


*...no I don't think you're the real Father Christmas!*
*I think you're up there pinching lead off my roof!!*

Romford
BAPTIST CHURCH

# Grapevine



**Family Magazine**
December 2026
and
January 2027
**No. 241**

## From the Editor

In this world of instant outcomes, we can become very impatient. Whether it's waiting for a bus or waiting for Christmas Day to open presents, eat dinner and see loved ones, it's not always easy. Waiting for answers to prayer might also feel like it's forever. Yet we are encouraged to wait for the Lord.

*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

Often, when we look back, we see God's goodness and presence with us in the difficult days as well as the seemingly straightforward ones.

As the song goes:
*In His time, in His time, He makes all things beautiful in His time*
*Lord, please show me every day*
*As You're teaching me Your way*
*That You do just what You say in Your time*

So, let's wait for the Lord to do it in His time. Be strong and take heart!

***Cheryl Schulte***

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|---|---|
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**Our purpose is to take the life-changing message of Jesus Christ to all, with the goal that they become his loyal disciples**

## Current Church Activities

**Monday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 12:00-2:00pm | Foodbank (donations can be dropped off at other times) |

**Tuesday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00am | Needlecraft Group |
| 10:30am | Amaze Adults |
| 2:00-3.30pm | Treasure Times |
| 7:45pm | RBC Worship Team meet |

**Wednesday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00-11:30am | Parent and Toddlers |
| 12:00-2:00pm | Foodbank (donations can be dropped off at other times) |
| 12:45pm | Prayer |
| 7:45pm | Wednesdays at RBC |

**Thursday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00am | Thursday morning Life Group, alternate Thursdays (please call church office for dates) |
| 11:00-3:00pm | Holiday at Home – for over 65s, usually termly |

**Friday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00am | Craft Group in the Meeting Place |
| 7:30-9:00pm | Youth Club (Years 7 – 13, term time only) |

**Sunday**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10:00-10:20am | Powerhouse prayer |
| 10:30am | Morning Worship in the building and online |
| 6:00pm | Evening Worship in the building and online |

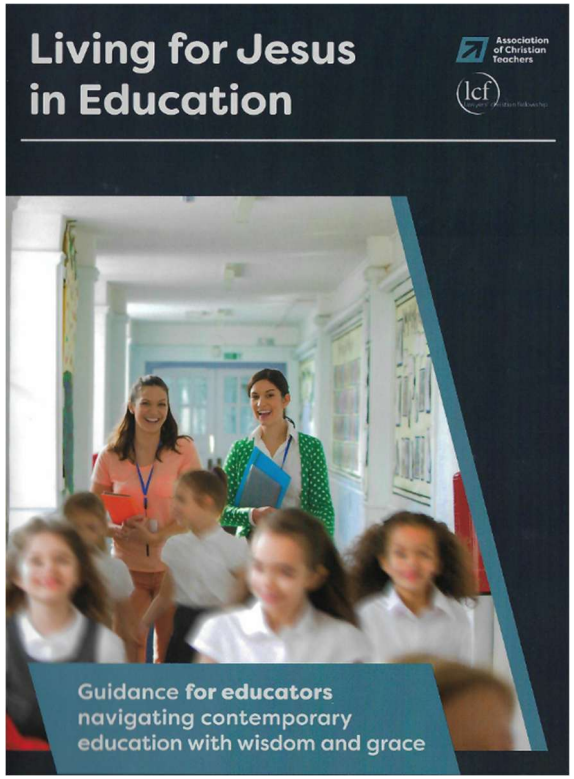


If you have any regular church activity which you would like to have included, please let the editor know.



## Living for Jesus in Education

Wherever you serve in education – as a teacher, teaching assistant, leader or governor – this guide is here to help you navigate what it means to live out your faith authentically and serve Jesus faithfully in your context.




