

2026

January  
2026



REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH

“Look! I am making all things new!” (Rev 21:5, NET)

These words are spoken by God in the book of Revelation, right at the end of the Bible, and I think they’re really quite important.

We have just started a new year; and even though the calendar change is somewhat artificial (the 1<sup>st</sup> January wasn’t always the first day of a new year, and Jesus wasn’t born in year 1), it still always makes us think about change and newness – throw out that old clutter, break that harmful habit, renew that hopeful promise, become what you deep down want to be... And maybe this will be the year when the world will come together as one and stop the spiralling madness of war, injustice and misinformation?

But if we’re honest, it’s hard to find the strength needed to change ourselves – New Year Resolutions rarely last beyond January – and changing the world is harder than you think... We know change is desperately needed, in ourselves and others, but how will it happen?

That’s where the good news is such good news: Jesus is all about change and transformation. Yes, we might not always realise (especially while we are in the midst of singing those good old carols once again), but it’s true. People often think Christianity is all about tradition and institutional piety, and this sentiment often comes to the fore during Christmas – but that’s not really what the Kingdom of God is all about!

Jesus calls us to repent and believe. Both those words imply change: change the way you think about God, the way you think about yourself, the way you think about your behaviour...

Jesus invites us to follow – which of course involves changing the way you run your life, shifting the authority from yourself to Jesus:

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:2)*

Jesus proclaims that he is the King of kings and Lord of lords, which should mean massive changes to how we manage the world he has given us to look after...

And Jesus demonstrates that he has power to make everything new: he heals incurable diseases; he sets people free from various destructive powers (including alcohol, gambling and fearful conspiracy theories); and he has defeated death.

Unlike the other changes, we don’t yet see the power of this final victory, and we can’t pinpoint it in the calendar; but we know it’s coming!

And when it comes, we will finally be made new from the inside out, all the rubbish will be cleared out, and the whole universe will be renewed through the power of Jesus’ resurrection.

And with a world looking more fragile and volatile with every passing month, that is definitely something to look forward to!

David

Dates for your diaries!

Sun	Jan 4 <sup>th</sup>	11am Service led by David Vaughan	
Sat	10 <sup>th</sup>	10.00am – 12.30pm Decorations to be taken down. Coffee, biscuits and mince pies will be provided for all those who come and help.	

### Why you should aim to eat the rainbow

The supermarket chain Tesco has reported a surge in demand for brightly coloured vegetables, from rainbow carrots to pink onions.

The trend follows calls from nutritionists for people to 'eat the rainbow' of fruits and vegetables, so that they get the whole range of vitamins and minerals.

Demand for rainbow carrots and pink onions is up by 100 per cent this autumn versus last, the demand for rainbow chard is up 70 per cent and that for Cavolo Nero – also known as 'black cabbage' – is up around 30 per cent on last year.

*Editor: Our irrepressible poet Nigel Beeton was inspired to write another version of a famous hymn...*

### See, Amid the Winter's Snow

See, amid the winter's snow

Lots of cars that just won't go;

It is not the drivers' fault –

Councils have run out of salt!

Here, we sit the whole night long!

Where have all the snowploughs  
gone?

If we'd known we'd be delayed

We'd perhaps have brought a spade!

Say, ye cheerful children, say

Why aren't you in school today?

'We are skating round and round

'Cos the heating's broken down!

'Yes, the heating's gone beserk!

'Mum has missed a day at work!

'Though she's cross and seems on edge,

'We can ride upon our sledge!'

Sages on the weather show  
Said the sun would surely glow,  
And, said they, we may be sure  
Of a glorious day in store!  
But they missed a detail, small  
And the snow did thickly fall!  
But the met-men feel no shame –  
Their computer takes the blame!

*By Nigel Beeton*

*There is a lot of talk about 'mindfulness' these days, and how to find calm moments in our daily lives. Both the BBC and Classic FM have even got radio stations devoted to 'mindful' and 'calm' music. But as Christians, we have an extra, divine resource, to call on. And so this month we are launching a new series, simply offering three verses to help reassure your readers that they are not alone in their tough times.*

### **Peaceful mind**

The Bible tells the story of Jesus and His disciples in a boat. The wind blows, the waves rise, and the disciples are stressed. Like them, we also get hit by storms in life. Like them, we can't control what comes our way. But like them, we can know that Jesus is also with us. Why not take a moment to ponder these promises:

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for You alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.  
(*Psalms 4:8*)

