

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Thursday 04 December: 8-9 PM -
"Heart of a Child - Timelessness" follow-up discussion and prayer

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/97808472409?pwd=Fd8Znkbc6gmpabDUcgmisRL4wD2jqf.1>

Meeting ID: 978 0847 2409. **Passcode:** 251402

Sunday 07 December: 10:30 AM. Malcolm speaking.

Sunday 14 December: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 21 December: 10:30 AM. Carol service & collection for HOPE worldwide Afghanistan

Sunday 28 December: 10:30 AM. Church service

Sunday 04 January: 10:30 AM. Church service



Leadership Retreat Report

The staff and leadership of our churches in the UK, Ireland and the Nordic countries meet once a year for a retreat and conference. I thought you might like an update on this year's gathering.

We met in Northamptonshire from 14 to 16 November. Some admin staff, volunteers and trustees from the International Churches of Christ Missions charity also joined us. Churches represented included Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Leeds, Belfast, Birmingham, Leicester, Watford, Thames Valley, Cardiff, East London, North London, West London, South London, Southeast London and Stockholm. We were also blessed to have a visiting speaker, Mathis, from our sister congregation in Munich. More on him later. The only congregations not represented were Cambridge, due to prior commitments, and Dublin, due to a personal health issue.

Schedule

Friday evening focused on fellowship, good news sharing and an extended time of worship based on Psalm 27, which I had been asked to lead.

Saturday morning opened with a presentation from the Southside Ministry in London on their mission vision. After a coffee break, Mattis Wosegien from Munich shared how several congregations built unity across time zones, cultures and languages in Western Europe.

After lunch, two young men, Tosin Sowoolu of Birmingham and Christian Xavier of Cardiff, spoke on "Spirit-Led Example". They were followed by our regional family chair for the UK, Ireland and the Nordics, Roger Frimpong of Birmingham, who spoke on "Christ in all things". We then broke into small groups to reflect on what we sensed God was saying and to explore ideas together. The day closed with the ICCM trustees giving an update on several matters, including safeguarding, mission funding and international cooperation.

Relationships

Listing every point from the talks would make this far too long, so here are a few personal reflections. It was wonderful to worship and spend time with brothers and sisters from all over the UK and Ireland. Some I have known for forty years. Others I met for the first time. It was especially encouraging to see more young people aspiring to spiritual leadership. This was only our second retreat since COVID, and the joy of being together felt even stronger than last year.

I had many conversations that left me encouraged. In some cases, I was able to help. In others, I learned. All of them strengthened our

sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. In my view, the main purpose of these retreats is relational more than instructional. You can learn online, but you cannot build deep relationships that way. Sharing meals, singing and praying together strengthen Christian fellowship. Which brings me to the topic of unity, because unity is rooted in relationships, not structures or statements.

Unity

Unity was on everyone's mind. It seems to get harder as we and our churches grow older. With age comes experience and opinions, but also complexity. Opinions matter, but they can drift into obstacles if we let them divide us.

Mathis posed a striking question. To paraphrase: "Unity is difficult. The process itself is part of our spiritual maturity. Did God make unity hard for two reasons? First, so we would rely on him as we work through our challenges. Second, so our unity would stay relational rather than organisational?" Unity is not something solved by flicking a switch. It takes sacrifice, time and humble conversation. That's why Paul tells the church in Ephesus:

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)

It's hard work!

Please pray that unity across our congregations in the UK and Ireland will grow stronger through Christlike dialogue. I personally look forward to deepening my friendship with Mathis, whom I first met in 2001, and exploring how we can strengthen ties between our churches here and across the continent.

If you would like to know more, feel free to talk to me. I am happy to fill you in on anything else that interests you.

Malcolm

Plans for 2026

Planning together with the Holy Spirit

We are planning our congregational focus and events for 2026. We wish to listen and cooperate with the Holy Spirit like the Antioch church (Acts 13:2-3).

Please take some time to pray and ask the Lord for wisdom and discernment about his priorities for us here in Watford (Proverbs 16:9). It's important to make plans, but also to hold them lightly (James 4:13-15).

What do you think the church needs next year? How can we be in step with what the Spirit is doing in our congregation and around us?

Malcolm

Watford Contribution Details

Church bank

account: Three Counties churches of Christ HSBC

Sort Code: 401915

Account Number: 04759613



Watford Media



DECEMBER SERMON SERIES

“God’s Generosity in Ordinary People”

This December, we are exploring how God works through humble, relatable people in the story of Christ’s birth.

In the run-up to Christmas, I invite you to join me in a daily Bible reading series. These short readings are a way to reflect on the story of Christ’s birth and the hope it brings, helping us to focus on what really matters during this season. Of course, taking part is entirely optional, but I hope you’ll consider it—spending just a few minutes each day in God’s Word can bring encouragement, perspective, and a more profound sense of wonder.

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11)

WEEK 1 — Sunday 7th December

Sermon. Mary: God’s Generosity to the Humble

Sermon Text: Luke 1:26-38

Supplementary Scriptures: 1 Samuel 1:9-20; Psalm 34:1-10

Daily Readings:

Mon — Luke 1:39-56

Tue — Micah 5:2-5

Wed — Isaiah 7:10-14

Thu — Romans 12:1-3

Fri — James 4:6-10

Sat — Luke 11:27-28

WEEK 2 — Sunday, December 14th

Sermon. Joseph: God’s Generosity in Times of Disruption

Sermon Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Extra Scriptures: Psalm 25:1-10; Proverbs 3:1-8

Daily Readings:

Mon — Genesis 37:1-11

Tue — Genesis 39-40

Wed — Hebrews 11:1-8

Thu — Psalm 32:8-11

Fri — Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Sat — Romans 8:28-30

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WEEK 3 — Sunday, Dec 21st — Carol Service

Sermon. The Shepherds: God’s Generosity to the Overlooked

Sermon Text: Luke 2:8-20

Supplementary Scriptures: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 98

Daily Readings:

Mon — Psalm 23

Tue — Ezekiel 34:11-16

Wed — John 10:1-18

Thu — Luke 15:1-7

Fri — 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Sat — Philippians 2:5-11

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WEEK 4 — Sunday, December 28th

Sermon. Simeon & Anna: God’s Generosity to the Faithful

Sermon Text: Luke 2:25-38

Extra Scriptures: Psalm 130; Isaiah 40:25-31

Daily Readings:

Mon — Habakkuk 2:1-4

Tue — Lamentations 3:21-26

Wed — Hebrews 6:9-12

Thu — Luke 1:5-17

Fri — Psalm 27:1-14

Sat — Galatians 4:4-7