptist) would prove to be (v13-17).

Zechariah's response is hardly surprising! How can this be? How can you be sure of this? There are definite echoes of another older couple here, Abraham and Sarah. The promise given to Abraham was that ALL peoples of the earth would be blessed through his faith; but how was this going to happen, since he and Sarah had no children? In their old age God gave Abraham and Sarah the gift of a son, Isaac, and so this made sure that the promise of God would be fulfilled through Abraham's offspring.

Little did Zechariah and Elizabeth realise that they were in on this great story of God's promise! Two answers to prayer! Their son, John the Baptist, would prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah! The Messiah would eventually come through Mary, Elizabeth's cousin. John the Baptist would be in part the

fulfilment of the words of the prophets Isaiah (40:3) and Micah (3:1) ... but of course Jesus would be the ultimate fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham. The angel of the Lord announced the Messiah's birth; *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for ALL the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord."* Isn't it just like God to give Zechariah so much more than he prayed for! Not just a son, but a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah.

With all that is going on within the lives of so many of our church family as a direct result of illness, cancer treatment, loss and bereavement let's hold on to this wonderful truth this Christmas from Luke 1:13... *"Do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard."*

Happy Christmas and every blessing for 2024.
With love,
Alistair, Lead Pastor



Family News

Congratulations...

... to Ron & Sheena Meek who are delighted to announce the arrival of their new granddaughter Isobel Catherine. She was born on 15th November to their youngest son David and wife Alex. Both of them are thrilled and getting used to parenthood.

Congratulations...

... to Kirsty Masters and Max Harrison who recently became engaged. They are living in Helmsley in North Yorkshire.



Congratulations...

... to Lorna Rideout and Sam Lumley on their engagement.



Congratulations...

... to Jennifer Weir and Daryl McLean who were married on 19th October 2023.



Congratulations...

... to Gus Traill on his big birthday! And to the three others who are celebrating big birthdays but are keeping it quiet, **Happy Birthday** to you all!

We extend our sympathy...

... to Craig & Colin Holmes and the wider family of Dolores Holmes who went home to be with the Lord on 30th November after a long illness. Dolores lived and died with these verses on her lips and heart: *"I remain confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."* Psalm 27: 13-14

Thank You...

... for all your prayers, messages, cards and gifts for John, before and after his recent operation. We are giving thanks for answered prayer!

John & Joan Thomson

Thank You...

... Christine and Liz Robertson thank all for their prayers, kind thoughts, cards and flowers on the passing of John, a dear brother and uncle. All much appreciated.

Thank You...

... to everyone for your prayers, cards and kind words given to me on the passing of my Mum. She was called home on Wednesday 11th October 2023 aged 94. *"Precious in the sight of*



the Lord is the death of His faithful servants." Psalm 116:15
"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21

Ruth Broadley

Prayer for Israel



Monday 4th Dec @ 3pm

Prayer for Israel group on Monday 4 December will meet in my house 41 Arrol place DG1 1 AF - Francis

★
For
unto
you is
born this
day in the
city of David
a saviour, which
is Christ the Lord.
Luke
2:11

Home-Start Dumfries



Being a parent has never been easy. It can be lonely, frustrating and over-whelming. Life changing events can happen to anyone.

Home-Start Dumfries is a local charity providing support to families in Dumfries with at least one child under five years, who are facing challenges in their lives. We carefully match trained volunteers who are either parents,

grandparents or experienced carers to provide weekly practical and emotional support to families in their own home environment through a confidential, non-judgemental and nurturing approach. We respond to the individual needs of the family, helping to reduce isolation and loneliness, improve mental health and wellbeing, encouraging engagement within the local community and help increase the confidence and resilience of families.

Home-Start Dumfries is affiliated to the national organisation, Home-Start UK, who provide advice and support and has a strong and thorough Quality Assurance review process ensuring the effective running of our scheme.

Home-Start Dumfries is responsible

for its own management and funding, run by a board of trustees.

Emily Hamilton is the Dumfries Senior Co-ordinator.