The Lord gives strength to His people, the Lord blesses His people with peace. (*Psalms 29:11*)

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace - as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. (*1 Corinthians 14:33*)

### **Observations on Christian life and faith**

Life is too short for us to do everything we want to do; but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do. - *Anon*

The future belongs to those who belong to God. This is hope. - *W T Purkiser*

I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. - *OW Holmes*

It is not so much of our time and so much of our attention that God demands; it is not even all of our time and all our attention; it is our selves. - *C S Lewis*

We are not always doing the most business for God when we are the busiest. - *John Henry Jowett*

If we are taken up with our own personal needs, or if we are looking for position and status in the church, we shall be of little use to God. - *David Watson*

An atheist is someone who believes that what you see is all you get. - *Anon*

Philosophy and religion may reform, but only the Bible can transform. - *B Edwards*

## How to keep those New Year Resolutions

We are full of good intentions at the start of each year. How come we usually fizzle out by February? Here are some tips to keep you going...

*Be realistic.* If you have several goals, don't attempt them all at once. Research has found that if you stagger your goals, you will have more success. So, for example, if this year you want to spend less money, do more exercise and spend more time with your family, start one change this month, another in February, and start the third in March.

*Be specific.* For example, don't tell yourself: Lose weight. Decide exactly how much you want to lose. When do you want to lose it by? How will you do it? If you want more time with your family, how and when will you do that? The more exact you can be, the more likely you are to succeed.

*Write it down.* There's something about committing thoughts to paper that helps to cement your resolve. Why not start some sort of journal this year, to track your thoughts, your hopes, your goals – and your successes!

*Tell other people.* If you intend to do something, tell someone, and therefore you will feel more obliged to get going with it... your pride may keep you going when all else fails!

*Focus on GAIN, not loss.* Ever notice how many resolutions are about giving something up? Why not put it the other way round - instead of saying you will eat less, tell yourself you are headed for those skinny jeans....

*Give yourself rewards.* If you are quitting smoking or sweets, for example, put the money that you would have spent in a jam jar, and treat yourself to something nice (and healthy) with it.

*Break your resolution into steps.* Some goals will take months to achieve. So, break each one down into tiny steps, and simply head for each step. Build in some time frames, to prevent you procrastinating.

*Finally, don't let failure defeat you.* You will make mistakes. But the secret is to simply get up again and to keep going. Only if you stop are you *really* defeated. None of us are perfect, and the Bible encourages us to always start again.



## Menai Suspension Bridge celebrates 200 years

If you have ever gone to Anglesey, chances are that you used the Menai Suspension Bridge (*Pont y Borth*, in Welsh). A lot of people do – an average of 13,300 vehicles a day, or about 4.8 million vehicles a year.

The bridge celebrates a big anniversary this month: it is 200 years old. It was formally opened on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1826, to link Anglesey (*Ynys Mon*) to mainland Wales (*Gogledd Cymru*).

The bridge is special – it is the world's *first ever* major suspension bridge, with a 176-metre span. Designed by Thomas Telford, it took seven years to build and has been a huge success. It made the crossing safer (until then farmers had had to swim their livestock across the strait), and it also made the crossing more dependable and quicker for everyone, cutting hours off the trip from London to Holyhead.

The bridge has changed a bit over 200 years – the original wrought-iron chains were replaced with high-tensile steel chains in 1940, the bridge was reconstructed after a fire in 1970, and in 1998 it was brought under the management of UK Highways A55 Ltd.

But the Menai Suspension Bridge is still a much loved and critical road bridge for Anglesey, and there will be warm celebrations for it this month.

To put the history of the bridge into perspective: it was built nearly 25 years before Big Ben (in 1859) and more than 60 years before the Eiffel Tower (in 1889).

(Editor's note: Sadly I have no recollection of my father as he was killed as a test pilot after the war ended. However, his sister has told me a story concerning the Menai Suspension Bridge. He was training to be a pilot at the beginning of the war and wrote to my grandmother and aunt to tell them to be by the bridge on the certain date and wave to him. They did as were bid, and he flew his plane under the bridge! Following this he flew solo out to Burma and spent the war there as a fighter pilot and also as a member of the Chindits.)