"There is arguably no greater calling than educating the young but has there ever been a more challenging time to be in school? This new ACT resource provides encouragement, sure ground and wise counsel for Christian teachers everywhere as they navigate these challenges and work through how to be a winsome Christian witness in their workplace. As an ACT member myself for many years, simply knowing I was not alone in this endeavour was itself inspiring and I commend ACT for their steadfast commitment to supporting Christians in education." — *Caroline Ansell, Former Member of Parliament and Education Select Committee Member.*

This guide is recommended by Barabra Gatherum; for more information speak to her.

# Pastor's Page

## The Story of Our Lives

Something that seems to be gradually disappearing from many communities is the local library. Once, it was a place where you could go to discover information, browse the reference section and look up almost anything. Remember the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*? Today, it has largely been replaced by the likes of Wikipedia and the vast resources available online.



There was also the fiction section, where you could borrow a book, settle down and lose yourself in a story, escaping for a while into the world created by the author. Although not all libraries have closed, they seem to be becoming increasingly rare.

As we approach Christmas, we are reminded of another story. It is a familiar one, but one that has the power to transform lives. Unlike the stories found in the fiction section of a library, this is not a work of imagination. It is the account of God's intervention in human history.

As we hear again the story of the angels, the shepherds and the baby born in a manger, we are challenged to make space in the busyness of our lives, not simply to hear the story once more, but to allow it to become central to our Christmas celebrations.

As we welcome the Christ Child into our Christmas celebrations, may we also welcome Jesus into our hearts as Saviour and Lord, not just for the Christmas season, but for the whole of our lives. After all, **Jesus is not just for Christmas!**

I have a dream of another kind of library. Not one filled with books, but one made up of people. Each person has a unique life story, shaped by experiences, relationships, joys, sorrows, challenges and discoveries. I love listening to people's stories. They are fascinating, often surprising, and always worth hearing. If only we took more time to listen!

Your life is one of those stories. But have you ever stopped to consider what others might see as they read the pages of your life? What would stand out? What would they discover about the things that matter most to

you? Would they see someone whose life has Christ at its centre?

As we journey through Advent and celebrate Christmas, perhaps this is a good opportunity to reflect on our own story. Will welcoming Jesus afresh make a difference to the next chapter? Will others see something of His love, grace and compassion in the way we live?

**The Christmas story is not simply a story to be remembered; it is an invitation to be lived.**

May Jesus be at the centre of your story, this Christmas and in every chapter still to come.

