



23RD & 30TH DECEMBER 2018

As I reflect and look back on 2018 in many ways it has been a difficult and challenging year, personally, for my family but for the nation as a whole.

I imagine most of us will be familiar with the old question "Is this glass half full or half empty?"



The danger for me is that the difficulties and challenges of life can cloud out the wonderful success and joyful moments that God provides and my focus remains on the struggles of life.

A friend was telling me about a recent trip to the Lake District and after walking some distance in the rain and mist the air suddenly cleared giving them a beautiful view of the mountains and lakes. The view had always been there but was hidden in the fog.

What a powerful image of the Christian journey of faith, the power, wonder and beauty of God is always there but so often the fog of life hides them from our view.

It is so easy to get caught up in negative thinking and negative talking, and this can be incredibly destructive not just to ourselves but also for those around us.

In Philippians 4:4 Paul says 'Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!'

In the UCB word for today this week I read this reflection on Philippians 4:4

Where was Paul? In prison! Who was Paul writing to? People outside the prison! Why did he repeat himself and say, 'Again I will say, rejoice?' Because we forget and lapse back into negativity so quickly. True joy is an inside job that's not subject to people or outside situations. Jesus said, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full' (John 15:11 KJV).

So as I reflect on the last 12 months at Emmanuel church we have much to celebrate. 14 baptisms in one day! New people joining the church with many incredible gifts and talents.

New ministry developing through the Elmsbrook church planting initiative, the Orpine Close missional house, Cherish women's ministry and the extending of our Chaplaincy work.

So whether your glass is half full or half empty this Christmas time remember to Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again,

'REJOICE'

I pray that you may know the joy and hope of Christ afresh this Christmas time.

Yours,

Ian Biscoe

ECB DIARY

23rd Dec	10.30am	Informal Communion Leader: Erika Biscoe Preacher: Ian Biscoe Reader: Sandy Addison Prayers: Katie Jenkinson
	7.00pm	Evening Service (café open from 6:30) ENCOUNTER Leaders: Chris & Autumn Hunt
24th Dec	3.00pm	Nativity Celebration
	4.00pm	Christingle Service
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion
25th Dec	10.30am	All Age Celebration
30th Dec		No services. Small Groups will be meeting at various venues. Church will be open for those not in groups who would like to gather.

2019

Tuesday Prayers re-start on 8th January

ECB Café re-opens on Weds 9th January

Oasis small group restarts Weds 16th January

NOTICES

CHRISTINGLE MAKING

Volunteers needed to join the “Christingle Assembly line” at 5pm on Sunday 23rd December. Speak to Debbie Winson for more details.

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES

Monday 24th

3pm Nativity (Children can come dressed up or use the costumes we have in church)

4pm Christingle

11.30pm Midnight Communion

Tuesday 25th December

10.30am All Age Christmas Celebration

BEN BISCOE- CHURCH PLANTING TRAINING OPPORTUNITY IN CALIFORNIA.

Please pray for Ben as he gets ready to go to America to learn about church planting from his former pastor (when they were both in Wales).

He has to be self-supporting as his visa doesn't allow him to be employed. Please talk to Debbie Winson or Rose Hunt to sign up for his newsletter and/or make a donation to him.

BISHOP STEVEN'S BLOG

The Bishop of Oxford has written a blog entitled “Let's Raise a Glass..” which recognises all the work done by those in churches around Christmas. It's well worth a read. <https://blogs.oxford.anglican.org/lets-raise-a-glass>

CAP MONEY COURSE

Starting on 17th January 10am –12 noon at the Salvation Army. A 3 week course to get your finances under control. See flyer for details.

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