

# CHURCH ON THE BUS

By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break  
upon us, to give light to those who  
sit in darkness and in the shadow of  
death, to guide our feet into the  
way of peace." Luke 1 v78-79

December 2022

**"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29 v.11**



If you attend a carol service this Christmas, with readings from Genesis to the Gospels, you will be left in no doubt that God had a plan, and still has. The history and literature of Israel, the prophets and, in the opening of the Gospels, the angels all point towards Jesus, the King who was and is and is to come.

He left us with a commission; in order to fulfil that commission, we still look and listen for his plan and try to follow his way. This is true for us as individuals and the groups that we form a part of. For CotB this meant starting with a bus; when the bus could no longer serve, we moved to a different way of welcoming our guests and also had to take account of the Covid pandemic. In 2020, we used our finances to help those who worked to take people off the streets, providing accommodation at Mount Cook Activity Centre. Last year, a small but effective army of volunteers provided food and hospitality for this in B&B accommodation in Chesterfield. This year things are different again.

In this newsletter, we want to wish you a happy, peaceful, and joy-filled Christmas; we also want to share with you how we will be working over the winter and give you news of the plans we are beginning to discern for the future.

May Emmanuel be with us all this Christmas and lead us into 2023.



## Winter Provision in Derbyshire

2022/3

From December winter provision in Derbyshire, excluding Derby City, will focus on a 15-bed unit in Heanor. This will be run by Freedom throughout the Winter.

This unit consists of self-contained units, each with its own cooking facilities. This could be an important

stepping stone for people to move to more stable accommodation. It is acknowledged that there will still be some people in temporary accommodation; these will be supported by the commissioned outreach service.

Because of this work in Heanor CotB can continue to operate normally on Monday and Thursday evenings at Grace Chapel, supporting the excellent work of the local authorities and agencies. We are grateful to the people who were ready to step forward again and have kept in touch with our work.

## The Way Ahead for CotB in 2023

At the start of the Autumn the Trustees began to consider the ways in which CotB should be working and, possibly, changing.

Relationship was the key characteristic that they saw as central to the current and future work of CotB. This is a strand that runs through all we do and provides a direction for future plans.

We want to welcome and build relationships with our guests in Matlock and Chesterfield. The provision in Matlock is working well and is underpinned by our relationship with Cornerstone who allow us to use their upper room to give hospitality. We pray that this work will continue through the coming year.

Our relationship with Greggs means that Chesterfield is well-resourced for food on Mondays and Thursdays. This means that we can supplement the provision with simple items, such as soup, and give attention to building relationships with our guests.

The third strand of relationships that are important to us is with our partners. We hope to repeat our successful partners meeting in the Spring as well as continuing to contribute to the fortnightly Rough Sleeper Action Group.

We know that a number of our partners were very keen on the possibility of us assisting with furniture for new start housing; this is an area of work that we are still exploring.

# Cards for Christmas

The ever-creative John Small has designed and printed a series of cards which we can share with our guests from November to January, from the feast of Christ the King to Epiphany.



## Epiphany W/c 1<sup>st</sup> Jan '23

Epiphany or the Festival of "The 3 Kings" is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> January '23. It marks the climax of Christmas (12<sup>th</sup> Night) but continues to celebrate the coming of Christ to this world. It is a time when traditionally we take down the decorations. We also remember the wise men who followed a God given light to find the Christ child who they worshiped as the King and gave gifts of Gold, Frankincense & Myrrh. It is a powerful statement that Jesus came as saviour not just for the Jews but for all.

The time of Epiphany is about finding Jesus and understanding why He came. We can do this by allowing God's love to lead us to know more about Jesus who came to save us and make us part of His Kingdom.

**Reflection:** What gifts can I bring to Jesus, the King and Saviour?

**Prayer:** Help me to learn to worship Jesus, the Saviour and King, and to include Him in my Life. Amen

There are six cards. On the front of each one, there is an explanation of what the church remembers and thinks about during this time of year. There is then a question that prompts personal reflection about how we can relate to this season or festival. Finally, there is a short prayer that asks for Jesus to help the person praying it.



## Festival of Christ the King. W/c 20<sup>th</sup> Nov '22

The Festival of Christ the King marks the end of the church year. It celebrates the ascended Jesus sitting at the right hand of God having completed His work of bringing salvation for all. He is now reigning over all creation and in a position of universal sovereignty.

This is a powerful image that some may feel makes Jesus very distant from the reality of our lives. However, Jesus uses this position of authority to invite us to join Him and share in His Kingdom on earth and later in Heaven. He gives us Hope and the opportunity to become part of His family and Church.

**Reflection for the week:** How did Jesus' life on earth help Him to understand what it is like to be you?

**Prayer:** Jesus, I worship you for who you are and for what you have done for me. Help me to understand more about your Kingdom. Amen.

Please pray for the use of these cards that they may help sow seeds of faith, love, joy, peace, and hope.

## Can You Help With?

Please consider if you could help with any of the following – or maybe you could encourage someone from your church to volunteer in one of these areas.

**Gifts in Kind** – we need: small items for personal hygiene (that can be easily carried), trainers, walking boots, jeans, and new underwear. Sleeping bags are also useful.

**Sandwich Making** - for Matlock and Chesterfield.

**Welcoming Guests** - at Matlock or Chesterfield.

**Joining a “furniture” team** in Chesterfield.

To help with any of these please email: [churchonthebus@gmail.com](mailto:churchonthebus@gmail.com) or if your church, or community group, would appreciate a presentation of the work we do please let us know.

### Please Pray

**Homeless and Disadvantaged People in Derbyshire and Derby** – especially those at the Heanor Centre or in B&B accommodation over the Winter.

**Local Councils** – for wisdom in the use of finances and other resources. That they may value all of the people in their area.

**The Trustees** - that God may grant them true vision, wisdom, and compassion as they lead CotB.

**Volunteers** – give thanks for our volunteers and ask for strength and safety. Please pray for others to join our teams.

**Partner Organisations** – that we may see how we can best work together to serve the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged.

### Different Ways You Can Give Financially

**Regular or one-off donations** – can be made to our Co-op Bank Account: The Church on the Bus. Sort Code 08 92 99 – Acc. 65923339

**Just Giving Page** - [justgiving.com/church-onthebus](https://justgiving.com/church-onthebus)

**Amazon Smiles** – if you use Amazon, please login to your account through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) this allows you to purchase your goods in the same and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchases to your nominated charity, which could be CotB

**Give As You Live** – this website gives you access to many major retailers and high street stores. When you shop through this site a nominated charity receives a donation from the retailer – you can nominate CotB. [giveasyoulive.com](https://giveasyoulive.com)