

BCM UPDATE



Good news of great joy

It was a rainy Saturday afternoon. Jackie and I had just completed our weekly shop in Tesco's and were heading to our car. As I pushed the trolley around the back of the car, I heard someone say something. I turned and saw a lady standing in the rain nearby, crying. Through her tears she mumbled, 'Do you have a pound?'

Jackie talked to her. The story was that she had lost her bank card and didn't have the money to get back to Kidderminster where she had parked her car. Once she realised that her card was missing, she had cancelled it with her bank and therefore couldn't use her phone to buy a ticket. I explained that we didn't carry money, but I rummaged around in my car and found a couple of pound coins.

As it was raining, and the train station was about a mile away, we asked her if she would like a lift. She gladly got into the car and on the way told us her name. I asked if she now had sufficient money to buy a ticket on the train, but she didn't. I eventually gave her enough money for the ticket, along with a booklet called, 'Turn to God.' As she left the car, she thanked us, and we watched her walk quickly into the station. After many years of working with people, I wished I had had more time to ask other questions. I just hoped that, as our car disappeared, she didn't turn around and make her way back up to the Tesco's car park!

As we enter December and read again the Christmas narrative, there are always questions that I wonder about. How long did it take Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem? Were they with other family members? How did the conversation with

Pictured above, in October *Only A Pavement Away* provided 100 meals for a special day at the Care Centre to mark World Homelessness Day.

the inn keeper go? Did he wonder why Joseph had brought someone on a long journey so close to delivering her baby? What did he think about the bunch of shepherds turning up?

I like to think that the inn keeper had compassion on this young couple and generously guided them to the stable, but of course I don't know. We do know that on that night long ago the angels visited the shepherds and gave them a free concert. 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'

I think I would have liked to have been one of those shepherds! To see the sky filled with the heavenly host and hear them praising God. Their hearts must have pulsed as they rushed to Bethlehem and found, as they had been told, a babe in the manger. But no ordinary baby. In front of them was the Christ, the anointed one of God, the looked for Messiah, the Lord. Their response was to tell as many people as they could about Jesus.

As we approach Christmas, may we all be like the shepherds and tell as many people as we can the good news of great joy about Jesus being the only Saviour of the world. Pray that the Lord will bless all our efforts this December, and please pray for the lady that we met in the Tesco's car park.

Wesley **Wes Erpen, Chief Executive**

DECEMBER 2025



As I write this BCM are planning to bring some seasonal hope and joy to those who regularly come along to the Care Centre throughout the year. Two Christmas meals will be provided, with 50 people coming along to each one. As well as enjoying a traditional Christmas meal, everyone will receive gifts. And of course we will be singing Christmas carols! Huge thanks to James Brindley Academy for providing the gifts, and to 'I'm homeless, get me out of here' for covering the cost of the turkeys and trimmings.

So, as we move into the advent season, our prayer is that we will bring hope, peace, joy and love to all who come to our Care Centre, especially at this time of year.

Phil Ansell, Care Centre Manager

The hopes and fears

I love singing Christmas carols. I wish we could sing them all the year round! A line in *O little town of Bethlehem* goes, 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you tonight.' The writer is saying that the coming of Jesus into the world brought a new hope to overcome humanity's fears.

During this past 12 months staff and volunteers at the Care Centre have listened to many stories of humanity's fears, and I am regularly provided with homelessness data, both regionally and nationally. Sadly, it does not make pleasant reading.

Currently, in Birmingham alone, 27,504 households are on the local authority waiting list. 5,500 families and 12,000 children are in temporary accommodation, with 2,000 children living in bed and breakfasts. Nationally, 3.12 million people are using food banks.

Every day in the UK, 4 homeless people die, with the majority of deaths linked to suicide or drugs.

However, I found most deeply disturbing a report published in October by The Museum of Homelessness. It compiled data around homeless deaths. The number of people who died while homeless in the UK in 2024 was 1,611, an increase of 9% on the previous year and a record high. 11 were children. Every day in the UK, 4 homeless people die, with the majority of deaths linked to suicide or drugs.



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CARE CENTRE**

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£15



Be a part of BCM's 60th anniversary year!

Do you have an idea for a fund or awareness raising event you would like to hold on behalf of BCM in 2026? Or an individual challenge you could take on in aid of the Mission?

Or join BCM at its 60th anniversary year events.

Here are some dates for your diary...

60 Bridges Walk

on Saturday June 6th

BCM Open Day

on Saturday 4th July

BCM Banquet

on Saturday 19th September

60th Annual Celebration

at St Martin's Church

on Saturday 17th October



↑ It was a wonderful evening at this term's Fulfil youth event, featuring BIMM Gospel Choir, Kemi Naomi and Lindford George. 150 enthusiastic young people from 18 churches enjoyed worship and hearing about God.

