



WINTER NEWSlink

Keeping you in touch with Emmanuel Church, South Croydon

3,500 copies distributed throughout the South Croydon area

Winter 2011

Issue No.17

CENSUS BETHLEHEM



O little town ...

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to his own town to register. And so Joseph also went ... to Bethlehem the town of David.”

The scene in the carol ‘O little town of Bethlehem’ is still and sleepy. In reality the town was probably not like that. Partly in response to problems of insurgence and unrest, Caesar ordered everyone back to their home town to pin down who, what and where people were. They were uncertain and violent times.

Just like the ancient world we survey towns and measure our population. The last census for England and Wales was on 27 March 2011 and involved around 25 million households.

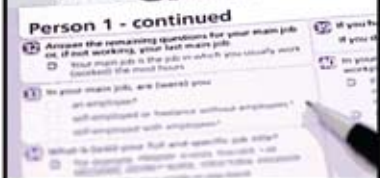
21st century communication connects us in ways the ancient world cannot have imagined. Online access to census returns, and celebrity TV shows, feed our interest in where we come from - ‘Who do you think you are?’

Two thousand years after Caesar’s census, we still have difficult questions about how we should live, how we should run our economy, how much tax should we pay?

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CENSUS 2011 - 25 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS

to complete your census questions



‘All for Jesus - Jesus for All’

visit us: www.emmanuelcroydon.org.uk

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A Tanzanian Christmas



Sue, Simon, Hannah and Jasmine French left Emmanuel to live in Karatu in Tanzania, East Africa. They help people who speak Swahili and Datooga to understand the Bible in their own language. Tanzania borders the Indian Ocean, between Kenya and Mozambique. It is one of the poorest countries in the world but also very beautiful, famous for Mount Kilimanjaro and the Serengeti National Park.

They write...

For us Christmas Day will start with opening a few gifts at home and breakfast. Then it is a two hour drive on muddy roads to a rural church. The roads, which have no tarmac, are likely to be muddy as Christmas falls during our rainy season. Last year we stopped en route to tow a car, which had slid into a ditch.

Unlike the UK there are not many carols here in Tanzania but Christmas services involve lots of joyful singing in Swahili and some of the local tribal languages. After the service we will meet with other believers in a neighbouring home and enjoy a meal of beans, spiced rice, beef or goat stew and bananas. Tanzanians in our area tend not to give Christmas presents but Christmas is great time of celebration and families getting together.

In 2010 the Christmas service we attended was a double celebration as it was the first time the mud brick church building was used, as you can see from the photo the roof was not quite finished.

We will get home around six in the evening when we will probably enjoy some time around our 'Christmas tree' which will be a branch broken off a local Acacia thorn tree decorated with some decorations from the UK plus some home-made ones too.

DRESS REHEARSAL

Script written
On a train.
Checked, amended
Twice again.

Cast pondered,
Asked a few.
Bagged the tech team-
Vital crew!

Planned rehearsals -
Booked our slot,
Learning words now,
Such a lot!

Building props -
What do we need?
Dust off 'Stable',
That's agreed!

Costumes sorted-
Quite amusing!
(Some of them were
Jennie's choosing)

Trying to find
The perfect song
For angel's entrance
Takes so long ...

Quite excited
Should be fun!
Something here
For everyone.

Come and join us,
Grab a pew.
What our service
Needs is YOU!

Details of the Christmas services can be found on the back page. This poem is inspired by our Christmas Eve All Age Carol Service.

Blackout 2011

“The letter in the mailbox contained a simple, chilling message: Leah’s family were known as ‘Christian Dogs’. They must leave Baghdad within 48 hours, or their house would be blown up. It was no idle threat. Leah and her family had to leave their home, all they had known, and start a new life in the north”.

In August we received a challenge from the organisation Open Doors to ‘Blackout’ in support of people like Leah, and the millions of Christians around the world who are persecuted for what they believe.

So, on the first weekend of November the young people of Emmanuel came together and camped out in church, and ‘blacked out’ from their mobile phones, their



Facebook and Twitter accounts, the internet, and their games consoles.