**Revd Ian Bunce**
**Team Leader**

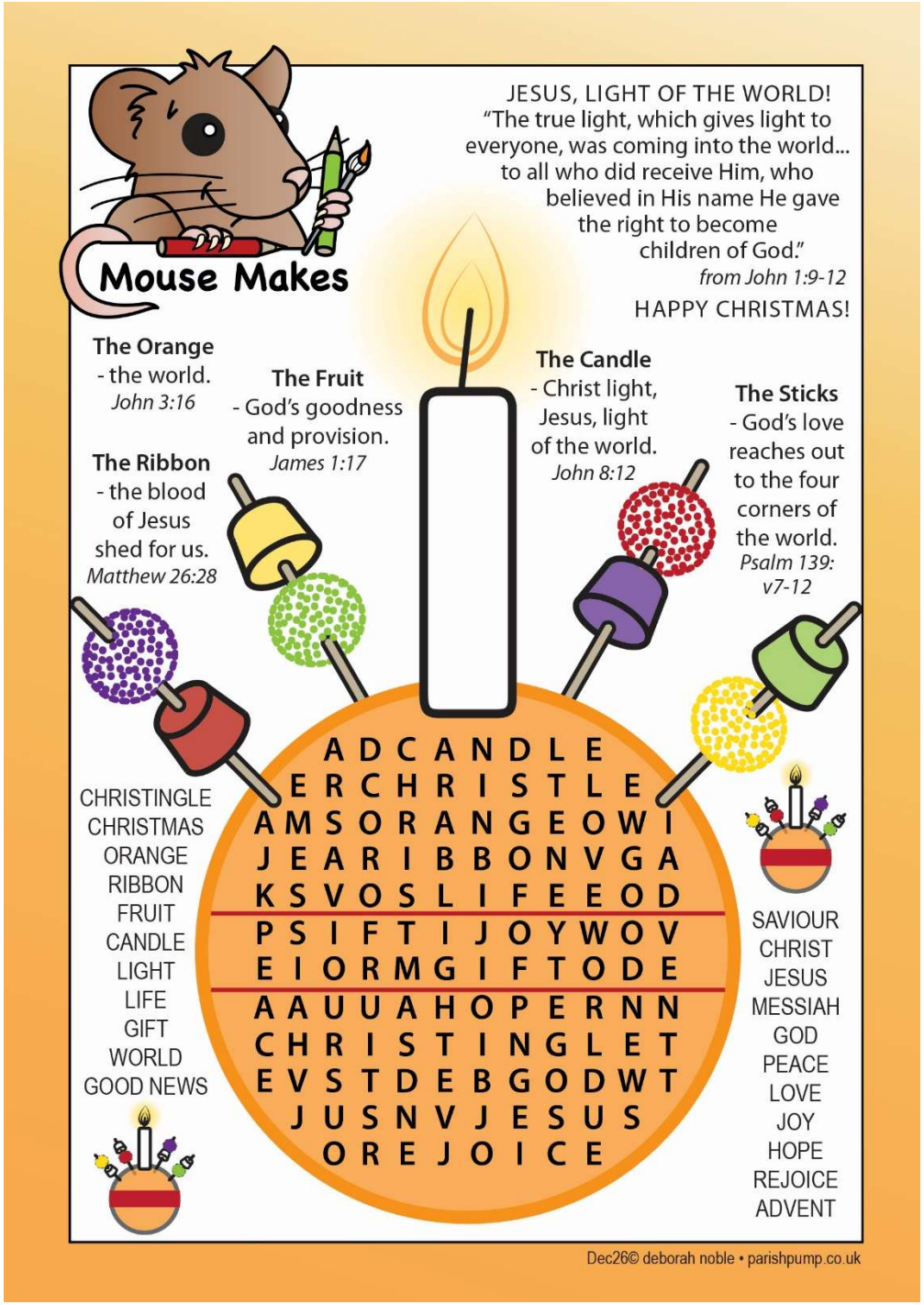
## Ethical Fashion

Firstly, let's talk about clothes – we all wear them, but do you ever wonder about who made them? With UK adults spending £162 billion on clothing each year and around 300 tonnes of clothing ending up in landfill or incinerated, where we buy our clothes and how it impacts people and the planet is an issue of creation care and justice – themes that underpin the work at BMS World Mission.

Behind every label we wear are millions of people known to God: garment workers paid too little to live on, working long hours in unsafe conditions, with little power to challenge either. BMS World Mission have recently launched their Ethical Fashion Guide and Brand Checker which brings that reality into the light and shows what can be done about it. The Frequently Asked Questions section about Ethical Fashion on the BMS World Mission website gives further insight into the topic. https://bmsworldmission.org/ethical-fashion-faqs

You can find the Brand Checker at https://bmsworldmission.org/ethical-fashion. It allows you to see the overall scores of many brands, based on human rights monitoring, policies, tracing, worker empowerment and environmental sustainability.

So next time we go shopping, we can make a difference by thinking about the impact on others and the environment, and by becoming wiser and more informed shoppers.



After all, I'm not supposed to be the same as everyone else if I follow Christ. Romans 12 verse 2 says

*"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will"*

I repented of things I knew were not from God. I believed His forgiveness.




But moving on was hard, especially when I couldn't forgive myself. It's funny how I can wholly believe God can forget repented sin but I can't seem to let go of it for myself. Once again, God's wonderful promise was revealed to me:

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!*
*Isaiah 43: 18-19*

Every now and then I have to hit the reset button. Some things are easier to recognise and discern as I follow along God's path and grow as a Christian. But I know I'll never have it all sorted. I always try to go back to God's guidance. It's hard in this day and age when so much sin is 'normalised'. But I try to remain focused on the teachings of Christ – pressing 'reset' when I need to.