Home-Start are looking for donations of books suitable for 0-5 years e.g. touchy feely/sensory books and small games e.g. snap, UNO, Orchard games, jig-saws (for early years) as I'm creating a small library for our Home-Start home visiting volunteers to use when they go out on visits to families.



If you have any of the above that you no longer use, please contact Emily Hamilton on: 07500 631183 or email emily.hamilton@hsdumfries.org.uk

Christmas @DBC 2023

Saturday 16th December 10.30-2.30pm
Christmas Stall in Dumfries Town Centre

Sunday 17th December 10.30am Nativity Service
6.30pm Carol Service

Saturday 23rd December 6.15-8.15pm
All Age Family Fun Event & Carol Singing

Sunday 24th December 10.30am
All Age Christmas Eve Service
Christmas Morning Service at 10.30am

Sunday 31st December 10.30am
All Age Hogmanay Service

Dumfries Baptist Church Gillbrae Road Dumfries DG1 4EJ

01387 268926 | www.dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk | office@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk

What's on at DBCC?

The next three weeks will see the café very busy providing Festive Lunches. We are thankful to have such gifted staff and volunteers to help make each occasion special for the groups enjoying their lunch. Several of our regular bookers have chosen to have their group's Christmas Lunches here as well as other groups of friends, families and colleagues.

Next week we will have lots of excited children at each Toddler Christmas Party, along with a visit both times from Santa.

Calside Primary School are holding their Christmas Performance here

during the second week of December.

The Centre will close for bookings from the end of day Friday 22nd December to Thursday 4th January. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in making the Centre and the Café such a success this year. To all our volunteers who generously give of their time and talents ~ you are very much appreciated! To all our wonderful staff we thank you for making DBCC a place that people want to come to and we wish you a good, well-earned rest.



Happy Christmas!

Singalong Plus

Saturday 6th January

10 for 10.30am

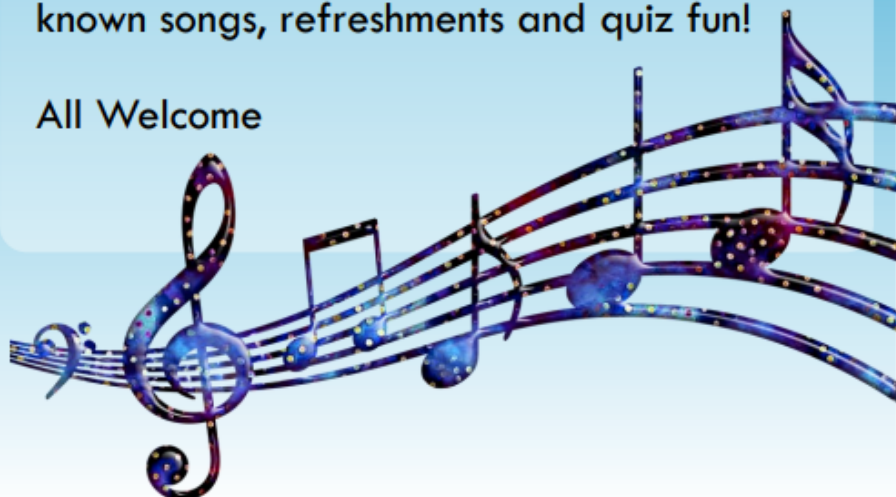
Avenue Rooms,

Dumfries Baptist Church Centre



Come along to enjoy singing some well known songs, refreshments and quiz fun!

All Welcome



Oasis

Bereavement
Support

Future Dates

1. **Lunch on Sunday 14th January 2024**
2. **Outing on Saturday 27th January** to Devils Porridge Museum at Eastriggs
3. **Lunch on Sunday 25th February 2024**
4. **Outing on Thursday 21st March 2024** to Edinburgh National Museum
5. **Lunch on Sunday 14th April 2024**
6. **Outing on Saturday 27th April** to the New Lanark Visitor Attraction
7. **Lunch on Sunday 26th May 2024**
8. **Outing on Saturday 1st June 2024** to Birdoswald Roman Fort, Lannercost Priory, Brampton
9. **Lunch on Sunday 23rd June 2024**

An Open Invitation

I'm not really a party animal, but there is one party I really do not want to miss. It's a very auspicious occasion - a huge banquet in celebration of a royal wedding - so it's a real privilege to be invited. You can read the announcement in Luke 14:16-24 and Matthew 22:1-14, and you're invited too.