On the Saturday, instead of sitting at

home using our phones, surfing the ‘net and playing video games – we had a great time cleaning up the streets around the parish, collecting 15 black sacks of litter in just over an hour (including a fifteen year old can of Lilt!), and playing board games and eating cake with the residents of Villa Maria nursing home.

We also held a ‘secret service’ in church on Saturday evening to remember and pray for those people around the world who, the very next day, would be coming together and holding secret worship meetings.

By Mike Rutt and Ali Kidd

WHO ARE OPEN DOORS?

Open Doors is active in over 50 countries, supplying Bibles, leadership training, Scripture-based literacy programmes and support for Christians suffering for their faith. And we want to continue to encourage the church here to play its part: that means not only responding to the needs of the persecuted church, but also learning from their experience of what it means to follow Jesus.



Open Doors
Serving persecuted Christians worldwide



Musician and midwife!

The birth of a child is often a happy event. Many women have a trouble free pregnancy, but sometimes there can be problems and some women need more support.

Linda Penn is a member of Emmanuel and her passion is helping pregnant women who have mental health issues. These women can easily feel stigmatised and as a specialist midwife Linda supports them so that they can access the care they need while they are pregnant.

For nearly 25 years Linda has worked in Beckenham and



Penge as a Community Midwife. As well as looking after mums and babies when they are born, either at home or in hospital, she has provided ante-natal and postnatal care, giving advice on baby care and parent education.

As a busy mum herself Linda also finds time to play flute in the services at Emmanuel which she attends with her family. A keen musician she also plays in the Croydon Symphony Orchestra and with the Militaire Orchestra, playing at the Mansion House and Guildhall in The City of London.

Linda has always had a special interest in caring for women with mental health issues. In September 2010 she became a specialist "Named Midwife" based at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough. This job gives her responsibility for ensuring all women who are cared for by the Trust are safeguarded from harm and their welfare promoted.

"My job is important to me" she says "as it allows me to



hopefully make a difference and to ensure the safety of the mothers and babies that we care for."

If that's not enough Linda also trains and supports other midwives and professionals who identify women with complex needs, such as those with severe mental health issues, those who have experienced domestic violence, or drug and alcohol problems.

Linda trained as a nurse at Guys Hospital, London before specialising in midwifery. Currently, she is doing a 3 year MA course in Safeguarding at Greenwich University.

Town Centre Chaplaincy Project, Croydon

Life can be stressful especially around Christmas and the New Year. For many people it can all feel a bit of a disappointment.

Having someone to talk to in confidence can make all the difference and to support the local community the Churches in Purley and Kenley set up a town chaplaincy. Members of the team visit local shops,

offices and businesses and spend time in the town. They are available to talk with anyone, to care and to help. They can always be identified by their purple fleeces and badges.

Building on this local success a new six week training course, run by the Associate pastor of Purley Baptist Church Pam Bryan, has been extended to Croydon churches. A group of

people from Emmanuel have joined the course.

The aim is to roll out the Chaplaincy Project to the centre or Croydon. Local Churches are working with the Town Center Manager to find a shop where the new Croydon team can be based. Details will be on the Emmanuel website once the shop becomes available.

Emmanuel Team out-bowls Mayor

Family Learning Week runs annually as part of a national campaign to promote Family Learning and parental engagement, for which Croydon has won numerous national awards over the last ten years.

Events take place during the week across the borough in a wide range of venues, from schools and children's centres to libraries, youth centres and community venues, as well as the major focus in the centre of Croydon over the weekend.

This year, the youth and children's teams from Emmanuel were asked to be a part of the exhibition in the Whitgift Centre on the Saturday.

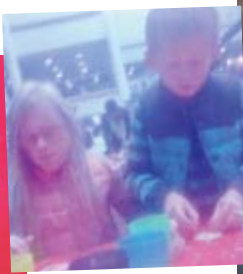
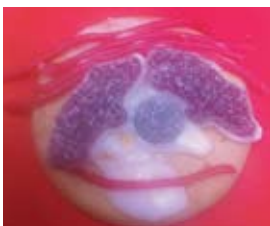
So, on a warm October morning, we decamped from Emmanuel and set up our stall in the middle of the Whitgift Centre. Once set up, we met, chatted, and spent time with around 350 young people of all ages (and their parents) from all over the town and got them decorating biscuits (we had to make four trips to refresh our supplies during the day!), making friendship bands, designing badges and trying to beat Mike's (pathetic!) score



on Wii bowling – 2 young people spent the best part of 4 hours trying to beat the highest score.

