

## December 2023 prayer diary

### FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER

- Pray for Jonny and Alex (Facilities) and Associates in a busy month with many carol services. Pray for energy, and that they will trust in the Lord to provide strength to serve. Pray that there will not be any distractions to the gospel being clearly proclaimed
- Pray for Jonny and others planning for the year ahead, for ministry needs, budgets, building projects, and for wisdom in helping enable the ministry of St Helen's in the best way possible
- Pray for safety and courage for the Asha team as they continue to operate a book table most Fridays in or near Whitechapel Market

### SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER

- Tim S is speaking from John 5 at a biblical evangelism training day for UCCF. Pray that students will be emboldened to use the Bible in their evangelism
- Nathanael Brown and Lois Mulvenna (6pm congregation) are getting married today
- We are committed to partner in prayer with Holy Cross Gleadless Valley, Sheffield: This month they ask us to give thanks for: Sunday Dawodu and his family being granted visas so that Sunday can now begin as Youth and Children's Minister; Remembrance Sunday and their memorial service (for guests, and visibility in the wider community); a great discipleship weekend for their older youth; the Lord's timely, challenging and encouraging message to their diverse church family through the Letter of James; good preparations for Christmas and an exciting programme of outreach and services
- and to pray for Christmas events and services and outreach at the local shopping precinct; the Lord's equipping of Sunday for his role; a gradual and smooth transfer of responsibilities to Sunday in the Youth and Children's ministries; building work - for the finance and practical outworking of plans to use revamped shipping containers to provide much needed space for children's ministry, revitalise the kitchen for its increased use and the need for a new roof

### SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER

- Pray for the 10am & 10.30am (William on Matthew 23:1-39), the 2pm Mandarin (Abraham L on 1 Peter 1:1-9) and the 4pm & 6pm (Aneirin / Tim on Acts 28:11-31) meetings
- Pray for an IGG student lunch on how to meditate on the Scriptures (Henry speaking)
- There is a 10.30am church family lunch. Pray for a good welcome for newcomers, deepening of friendships and building one another up with God's word. Pray that the Q&A at 'Equipped' will help encourage and equip those attending
- Pray that the 4pm women's reading group will be encouraged as they read about God's work in and through the lives of saints of old
- Pray for Asha, today a discussion on Matthew 17:22-27

### MONDAY 4 DECEMBER

- Give thanks that the Lord has provided a house for Will & Joanna in Bordeaux. Pray for them and their children as they make the transition from Brussels. Pray for the church plant, still at an early stage. Will & Joanna hope to be able to host a Christmas evangelistic event on the 17th
- Rob is at All Nations College today, teaching on Islam
- The ladies' evangelistic event, "Christmas is Coming", is tonight. Sun Ying is being interviewed. Pray that women there will want to investigate Jesus for themselves as a result

## **TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER**

- Pray that City workers will make the most of Christmas gospel opportunities with colleagues in workplaces and at lunchtime carol services
- Pray for the lunchtime meetings at St Helen's (William on Matt 11:28-30) and Covent Garden (Giulio on Matt 11:28-30) and carol services at Aldersgate (Chris Tapp speaking), Ashurst (Wes speaking) and the Lime Street Ward (William speaking)
- Pray for the St Michael's "advent carols by candlelight", that in both the carols and the readings the Lord will cut through with the truth and power of his word

## **WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER**

- Pray for positive responses to last-minute invitations to carol services
- Pray for the lunchtime meeting at N Bishopsgate (Abraham on Matt 11:28-30) and the carol services at Moorgate (Chris Tapp speaking), BT (Wes speaking) and Freshfields (Phil Allcock speaking)
- Pray for an evangelistic event in Marunouchi (Tokyo – Thierry & Antonia). Pray it will be a real encouragement to the midweek groups, and that many non-Christians will come, hear something of the Lord, and start to ask questions about him
- Give thanks for so many people attending the recent IGG Explore course; pray they will all continue reading Mark's Gospel, and that some will repent and believe

## **THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the lunchtime carol services at St Helen's (Insurance; William speaking) and Amazon (Abraham speaking)
- Our Associates have a final review of Philippians today. Pray that increasingly their manner of life will be worthy of the gospel (Phil 1:27)
- CF have their last study of the term this week. Pray that they will rejoice in God's accomplished rescue of his people from Egypt, and trust him, our God, more, and reflect on what they have learnt about how he reveals himself over the coming weeks