With royalty present there is naturally a strict dress code, and anyone not conforming to the published dress code will be barred from attending. For instance, we have to be clothed with Humility, (1 Peter 5:5) but you can't buy that on the High Street. There are other required garments too, none of them a common brand, and all quite costly. However our host has promised to provide everything we need via his supply agent the Holy Spirit. In fact all the garments we need are available via the Holy Spirit, and here are some other garments we've been told we must wear: Mercy, Kindness, Meekness, Patience and Forgiveness. Colossians 3:12-14. We need Faith and a belt made of Truth, and the host has even specified footwear which is the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Ephesians 6:14-15. The most vital and important top-garment is Love. We are to request these necessary garments, and then put them on.

The host has also made it clear that there are things we must not wear - even underneath all these lovely garments which we do have to wear. Lying is a definite no-no; also bitterness, rage and anger, thieving, rowdiness, malice and bad language. Ephesians 4:25-31.

Guests will be pre-vetted for their behavioural standards. Fornication, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, seditions and heresies, envying, drunkenness and intemperance will not be tolerated.

What is required is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness, faith, meekness and temperance - Galatians 5:19-24. After all, the host wants this magnificent banquet to be a wonderfully joyful, happy and harmonious occasion for all. He wants everyone present to fully embrace the joyous festivities celebrating the royal wedding.

Surprisingly, many who were invited have turned down the invitation. Apparently some weren't interested or said they were too busy, while others had prior commitments which they felt were more important. The host is understandably very miffed to have had his wonderful invitation rejected, so he has thrown open the invitation to others. We can invite friends and family and anyone else we meet to fill the vacant spaces. In fact the invitation is open to anyone who will respond, provided they are willing to accept the dress code, and they'll need to be washed and cleaned up first of course.

We are to invite as many others as possible to come to this magnificent banquet so that all the seats will be filled. It is hugely exciting, so let's put out as many invitations as we can. And let's get "online" in prayer to gather and put on the garments we need to meet the dress code. It's going to be great! Revelation: 19:7-9

Richard Whiting



Keeping in Touch



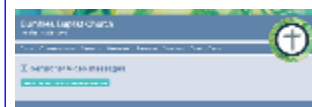
Email If you have given the DBC office consent to use your email address, we will keep you updated by email. If you are reading this and not getting emails from the DBC office, then please email:

office@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk and we will make sure you get a Data Consent Form to complete and return.




Telephone Please phone the DBC office if you have any requests for help, prayer or just for a chat!

The church office is staffed 9am – 1pm Mon – Friday. Tel: 01387 268926



DBC website
The past sermons

and video messages recorded for Sundays and Wednesdays are available from the Dumfries Baptist Church website <https://www.dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk/resources.html#sermons>

Morning Worship on Sundays is at 10.30 in the Auditorium and also available on the church YouTube channel at [DBCC Gillbrae](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBCCGillbrae). 

Discoverers meet each Sunday (in term time) during the morning service.

Evening Worship is at 6.30pm in the Auditorium.

Wednesday 9pm Short **evening reflections** are available at [DBCC Gillbrae](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBCCGillbrae).

The DBC Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/Dumfriesbaptistchurch/> You don't need to be a Facebook user to access this page online.

Links to the evening reflection and other messages are regularly posted on the DBC Facebook page.



Getting to know you - Amy Blair

Amy will be with us in Dumfries Baptist Church for two ten-week placements as part of her course at Tilsley College in Motherwell.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family Amy, please.

I am 18 years old and have lived in Motherwell most of my life.

My parents were Missionaries in the South of France for 10 years, where I was born. I left there when I was two and a half years old, and we came back to Scotland.

My younger brother also was born in France, but my younger sister was born in Scotland. As a family, we have gone through some difficult times together, e.g., health issues and several hospital trips (sometimes for extended lengths of time), however, we take great courage in that God has and always will be with us and won't leave us.

What hobbies and interests do you have?

