

# FAITH MATTERS

## New Year, New Life, New Hope

Many people couldn't wait to see the back of 2020. It was a year of lockdowns, rules, isolation and for many heartbreak. Some families have lost loved ones far sooner than expected, or been separated in an attempt to prevent infection.

Others have lost their income as furlough gave way to redundancy, whilst the self employed have seen their businesses disappear. Yet within it all there have been stories of God's faithfulness, grace, mercy and provision. As a fellowship we have seen God's faithfulness first hand.

We have entered 2021 and once again find ourselves 'locked down'. Yet is with confidence that we enter 2021, confident that our God is more than able to see us through the coming year. We have a hope that is steadfast and sure.

Every Blessing

EPCS Leadership Team

## Keeping in touch

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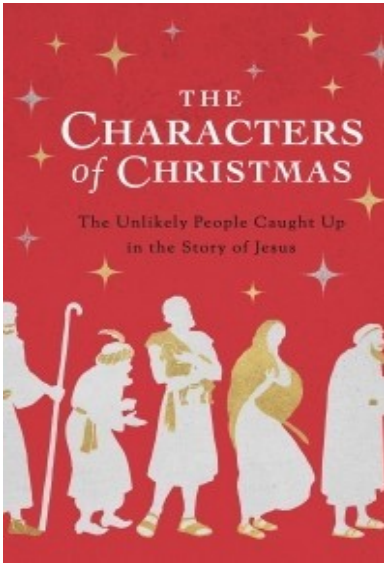
YouTube Sunderland Elim



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## The Characters of Christmas

During December, we continued to consider the characters that feature in the Nativity. In 'The Characters of Christmas', Daniel Darling invites us to take a fresh look at the Nativity through the ordinary characters who represent each of us so well. In our Reflections on Wednesdays, Granville shared with us 'The Song of the Angels'. On Sundays, we have considered the Innkeeper, Shepherds, Wisemen and King

Herod. We thank Tracy, Louise, Luke and Granville for their ministry during December. Please note our Sunday Services are available on YouTube and Facebook. Podcasts of our sermons can also be found on our website and mobile app. For those without online access there are CD's of the sermons and daily devotions available. If you or someone you know would like one please get in touch.

## *Praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest"*

### Current Programme

#### Sunday

11am Live streamed on Facebook

12noon After Service Catch Up Zoom.

#### Wednesday 7.30pm

Alternating between Prayer Meeting and Reflections

#### Mon to Fri

Daily Devotions (Facebook Page)

Daily Verse (Text)

Please get in touch for more details

**Angels** (Luke 2:13-14) We cannot step into any of the incarnation narratives without running into the angels. The angel Gabriel first appears to Zechariah then a few months later to Mary. Twice an angel was sent to reassure Joseph, and a heavenly host hovered above a shepherd's field. Angels didn't just announce good news. They were also sent to protect the baby King from an illegitimate and ruthless king. An angel redirected the Magi's journey home and came to Joseph with instructions to escape to Egypt. Angels were created by and for Christ (Col 1:16). Spirits that do not die (Luke 20:36), they can don human form, and seem to have emotion, intellect, and will. They advocate, protect, make war, announce, teach, comfort and guide. But mostly, they worship the triune God.

The angels were witnesses to God's creation of the world, watching in wonder as the Trinity forms the universe with his spoken word. They watch this beautiful world turn dark as Eve believes Satan's lie. They know their God and they watch to see how his glory will be revealed. They watch in wonder as God unfolds history. So they announce to Zechariah, Mary and Joseph, flood the earth with celebration to the shepherds and warn the Magi. They rejoiced and sang because the incarnation reveals God's glory, His love, His holiness. Can we adore our God as we turn from war, poverty, racism, disease, violence knowing that all our days are being gathered by God as he gathers history to himself.

## All Age Quiz Night

On Wednesday 30th Dec, we held a family quiz night. via Zoom. It was great to be able to get together as a church family and have some fun. Below are a selection of the questions. How well can you do?

### Around the World

1. Which of the following is considered poor etiquette in Japan?  
Offering a gift with two hands, placing your chopsticks upright in your food or taking off your shoes before entering someone's home
2. What is the name of the river in Sunderland?  
Wear, Near, or Tyne
3. In which country is the number 4 considered unlucky?  
China, Mexico, Iran
4. In which country does nodding the head up and down mean 'no' rather than 'yes'?  
Bulgaria, Russia, Thailand
5. What country has the most time zones?  
Russia, China, France

### Through the Decades

- 1912 Which ship famously sank after hitting an iceberg?  
1922 Which ancient Egyptian pharaoh was dug up?  
1935 What country invaded Ethiopia?  
1948 Who was assassinated in New Delhi in 1948?  
1959 What became the 50th U.S. state?  
1961 Who was the first person to go into space?  
1972 What city hosted the Summer Olympics in 1972?  
1983-85 What country had a famine that killed over 400,000?  
1997 In what city did Princess Diana die?  
2005 'Me at the Zoo' was the first video to be shown on which social media platform?