## **FRIDAY 8 DECEMBER**

- Pray that many students will sign up for the Winter Student Getaway at the start of January
- Ask the Lord to bring many new guests to attend the Mandarin Christmas Dinner (Henry speaking), and for it to serve outreach across all our Sunday congregations
- Give thanks that a man in Sylhet with whom Rob reads the Bible was recently baptised. Ask the Lord to grant salvation to others from that community and to provide a way for mutual encouragement
- Give thanks too for a couple of men and a couple of ladies who are currently regularly willing to open up the Bible 1-1 with the Asha team, but have not yet come along on a Sunday

## **SATURDAY 9 DECEMBER**

- Give thanks for recent 4pm men's and women's brunches. Pray that the Lord will use them to help grow deeper roots in Christ
- Pray that the 6pm women's breakfast last month will have encouraged the women to be meditating on God's word more and more, as well as helping friendships form around Christ
- Pray that members of RML and Central Focus groups will love and encourage one another over the Christmas break. Pray that those who are far from home at Christmas will be well looked after by brothers and sisters in Christ
- Asha are running a Music Event this evening

## **SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the all-age carol services at the 10am & 10.30am (Jim / Phil H), the 2pm Mandarin meeting (Abraham L on 1 Peter 1:10-12) and carol services at the 4pm and 6pm (William / Tim)
- Pray that this evening's carol service will prompt university students in their evangelism
- Pray for Asha; today joining a Salvation Army Nativity performance at Stepney City Farm
- Pray that Paul's example of trying to have a clear conscience before God and man will have encouraged all at the 6pm to be sharing Christ with others

## **MONDAY 11 DECEMBER**

- Pray that many seeds of the good news will be sown this Christmas time and, in the Lord's perfect timing, will go on to bear a harvest in the hearts of many people
- Pray for school Christian groups running Christmas events, and pray that unbelievers will come and hear the good news about Jesus
- Give thanks for a good group of 1st Years at the Brussels Bible Institute; pray for a few more to join for January. Pray too for wisdom for James HH about how much writing work to take on
- Our Finance Committee meets today; pray for the Lord to direct their discussions and decisions

## **TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the lunchtime carol services at St Helen's (Paul speaking) and Aldersgate (Phil M speaking), and for carol services at St Benet's (Aneirin speaking), BCLP (Andrew Sach speaking), Latham & Watkins (Wes speaking) and Rothschild (Paul speaking)
- Pray for those within our church family who are same-sex attracted. Pray they will keep trusting Jesus and the words of Scripture in the face of pressure to conform to the world
- Pray for orthodox leaders within the Church of England who face difficult decisions as a result of the recent General Synod

## **WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER**

- The Asha team run ESOL classes each Wednesday. Pray for appropriate and imaginative use of the Bible as part of the teaching material
- Pray for the lunchtime carol service at Moorgate (Phil M speaking) and the evening carol service at St Helen's (Luke speaking). Gwilym is speaking at a carol service for the MoD
- Youth RML have a Christmas dinner this evening. Pray that the teenagers' friends will come, and will want to return to Youth RML in the New Year to hear more about Jesus

## **THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER**

- We give thanks for the life and ministry of Jeremy Marshall at a service at St Helen's today; pray that many City workers will come and hear of resurrection hope in Jesus (John Lennox speaking)
- Pray for carol services at Grant Thornton (Paul speaking), NatWest (Leo speaking) and Covent Garden (William speaking)
- Asha are hosting a Christmas event for their Sylheti friends
- Pray that Christmas events and services at Woluwe Church (Brussels – Steve & Dawn) will be useful in proclaiming Christ to the lost and in encouraging Christians to be bold in sharing their faith

## **FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the Little Pickles Christmas Special, and for guests to listen to the gospel message
- Pray for all those within our church family who have been bereaved this year; pray that they will find comfort in the words of the Good Shepherd
- Give thanks for our small group leaders and pray that they will continue to sit under and be refreshed by God's word themselves, and remain prayerful for their groups over the Christmas break