Some of the highlights from the day included the Mayor popping into the stand and having a go on Wii bowling (he failed to beat Mike's score), and the look on the children's faces when we told them that they could do whatever they wanted and wouldn't have to pay for it! It was a fantastic (and exhausting) day, and the team were very excited to have met so many people from the local area.

We're already looking forward to next year!!



POP Service: Mobile information & advice for the over 50's

Everyone needs information, support and advice at some time in their life. The POP Service is a mobile team that brings together specialist advice for people over 50, or those caring for someone over 50.

Emmanuel's Community Action Team is pleased to let you know that:

The Croydon POP Service will be available in the Emmanuel Church Hall on Rockhampton Road and you are welcome to come on Wednesday 18th January 2012 between 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

The POP service offers:

- Free, specialist advice from experts working together
- Clear and simple up-to-date information
- Time to start to chat about what's bothering you
- An opportunity to consider options for the future
- Advice on healthier lifestyles

Details can be found at: www.croydonpop.org.uk

Puzzling Questions

'Mum, where do babies come from?'

Children have a knack of asking the most awkward questions at the most awkward times! Sometimes their questions are timely and insightful: 'So why do people watch the X Factor?', 'What exactly are MPs for?' Sometimes their questions are difficult to answer: 'What are black holes for?' 'Where's heaven? I can't see it in the sky.' And sometimes their questions are just plain embarrassing: 'Why is that woman so fat?' (Usually said in a loud voice in a public place, leaving me feeling like I'm in a real-life episode of Outnumbered...)

Of course it isn't just children that ask awkward

questions. At certain times in life we may find ourselves asking some difficult questions. When life changes because of a birth or a death, when we're unwell, when a relationship ends, when we lose a job, we can be provoked to think about some of life's bigger questions. But voicing those questions can sometimes feel embarrassing or uncomfortable.

In January Emmanuel are running a short course called 'Puzzling Questions'. We're hoping to create a space for people to discuss some of life's difficult questions – without feeling embarrassed. The course lasts six sessions and looks at the following questions - **Who am I? If there is a God, what does**

he/she look like? What happens after I die? How can I be happy? Why is there suffering in the world? What does it mean to be spiritual?

The sessions will run on Monday evenings from 7.45pm – 9.45pm. They'll begin with a meal, we'll then watch a 40 minute DVD that explores the question, and we'll end with some informal discussion (and hopefully a lot of laughter too!)

The course will run on January 16th, 23rd, 30th and February 6th, 20th, 27th.

If you'd like to know more about the course please email bridget@emmanuelcroydon.org.uk or ring the church office on 020 8688 6676.



Heads up!

'So tell me about yourself' I say. 'I'm 21!' he says with a grin, 'and my wife said please don't tell them you're an Essex boy!' He's an Essex boy born and bred.

I'm sitting in the office of Paul Thomas, the new Head teacher at St. Peter's School. His office tells you a lot about him – the walls are filled with family photos, pictures and mementoes of the schools where he's worked, and of course all the Chelsea FC memorabilia. He's a lifelong Chelsea fan, a subject which comes up several times during the course of our conversation!

Paul studied education at Brighton Poly, and then moved to Croydon in 1988 for his first teaching job. Since then he's held a number of posts, most recently as Head-teacher at Victory Primary School in Elephant & Castle. Paul's always taught in challenging schools, so St. Peter's is a bit of a change for him – though he's keen to stress that this role is still challenging, but just that the

challenges are different.

When I ask Paul about his vision for the school he tells me he wants it to be an 'outstanding school at the heart of the community'. He talks with passion and pride about his staff and pupils, but is also clear that there's still a lot of work to be done. He'd like to see the curriculum developed and broadened so that it gives children the skills that they need for the future. He'd also like to improve the school's library and ICT suite, as well as opening up the school to the wider community.