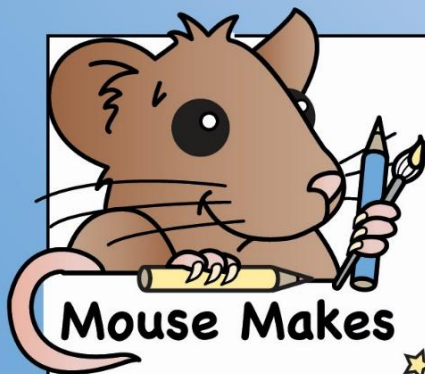


## A New Year's resolution-prayer – following in His footsteps

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, grant us the desire to do only what pleases you, and the strength to do only what you command. Cleanse our souls, enlighten our minds, and inflame our hearts with your Holy Spirit, that we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

*St Francis of Assisi, 1182 – 1226*





**DID YOU KNOW ?**  
*Stars shine different colours, the colour we see depends on the temperature of the star. The hottest stars shine blueish-white, then yellowish-white, yellow, orange and the coolest stars shine red.*

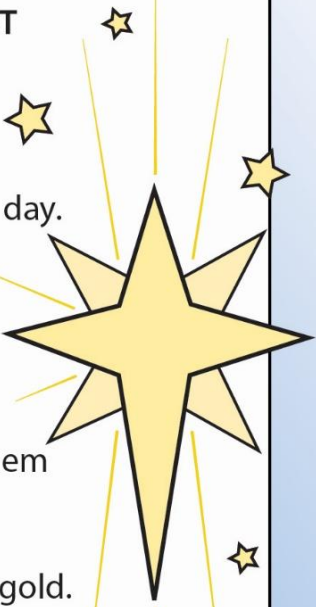
## WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

The Wise Men came from a land far away, they had seen a star that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign of the birth of a king, so they followed that star to pay homage to him.

They found him in Bethlehem as the prophets fortold, they gave him three gifts: myrrh, frankincense and gold.

The star led to Jesus our saviour and king, let us join with the Wise Men and go worship Him!



Read the story of the Wise Men in **Matthew 2:1-12**

S B E T H L E H E M J O I Y  
 T K J E S U S K I N O W W C  
 A G O E P I P H A N Y O I V  
 R I U M E S S I A H G R S I  
 K F R A N K I N C E N S E S  
 I T N G O L D M Y R R H M I  
 N S E I J V S I G N B I E T  
 G O Y A C H R I S T C P N M

Can you find these words in the word search?

- WISE MEN • MAGI
- STAR • SIGN
- JOURNEY • BETHLEHEM
- VISIT • JESUS • MESSIAH
- CHRIST • KING
- GIFTS • GOLD • MYRRH
- FRANKINCENSE
- WORSHIP • JOY
- EPIPHANY

## January Crossword Clues

### Across

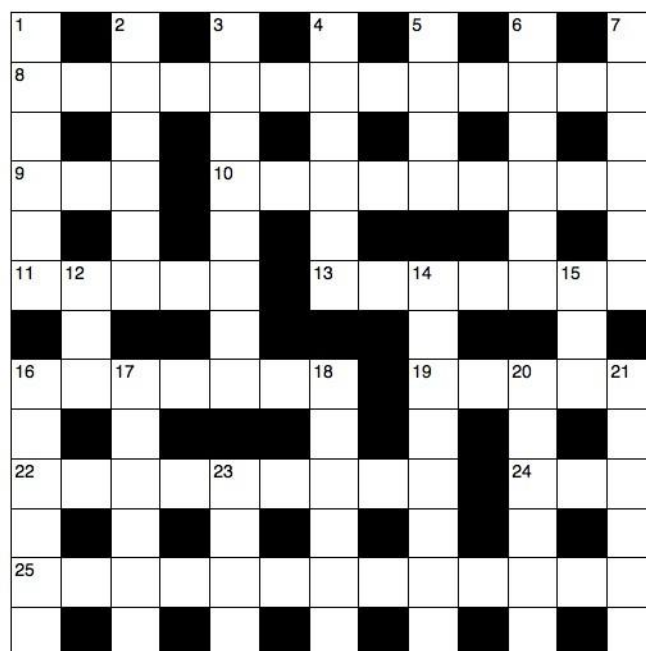
- 8 How the Abyss (NIV) is described in the Authorized Version (Revelation 9:1) (10,3)  
 9 Frozen water (Ezekiel 1:22) (3)  
 10 The Ten Commandments (9)  
 11 In Roman Catholic theology, neither heaven nor hell (5)  
 13 Des cons (anag.) (7)  
 16 'Though [your sins] are red as — , they shall be like wool' (Isaiah 1:18) (7)  
 19 Keen (Romans 1:15) (5)  
 22 Repugnant, loathsome (Jeremiah 24:9) (9)  
 24 Drink like an animal (Judges 7:5) (3)  
 25 First and last (Revelation 22:13) (5,3,5)