Like my Mum and Dad, I love musical theatre, so I love to go to the theatre to watch a show but also to sometimes be a part of one as I like to sing, dance, and act. I love music and the impact it can have on people. My hobbies also include reading, crocheting, knitting, and recently embroidery.

How did you come to faith?

I was 4 years old when I decided to give my life to Jesus. My mum led me through a prayer after she had read the story of Jesus calming the storm because my dad had asked her to, since

He was on the Sea of Galilee. I have had a rocky experience with temptations, etc during my teenage years but I'm back on track and really enjoy finding out ways that I can best serve God.

What led you to apply for the Diploma course at Tilsley College?

I applied because I really enjoyed the first year of Tilsley, especially the practical aspect, and I really wanted to try out different ways I can best serve God and what He wants for my life. I enjoyed the classroom side also as it allowed me to dig a little deeper into God's Word and find out what it means and why it was put there.

Is there anything specific that we can pray for you now or in the coming months?

I am in the process of applying to a primary teaching course as I think that is where God is showing me I should be. I would really appreciate prayer for that and just that God's Will would prevail in this.

Also, I would appreciate prayer for my Mum and Dad. My Mum has had a difficult year, in and out of hospital for many different reasons, and

she is still recovering through physio and check-ups, so just that God would keep His healing hand on her and she would be reminded that God is there with her and is helping her. It's been a very tough time for her and the rest of my family. My Dad has been the one to take on most of the work for my Mum, hiring carers, etc., so just that, again, he would be reminded that God is with Him and that He will never leave Him. And that God would help Him with the stress of everything he has going on at the minute.

Amy Blair





There were about 30 Carol Singers in the end at the Loreburn Centre (above) - most from DBC and River of Life but a few from other churches too.



A happy time at Singalong Plus on Saturday 2nd December in the Avenue Rooms (left).



Contacts

Lead Pastor	Alistair Purss	01387 263032 alistair.purss@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk
Pastor	Eoghan Paterson	07926 731592 eoghan@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk
Church Magazine	Karen Miller	01387 710155
Church Office	Mon-Fri 9am-1pm	01387 268926 office@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk
Discoverers	Jane Rafferty	01387 268066
Elevate	Janet Derby	01387 268934
Encore	David White	07476379865
Friendship Hour	Chris Dewhurst	07473545994
Global Partnership Group	Barbara Mearns	01387 710031
Girlzone	Sharon Rossi	07739130934
Impact	Alison McKendrick	07752553703
Prayer Ministry	Eleanor Moss	01387 263994
Secretary	Lesley Mackay	01387 247456 secretary@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk
Toddler Groups	Heather McCombe (Mrs)	01387 253416
Treasurer	Ian Penn	01387 263242 pennnithsdale@supanet.com
DBC Youth Team	Alistair Wallace	07851145918 youth@dumfriesbaptistchurch.org.uk

Treasurer's Report

Total Monthly Income

September 2003 £26,648.97

October 2003 £36,939.16 (includes Tax Refund)

These figures represent the first third of financial year 2023/24 with income 40% budget and expenditure 30% of budget. The total Income was £123,387 (£6512 / week against a budget figure of £5400,/week). Expenditure during this same period amounted to £84,307 (£4683 /vweek against a budget figure of £5400 / week) . The income includes £8,090 for the "food parcel" ministry, which includes a grant, and expenditure £3910 for this work, a great example of outreach to the community

We continue to notice the effects of increasing costs for many items but particularly gas, electricity and water rates. The Operating Company is particularly affected by rising food and staffing costs.

If you already give regularly, or are considering doing so, and you pay income tax (as the vast majority of us do) you can "gift-aid" your offering which effectively means the church can claim an additional 25p for every £1 you give at no additional cost to you. This past year over £34,500 of our offerings were **not** subject to Gift Aid. Please prayerfully consider whether you can Gift-Aid your giving. You can continue to give weekly, monthly or directly through your bank. Please contact me if you want further information regarding Gift-Aid.

Ian Penn - Treasurer (01387 263242)

For
Unto
us a
CHILD
is born
Unto us a Son
is given, and the
Government shall be
Upon His shoulders,
and His Name shall be called,
Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Isaiah 9:6