It's pretty clear that the school's changing – the big yellow diggers on site are a sign of that! Paul explains that over the next five years the school is expanding from a one form entry to a two form entry. Work has already begun on a new two storey building, and the existing building will also be improved and upgraded. The work is due to be completed in the summer of 2013, and Paul is confident that it will help the school to



fulfil its potential to be an outstanding school. In the mean time he's looking forward to getting stuck in to his new job, and to building further links with the local community, including the church.

I finish by asking him which living person he most admires. He thinks for a minute and then says 'Pele', with a smile. Did I mention that he's a football fan...?

Interviewed by Bridget Shepherd, Curate at Emmanuel and school governor St Peter's.

WEDDINGS, FUNERALS & BAPTISMS AT EMMANUEL

Weddings 2011

16th July - Benjamin Peterson and Emma Rees

6th August - Andrew Brown and Judy Solomon

Funerals 2011

20th July - Joan Swabey

5th August - Irene Burton

3rd Oct - Norman Bellwood

7th October - Olive Uwins

13th October - John Reeder

21st October - Tom Butlin

Baptisms 2011

17th July - Luke Webster

7th August

- Oliver & Amy Scott

14th August

- Isabella Veiga da Corte

28th August - Jasper Coxe

11th September

- Saffron Ridgway

25th September

- Lucy Heath

20th November

- Molly Gordon

For more information about weddings, funerals or baptisms at Emmanuel call our office on: 020 8688 6676.

O little town ...

Continued from front page

The Christmas story stands the retelling. It is not set not in a lush, opulent, royal palace but in the community on a stable floor. Thousands of years later, this birth has something important to say about how we live.

To Herod at the time, the birth was a major worry and he feared being overthrown. Spooked and outwitted by a set of eastern Wise Men, he ordered all the boys under two in Bethlehem and its vicinity to be killed. Joseph fled to protect the child. Sadly, Bethlehem was not the peaceful town centre described in our beautiful carol.

Emmanuel Church is a



YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN OUR CAROL SERVICES

community of Christians who meet in South Croydon. As usual this Christmas we will simply tell the Christmas story as it is. It's surprisingly gritty and unglamorous when you listen to it. You are welcome to turn up, join in the carols and celebrate with us. No registration or form filling required!

In this issue of Newslink you

will hear from people who live and work locally. In page 4 we interview a local mum who cares for pregnant women with mental health issues. We hear from young people at Emmanuel who spent a weekend without mobile phones, internet and games consoles, to find out why see page 3.

OUR SERVICES

If you don't already join us at our services, you are most welcome to visit at any time. Three services are held at Emmanuel every Sunday. It's a special time that we'd like to share with you.

9.30am All-age service - A lively, informal all-age service, using the best in modern worship songs. This service has crèche facilities and children's groups available.

11am Morning service - A more traditional service of worship, teaching and prayer with psalms, some of the best modern hymns and biblical preaching relevant to everyday life.

6.30pm Evening service - A less formal service that includes contemporary worship music, relevant biblical preaching and prayer ministry in order to help people engage with God.

Holy Communion - Services of Holy Communion are held on the first and fifth Sunday of the month at 9.30am, on the second and fourth Sundays at 11am, and on the third Sunday at 6.30pm.

8.30pm Evening Prayer (2nd Sunday of the month) - A time for stillness and reflection. A short service (30 mins) for prayer, reading, silence and meditation.

Messy Church - A fun, informal, noisy and very popular service for 3-8 year olds and their parents, grandparents and carers. At 3.30pm 2nd and 4th Monday of the month.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

You are most welcome to join us over Christmas and join in the carol singing. Our services are held at Emmanuel Church, Normanton Road (off Croham Road), South Croydon, Surrey CR2 7AF. Tel: 020 8688 6676.

Sunday, 18th December: 6.30pm, Carol Service

Christmas Eve: 4pm & 5.30pm, All Age Carol Service & 11pm Holy Communion

Christmas Day: 9.30am All Age Celebration

For more details of our services please go to: www.emmanuelcroydon.com

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