*Sarah Jenkin*

## Membership news

**4 October 2026**



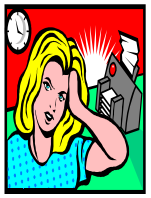
Chisom Ogbechie was officially offered the right hand of fellowship as she was received into membership today.

**25 October 2026**



Yetunde and Idowu Owoyemi - prayer - moving on from Romford to Eastbourne. They have been part of the church for over 10yrs.



**The <u>deadline</u> for the February 2027/March 2027 edition of the Grapevine is Sunday 10 January 2027**

Please give any items to Cheryl Schulte, or email them to Cheryl at:

**grapevine@romfordbaptist.org.uk**



## BMS BIRTHDAY SCHEME

### Birthdays December 2026

1st Christine Wright




### Birthdays January 2027

5th Anne Barnes
16th Grace Bello
25th Janet Loveard



## Missions

Open Doors have been running a global campaign called “Arise Africa” for the past few years. Millions of Christians face violent persecution for their faith in sub-Saharan Africa; on average, 12 Christians a day are killed for their faith in the religion. Millions have been driven from their homes by violence and conflict.

The Open Doors staff globally have worked hard as they brought a petition to completion. This will be handed into the UK government on 12th November, into the UN on 10th December and many other governments in the coming months.

Please pray:

- African speakers who are travelling to different countries around the world to speak to petition hand-in events. Pray for safe journeys, smooth travel arrangements, and God’s provision at every step.
- Local partners, as they work under considerable pressure to co-ordinate the speakers’ travel and ensure they reach they destinations. Pray for wisdom, endurance, favour and grace as they manage the many logistical details involved.
- The speakers’ message and impact. Pray that the Lord will prepare each speaker and speak powerfully through them, giving them wisdom, clarity and courage as they share.
- The petition hand-in events, that God will use these opportunities for meaningful engagement and lasting impact.

*Rianna Standard*
*(Mission Secretary)*

## Smile Lines

**Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus**

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw pictures of their favourite Bible story. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent. "The Flight to Egypt," was her reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: "That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?"

"Oh," explained Kate happily, "that's Pontius - the pilot!"

## Restore Factory Settings

Have you ever had to reset an electronic device because things in its system were scrambled? Or it wasn’t working properly, no matter what you did or pressed? I find it so annoying when I lose valuable information. Then there’s the problem of having to find my way around that device again and recovering files or phone numbers because the reset has changed everything around!

About 30 years ago, I had to spiritually ‘reset’ my life. Although I never lost my faith, I had drifted so far away from God’s standards I was running into all sorts of bother. I tried to rationalise my decisions and sort things out on my own, but I knew in my heart things just weren’t right. I didn’t have peace.

That’s when the Lord spoke to me in a personal and powerful way. He told me He saw past my sin and saw the real Sarah. He didn’t condone my behaviour, but assured me of His unwavering love. Rather like the adulterous woman in John chapter 8; Jesus showed compassion and told her to ‘sin no more’. He showed me that I would only have inner peace if I followed His way. To all intents and purposes, I looked like I had everything in my life sorted; ticking along nicely. But only God and myself knew my innermost feelings nobody else saw.




I listened to God’s loving, patient voice and gradually ‘reset’ my way of living and thinking. It was hard. Habits I’d formed over a long time were difficult to break. I prayed daily and went back to God’s Bible truths. I needed to see His way again and get rid of all the lies and rubbish in my head which had become so routine and ‘normal’.

I kept tripping up. It wasn’t an overnight change in behaviour – but it was an overnight change in attitude and desire. Slowly I relinquished harmful behaviours and I felt God gently convict me in areas which needed changing and resetting. I found myself actually praying that God would put that little voice in my head when there were behaviours which were not in line with His will. I found myself purposefully asking Him to show me. I wanted things to be different. Once I understood that He prompted me only through love, His advice was much easier to accept.