## **SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the RML leaders' Christmas drinks social today to be a really fun and encouraging time
- We partner in prayer with St Philemon's, Toxteth, Liverpool. This month they ask us to:
  - Pray for friends who come to Christmas celebration events to have soft hearts to the message of Jesus' birth and mission
  - As their teams reset in January, pray for leaders to have godly priorities for the year ahead
  - Thank God for growing their children's and youth work after years of prayer. Ask that the teenagers will grow in maturity in Christ

## **SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the carol services at the 10am & 10.30am (William speaking), 2pm Mandarin (Tom L speaking), and 4pm & 6pm (William speaking). The morning and afternoon carol services all incorporate children's Christmas parties. Pray for fun, fellowship and safety, and for lots of energy for leaders
- Sam Ajadi is preaching at HMP Rochester. Pray that the resources the Prison Ministry Team are planning to distribute during Christmas time will yield fruit
- Pray for the carol service at St Benet's (Aneirin speaking)
- Asha meets today, looking at Luke 1 & 2

## **MONDAY 18 DECEMBER**

- Pray the Lord will help each of us to be thankful personally for the birth of our Saviour, as we prepare to celebrate his coming
- Joelle's dorm girls (Cambodia) have returned to their villages for the long school holidays; pray they will be the light of Christ in their families and local community, especially as they serve at church and help teach Sunday School. Pray for the Krung / Brao churches as they prepare for their Christmas celebrations. Usually this is an event held outdoors in the middle of their villages for everyone to come and see. Pray that each programme will include not just fun and music and games, but also a clear presentation of the gospel
- (18-21 Dec) Gwilym is speaking at the LDN student house party

## **TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the lunchtime carol services at St Helen's (William speaking) and Aldersgate (Brian speaking), and for the carol service at A&O (Tom W speaking)
- Pray for those amongst us who struggle with depression, which can intensify over the winter months. Pray for care and support from the church family. Pray for resilience to persevere in faith through the thorns and thistles of a broken world
- Ruth (working with Wycliffe Bible Translators) has now returned from nearly two years in Togo. Pray for a smooth transition, and for a good time reconnecting with family and friends over the Christmas period

### **WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER**

- Pray that as a church family we will be alert to those in particular need this Christmas, and be generous in hospitality
- Pray that as students return home for Christmas, they will be humble and godly towards family and consistent in listening to Jesus in his word
- Pray for Joe & Elin (Asia) who are in discussions with her school about maternity leave. They would like Elin to have more than three months off, even if she goes unpaid for a while. Pray that they will trust the Lord to have the best plan, and that whatever happens they can maintain their visas

### **THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER**

- Give thanks for the St Helen's staff team; pray that they will be refreshed over the Christmas period, and spend time meditating on and giving thanks for the "riches of his grace" (Eph 1:7)
- Pray for grace and wisdom for Chris and others at Hope Central (Cape Town) in response to moves to marginalise their presence, and for practical solutions to the new space constraints for their Sunday meetings at a local school

### **FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the church family to battle temptation over the holiday period. Pray that we will fill our minds with what is true, honourable, just, pure (Phil 4:8) when changes to routine bring temptations old and new
- Pray that IGG students back in home countries over Christmas will have many opportunities to share what they've been learning; and that those staying in London will not feel isolated
- Pray that ongoing reflection from the recent IGG "Knowing God" weekend away will bear fruit in churches across the world in years to come

### **SATURDAY 23 DECEMBER**

- Pray that the Lord will frustrate any plans to harm Christians gathered to celebrate the wonderful gift of his Son over the Christmas period
- Pray for the three young men (Ishmael, Isyaku and Nanle) who are developing as leaders in the Kamuku work alongside Gareth & Katharine (Nigeria), and pray that they will grow in godliness and leadership skills. Nanle is getting married today

### **SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER**

- Pray for secret believers around the world who can't meet openly for fear of persecution. Pray they will know the joy of Immanuel, God with them
- Pray for the 10am & 10.30am services, and the all-age carol service at the 4pm (Aneirin speaking)
- David B is preaching at HMP High Down
- Asha will be hosting meals in various homes today

### **MONDAY 25 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the St Helen's Christmas all-age service. Pray too that today will be a time for us to meditate on and discuss the goodness of God in sending his only Son to save his people
- "...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."" (Matt 1:20-21)

## **TUESDAY 26 DECEMBER**

- Pray that many who heard the gospel over Christmas will continue to think about what they heard and will come to know salvation in Jesus' name
- Pray for prayerful perseverance for those who invited friends and colleagues to carol services and met with discouraging responses