← In November the ElderLink team had a great time playing conkers with care home residents as part of its reminiscence sessions.



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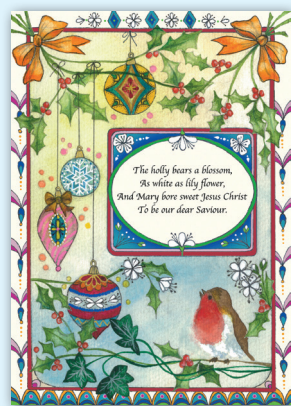
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BCM CHRISTMAS CARDS

£5 for a pack of 10 cards

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View the full range at birminghamcitymission.org.uk



Harvest helps a lot

Thank you very much to all who donated food and money this harvest to stock up the shelves at BCM's food bank and maintain its provision of up to 250 parcels each week to those who need them.

In total the Resource Centre vans picked up collections at 35 schools and churches, and 49 more delivered theirs to the door. One food bank client expressed his own thanks, saying:

'I walk here from Handsworth to save £5.20 which I can then use to buy a chicken. The food I get in the parcel helps me to make some meals to go with the chicken. The coffee, milk, sugar, and the treats in the parcel are very welcome too. It helps a lot and I am very thankful.'

DECEMBER'S PRAYER

SUNDAY - CHILDREN'S & YOUTH TEAMS



Pray for the teams as they go into primary and secondary schools, delivering special Christmas assemblies up to the end of term. Pray that the children and young people would hear the good news and think about what really matters in life. Pray too for staff and volunteers - for health, energy and safe travels around Birmingham.

MONDAY - CARE CENTRE

Please pray that the 2 Christmas meals run well, that they are a blessing to clients and that the gospel message is clearly shared. Pray too that the Alpha course finishes well, with good numbers continuing to attend the sessions. Pray that staff and volunteers have time to rest and be refreshed over the Christmas period.

TUESDAY - ELDERLINK

Please pray that the team's care home carol services will speak to the hearts of staff and residents. Pray too for protection and comfort for Visiting Scheme members during the colder months, and that ElderLink's Christmas hamper drops would encourage and bless.

WEDNESDAY - IMMANUEL

Please pray that the Immanuel poster campaign on West Midlands trains during the first 3 weeks in December would be effective in helping people remember Jesus, 'the reason for the season'.

THURSDAY - CITY MISSION MOVEMENT

In November BCM staff enjoyed fellowship and learning with City Mission workers from across the UK at the CMM-UK conference. Please pray for the 17 City Missions in the cmmuk.org network.

FRIDAY - CHRISTMAS TOYLINK

Please pray as preparations for BCM's ToyLink ramp up - for good management and sufficient donations for this huge project. Pray that this provision to families in need would be a help to them, and that through it many might discover God's great plan of salvation.

SATURDAY - RESOURCE CENTRE

As Christmas approaches, please pray for those who come to the Resource Centre for help, that they would have a safe, warm and furnished home, and enough food to eat. Pray that the Resource Centre would be able to provide for their needs.

Save the date...

A convention for all the family BIRMINGHAM SPRING CONVENTION 2026

Friday 8th & Saturday 9th May

at The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street, B4 6AF

with speaker JOHN HINDLEY

giving 3 talks on 'Weakness our strength'

Plus on Saturday...

Choice of seminars

KIDS STREAM led by BCM's Children's Team

BCM PRAYER DAY

Tues 6th Jan, 10am to 4pm

The Clock Tower, 2 Langdon Street B9 4BP

Come & pray for BCM



THANK YOU to all who have given gifts to BCM's ToyLink 2025, supporting thousands of children whose families struggle to make ends meet. The wrapping room has been full of brilliant and busy volunteers - the group pictured above from Gallagher Insurance.

If you would still like to donate, we are short of gifts for teenagers - books, craft kits, stationery, games, basketballs, hats... **Please bring or send these to BCM** at The Clock Tower, 2 Langdon St, Birmingham B9 4BP (open Mon to Fri from 10am to 4pm). **We can pick up large collections - call 0121 766 6603.**

Or do it all online. Choose a gift from an online store and have it delivered to BCM, or give financially.

For more on how and what to give visit:

birminghamcitymission.org.uk/christmas-toys

A parent has told us, 'Really, you don't even know how much weight you have already lifted off my shoulders. You made my Christmas much better knowing my son will get something. I really appreciate it!'

Birmingham City Mission
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Birmingham B9 4BP

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