### Down

- 1 Father of Ahi, a Gadite (1 Chronicles 5:15) (6)  
 2 Where David found the stone with which he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40) (6)  
 3 'Hour by hour fresh lips are making thy — doings heard on high' (8)  
 4 'And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their — at night' (Luke 2:8) (6)

- 5 United Society for Christian Literature (1,1,1,1)

- 6 'If he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would — — or a tax collector' (Matthew 18:17) (1,5)  
 7 Where Paul was taken when things became difficult for him in Berea (Acts 17:15) (6)  
 12 Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican Bank) (1,1,1)  
 14 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new — ; the old has gone, the new has come!' (2 Corinthians 5:17) (8)  
 15 Used to colour ram skins red for use in the tabernacle (Exodus 25:5) (3)  
 16 Vat car (anag.) (6)  
 17 'Be joyful — — , patient in affliction, faithful in prayer' (Romans 12:12) (6)  
 18 'The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts — — special treatment' (1 Corinthians 12:23) (4,2)  
 20 Ancient rowing boat (Isaiah 33:21) (6)  
 21 Say again (2 Corinthians 11:16) (6)  
 23 What Jesus did in the synagogue in Nazareth after he stood up (Luke 4:16) (4)





*David Pickup, a solicitor, gives some guidance on...*

## **Complaints and refunds – what about consumer protection?**

*'Use honest scales and honest weights' Leviticus 19:36*

*'The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favour with him.'* Proverbs 11:1

These verses are not about the scales you use to weigh yourself, to see how much weight you have put on over Christmas! It is a biblical warning for businesspeople to act fairly and not cheat the buyer. As such it is one of the earliest pieces of consumer protection.

The law has been updated to reflect changes in buying. Many of us do our shopping online and much of what is bought are not goods in the old-fashioned sense, but electronic items such as downloaded music or games. Whether you do your Christmas shopping in the January sales or on Christmas Eve, what legal rights do you have? This is a complex area, and the following is a guide only.

The law gives us some basic rights about the quality and standard of things we buy from a business. They must be of 'satisfactory quality' which means what a reasonable person would consider satisfactory. They must be 'fit for purpose' and 'as described'. So, if you bought a Bible, it must be in good condition; and it must be the whole Bible if it says Bible; and it should not fall apart when you start to read it. If it is a leather-bound church Bible, you would expect it to last longer than a cheap paperback.

So, what if there is a problem?

Normally within the first 30 days, if it is faulty, you can get a refund.

Up to 6 months, if it cannot be repaired or replaced, you are entitled to a refund - in most cases

Up to 6 years, if goods do not last a reasonable time, you may be entitled to some money back.

Some shops give you more rights. They offer money back guarantees if you change your mind. Always keep the receipt. Check that what you buy works, and that it is ok when you get it. No point buying something in November and then find out on Christmas Eve that it is broken. Watch out for those scales!



### CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

**ACROSS:** 8, Bottomless pit. 9, Ice. 10, Decalogue. 11, Limbo. 13, Seconds. 16, Crimson. 19, Eager. 22, Abhorrent. 24, Lap. 25, Alpha and Omega.

**DOWN:** 1, Abdiel. 2, Stream. 3, Wondrous. 4, Flocks. 5, USCL. 6, A pagan. 7, Athens. 12, IOR. 14, Creation. 15, Dye. 16, Cravat. 17, In hope. 18, Need no. 20, Galley. 21, Repeat. 23, Read.

### Eating alone 'bad for pensioners' health'

Pensioners who eat at home alone are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition and health.

So says new research. It has found strong links between dining solo and diets of poor quality, with fewer fruit, veg and meat. This can lead to weight loss and frailty.

Researchers at Flinders University in Australia are instead highlighting the importance of community-based initiatives – such as neighbourhood meal groups, intergenerational dining programmes, or local café partnerships to mitigate the harms of eating alone.

As one researcher explains, “Food is more than the nutritional benefit it provides. Sharing a meal is an important social activity that can influence appetite, dietary variety, and overall well-being for older adults.”



Have you got yours?

*God Bless You*

*I ask the Lord to bless you, as I pray for you today;  
To guide you and protect you, as you go along your way,  
His love is always with you; his promises are true.  
And when you give him all your cares, you know He'll see you through.*