

Focus December 2020 and January 2021



Northall Baptist Church – 200 years and still going.

A little Church with strong local links.

Endings and Beginnings

What a year this has been. As we move towards the end of the year and look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus – a momentous happening that changed the whole world. It was an ending of one era and the beginning of 2,000+ years of Christianity.

We celebrate a small baby being born, into a small village, to what seemed to be insignificant people. However, there were some who realised that this event was significant. Mary, a young girl was visited by an Angel to tell her she was to have a baby, although not married. This would have been scary but develops into a song of praise. Joseph also needed a visit from an Angel in a dream to explain the importance so that he realised that this was something very special. It heralded a very important beginning that is the focus of our Christmas – or should be – all these years later!

Why were people then and people now so unbelieving as it was all foretold by the prophets many, many years before. Isaiah 7 v 14 reads 'The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means God with us)'. The place was foretold in Micah 5 v 2 says 'But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.' The distant past quoted was from the line of King David, King Solomon and onwards.

When Jesus was born, the shepherds were visited by one angel, then suddenly joined by a host of angels. They found the baby and then went to tell everyone. The 'wise men' from Eastern lands were also in on this, followed a star and brought gifts to him. What would a small baby do with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh? But these were symbolic of Jesus' Kingship, his Deity and his Suffering and Death.

So much from then on changed the world. It was a tumultuous time then, under a despotic leader, Herod at the time of Roman occupation. The Jewish religious leaders held sway challenging his authority though others accepted the loving and healing they witnessed.



The Church of the Nativity stands on the traditional site - Manger Square Bethlehem today

It is lovely to get presents at Christmas and enjoy fun and festivities, but it is Jesus birth, life and leading to his death and resurrection, all foretold, that is what we should be focussing on. Maybe at this yearend we'll have more time to consider what really matters and make a new beginning for a new year.

As I write we are continuing our Sunday services on Zoom for the moment at 11 am. If you would like to join in the worship, music and song, you'll get a very warm welcome. Please ring the number below or contact us via our website.

For those interested in the history of Northall Baptist Church, a free copy of the booklet, Rebels in Green Pastures can be supplied or downloaded from our website: <http://northallbaptistchurch.org/>