## **WEDNESDAY 27 DECEMBER**

- Pray that, with small groups not meeting, group members will be looking out for one another during the Christmas period, that none might drift (Heb 2:1)
- Pray for the people that the City Pastors have shared the gospel with and who have taken tracts and Gospels. Over winter time they will show God's practical love by distributing "winter weather gifts" of hats, gloves, socks etc, to the homeless of the City

## **THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER**

- Pray for the Lord to limit atrocities being committed in the wars being waged in many countries. Pray for the wicked schemes of man to be brought to nothing. Pray that Jesus' kingdom will grow in these countries, and for Christians to remain faithful
- Teaching through the final chapters of Romans has helped Connexion Church (Paris – Joe & Anne-Sophie) think about mission, and many are keen to participate in a short-term foreign mission trip. Pray as the church seeks to decide whether such a trip is worth pursuing and, if so, when and where it should take place

## **FRIDAY 29 DECEMBER**

- Pray that occasional members of our youth groups and young people from unbelieving families will sign up for the youth groups' weekend away in February
- Give thanks for all those who serve on our Church Council and its various committees, and for our six churchwardens. Pray that all will continue to walk in Christ Jesus the Lord, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith... abounding in thanksgiving (Col 2:6-7)

## **FRIDAY 30 DECEMBER**

- Pray for David B in his role as Christian Chaplain at HMP High Down, leading services, 1-1s, group Bible studies etc. Give thanks for the hunger among the men and pray that he will be able to prioritise the ministry opportunities that will most further the advance of the gospel
- Give thanks for N and D at High Down who seem to be really grasping and delighting in gospel truth. Pray that they will be able to share the good news with those around them

## **SATURDAY 31 DECEMBER**

- Pray that in the year ahead Christians will be faithful in holding out the word of life to those around them, because God's word "shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

## **Mission Partner news**

St Helen's sends out and supports individuals and families involved in cross-cultural Christian ministry, both overseas and in this country. We are also linked with national Christians and churches overseas. Below is a focus on two of our mission partners. News for our other partners is on the information board under the balcony in St Helen's.

### **Gareth , Katharine, Eleanor (born in 2011) and Daniel (born in 2014)**

#### **Based in Northern Nigeria with Wycliffe Bible Translators**

received 17.11.23

We have had an action-packed month or so.

At the end of October we were all part of a Retreat weekend for our 120 staff (plus many family members) which included two performances of the "Mark Drama" in which Gareth was part of the cast and, rather worryingly, was cast as a Pharisee... It is a powerful experience of Mark's gospel narrative for audience and cast members alike.

Subsequently Gareth went to Ethiopia for the second week of November. This was a training week for some of our younger leaders who are participating in an Africa-wide internship scheme that began this year, and whom Gareth is mentoring. Two of them have young families, one is about to get married.

As we write towards the end of November, the Kamuku team are about to arrive in Jos to work (principally) with Katharine on ongoing training and the preparation of Scripture books to be published in the new year.

The Kamuku area is still suffering from constant attacks. Nine men from our village were kidnapped one night and we spent a stressful 24 hours worrying about them, before they were miraculously released! The local "vigilante" group managed to catch up with them and free them. This is not the normal end to the story so we were overawed by God's kindness in this. However, it is still not safe for people to sleep in the village.

Leaving aside all that, we are handling a lot of responsibilities and pressures.

On a more positive note, Eleanor and Daniel are progressing well in school and other activities. Eleanor's enjoying the chance to learn a bit of ballet! And Daniel loves to be on the tennis court, usually playing pickleball.

We plan to visit the UK for the Christmas holiday period this year, mainly to visit family.

Please thank God with us and pray for:

The opportunity to serve God here in Nigeria. Pray for faithfulness in our weakness.

Please continue to pray for the three young men (Ishmael, Isyaku and Nanle) who are developing as leaders in our work, that they would grow in godliness and leadership skills. And for Nanle's wedding on 23 December.

Similarly, please pray for the Kamuku people and especially the team working in a challenging context. Pray for peace, an end to the suffering, and the ability to work well as we aim to make more of God's word available in their language.

Pray for our planned Christmas visit home, that we would be an encouragement and have gospel opportunities with family. And get a little R&R.