### Guess Who



Answers next month

### Angels we have heard on high

Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly swinging o'er the  
plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains

[Chorus]

Gloria In Excelsis Deo  
Gloria In Excelsis Deo

[Verse 2]

Shepherds why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains pro-  
long?  
Say what may the tidings be  
Which inspire your heavenly  
song?

[Chorus]

Gloria In Excelsis Deo  
Gloria In Excelsis Deo

[Verse 3]

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him Whose birth the angels  
sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the new-born  
King



## Foodbank Update

December was a very busy month for the Foodbank with 127 food packages being sent out. In total we helped feed 180 adults and 139 children. We received donations from several companies, organisations and churches. We are particularly thankful for the support of Father Andrew and the congregation of St Ignatius Church who throughout 2020 brought not only food but financial support. Every Thursday we receive a delivery from Fareshare of fresh and fro-

zen items including meat, fruit and vegetables. The administrative cost of this is being covered by Sunderland County Council (£100/month) and we have just been informed that this will continue for the rest of 2021.

Through this initiative we have been able to provide our clients with a more nutritious diet which will impact their overall health. Thank you to Chizenga who has joined the team allowing us to reopen on Tuesdays.

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*“If you can’t feed 100 people, feed just one.” Mother Teresa*

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### God’s Word

#### **Isaiah 58:10**

Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon

#### **Matthew 4:4**

But Jesus told him, “No! The scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’”

## Upcoming Events

**Visiting Speakers:** This Sunday we have Debbie Bullock sharing God’s word. John and Debbie Bullock pastor the Elim Church in Newcastle. John will be sharing with us in March. Paul Hudson will be speaking on the 14th Feb .

**Limitless One:** Friday 12th Feb 8pm till 10pm

An opportunity for young people from across the nation to come together at the same time for LIMITLESS ONE ONLINE, followed by a week of exploring spiritual practices as we learn to follow the way of Jesus together.

**Elim Digital Conference:** Weds 17th Feb 9am—9pm

Together we will navigate how to effectively communicate and connect with people online in the digital age of 2020s

**Really Good News:** Elim’s outreach campaign. During March 60sec daily testimonies will be posted on Facebook for you to share with friends. Please encourage them to join the Good Friday and Easter Sunday Services (am and pm). On 21st April we will then be starting an online alpha course running until 7th July

Please let us know if you want to be part of the team as training is Wed 3rd March 7.30pm - 9 pm

## Reflection: The King and The Kingdom

We all look forward to the time when lock down ends and the restrictions are lifted but we need to consider how we as a church respond to the times in which we find ourselves. With that in mind, our Wednesday evening 'Reflection' has commenced a series called "THE KING AND THE KINGDOM", taking Matthew's Gospel as the basis for our study.

Matthew's gospel is written for and with the Jewish people in mind. He takes great effort to appeal to the thinking and mindset of the Jews. He commences in Chapter one of the gospel to show the babe, born in Bethlehem, is the longed for Saviour and Messiah. He who was promised by God, through the prophets, to be of great King David's family line is Jesus.

The Nation had been invaded and overrun numerous times since David and at this time were occupied by Rome. They had broken up the nation into areas ruled by Governor's and puppet Kings, of whom Herod was one. The people longed for the promised deliverer, Messiah and King to set them free and drive out the Romans. They looked for a king riding a white stallion and leading an army but Jesus came in the words of the prophet "behold thy King cometh to thee, meek and sitting upon an ass, the foal of a donkey" Matthew 21:11 & Zechariah 9:9.

Matthew throughout the gospel shows Jesus demonstrating and preaching about the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus teaches that the kingdom is not about land or country, but about the rule and reign of the King in the hearts and lives of His people. The song writer Ira Stanfield sums it up beautifully in these words;

He did not reign upon a throne of ivory  
But died upon the cross of Calvary  
For sinners there He counted all He owned but loss  
And He surveyed His Kingdom from a cross

Chorus

A rugged cross became His throne  
His kingdom was in hearts alone  
He wrote His love in Crimson red  
And wore the thorns upon His head

The study is not about **religion**, but **relationship**.

Week One: Knowing **who** the King Is and knowing Him **personally**.

Week Two: The ongoing battle between the Kingdom of **Light** and the Kingdom of **Darkness** and knowing **which Kingdom you're in**.

We have a battle to fight and a kingdom to bring in here and now not just in the sweet bye and bye!

Come and joins as we study The King and The Kingdom, you'll be blessed and challenged.

### Build Your Kingdom Here

Come set your rule and reign in our hearts again. Increase in us we pray, unveil why we're made. Come, set our hearts ablaze with hope, like wildfire in our very souls. Holy Spirit, come invade us now. We are your church. We need your power in us.

We seek your kingdom first, we hunger and we thirst. Refuse to waste our lives for your our joy and prize. To see the captive hearts released, the hurt, the sick, the poor at peace. We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause. We are your Church, we pray: revive this earth.

Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray

Unleash your kingdom's power, reaching the near and far. No force of Hell can stop your beauty changing hearts. You made us for much more than this, awake the kingdom seed in us. Fill us with the strength and love of Christ

We are Your church  
We are the hope on earth

## A Selection of January Daily Verses

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart from generation to generation.

Psalms 33: 11

Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass unless the Lord has commanded it? Lamentation 3:37

Who of you who by being worried can add a single hour to his life  
Matthew 6:27

In speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.  
1 Timothy 4:12

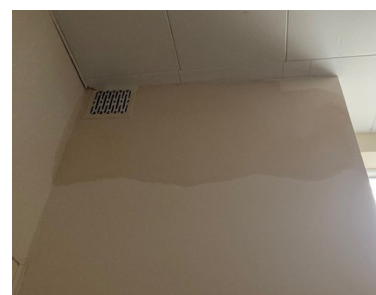
## National Day of Prayer.

On Thursday 7th Jan we gave thanks to God for the foundation of Elim formed on that day in 1915. The day was marked by a National Day of Prayer. Between 7.30am and 8am there was prayer and communion led by Paul Hudson with a prayer and worship service in the evening. Both are on Elim Pentecostal Churches Facebook Page and YouTube



## The Church Building

As you will know our church building is rather old and for many years there has been limited resources. A damp patch at the rear of the building has worsened and some skirting boards are beginning to rot. We consulted a damp specialist and various issues have been identified. Structural issues are re-



ferred to the management board at Elim Headquarters. We have submitted numerous reports, documents and quotes and it was an agenda item at last week's meeting. They are requiring further comments and will report back to us as soon as possible. The following are cost ranges connected to this. 1)Replacement of rear roof (above offices) £8,000 - 12,000. 2)Replacement of corroded wall ties and repointing of rear wall £2000—3200. 3) Drylining of chimney breast £2500

Additionally the heating system requires some attention regarding a longstanding issue that has never been fully resolved. We are in consultation with British Gas engineers and will provide further details at a later date. Estimated remedial cost currently is £3000.

The lights in the red carpeted room have not worked for many months due to water damage. Now that the section of the roof in that area has been repaired, we have engaged the services of an electrician. The kitchen lights have been replaced and work is ongoing in the red carpet room.

The Lord has entrusted his building to our stewardship, so please pray for wisdom for the Leadership Team, Management board etc.

## Finance

Dec and Jan combined: Income £6992.45 Expenditure £3274.28.  
Currently we are not paying a salary thus will be able to put any excess finance towards the building. Can we please ask that you prayerfully consider your giving? Some of our members have set up standing orders for which we are thankful. If you are a member or regular attendee and are not giving currently due to not being able to attend, could please get in touch so we can look at alternatives. We need to know what resources we have to cover the salary of a new minister. This is not a lack of faith, as we can testify to God's provision in 2020, but rather wise stewardship.

“For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?”  
Luke 14:28

## Children's Church and Sunday Youth Church

What an amazing month December has been. We counted down to Christmas together, with our Advent calendars. On Sat 12<sup>th</sup> December, we had a wonderful Christmas Service in church. Many of our families were able to join us. We had some socially distant fun, seat games, heard testimonies, listened to a bible story and enjoyed worshipping our Lord by writing prayers, playing instruments and dancing. We were able to share our digital Nativity to celebrate Jesus birth with everyone in church and watching online, on 20<sup>th</sup> December, in the morning service. Our children were amazing and we are very grateful for the support our parents have continued to show us.

In SYC, we enjoyed a fun-packed Christmas Quiz with our young people over Zoom and we continued our teaching

online with videos through our WhatsApp groups this month. We studied similar Christmas topics to Church, including Advent, Zachariah and Elizabeth, No Room at the Inn, the Magi and ended the month with Simeon and Anna.

In our Children's Church WhatsApp group, we studied Mary and Joseph's story, the shepherd and angels' story, No Room at the Inn and completed December with the Magi's story; accompanied by worship videos from Emma and Lauren. Our children and young people each received activities bags and small gifts to help keep them engaged over the Christmas holidays. Please continue to pray that our Lord gives them His peace and protection.



Elim Pentecostal Church  
Sunderland

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We passionately believe that God has a plan and purpose for you He loves you and wants you to come to know him through Jesus. We are a Christian community for all generations and nationalities.

We would love to hear from you too, so please send in any news, stories, prayer requests or praise reports.

Thank You..

## And Finally..

Two friends were walking through a desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt. However, he did not say anything, but wrote in the sand, "Today my best friend slapped me in the face".

They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath since it was really hot. Suddenly, the one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning. The other friend saved him without hesitating. Once recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone, "Today my best friend saved my life".

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "When I slapped you, you wrote it in the sand and now, you have written it on a stone! Why?" The other friend replied, "When someone hurts us, we should write it down in the sand where the winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we should engrave it on a stone so that no wind can ever erase it."

Elim Pentecostal Church  
Sunderland

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