

Dear Friends

As I write this I am looking across our drive which is deep in snow. Such a lovely sight, but a pain for many. I do hope that you are well and that the weather isn't causing you too many problems.

**FAMILY** — During January Hannah began a new job in the Social Work team in Kensington and is enjoying the fact that it is now possible to walk from their home in Putney. Meanwhile, Duncan has landed a long-term acting contract and so will be leaving Glasgow at the beginning of March. Do pray for Beth and Duncan as they adjust to this completely new way of life. In Newbury, C has had a mixed month – lots of very resistant behaviour at school and, generally speaking, delightful behaviour at home. She continues to visit the Play Therapist on a Wednesday morning and we do pray that she will be able to unlock some of C's insecurities and confusions.

**CHURCHES** — It has been really good to get stuck into life at Waterlooville Baptist Church. We had a particularly encouraging Church Members' Meeting early in the month which was well attended and in which people participated with great eagerness. We organized the hall café style and people shared very openly. Do pray for this coming Sunday (3rd) when a young couple, contacted through the Toddlers' Group, will be presenting their baby daughter for a Thanksgiving Service. They have no other church links and are delighted that the church wants to share their happiness and pray for their daughter. Eastleigh Baptist Church leaders saw three candidates for ministry during January and are continuing to reflect on the next step.

**FEBRUARY** contains some space which is welcome. It will be very good to be at the Southern Counties Baptist Association Leaders' Conference in Cheltenham and wonderful, the following week, to have a week in Porlock, Somerset with Sue and C.

Last month a number of people asked to receive this prayer diary for the first time and so I produced a quick summary of my present activities. I thought this might be useful to others and so I have added it after the diary.

Thank you for your interest and prayers ... and thank you so much to those of you who let me hear your own news. I don't intend this communication to be one way!

Every blessing,

Jonathan

## **FEBRUARY 2109 DIARY**

Friday 1st  
Newbury Office

Saturday 2nd  
Preaching at the Induction of the Revd Sandra Platford at Godalming Baptist Church

Sunday 3rd  
Preaching at Waterlooville Baptist Church

Monday 4th  
Newbury Office

Tuesday 5th  
Parish Nursing Trustees' Meeting in Peterborough  
Eastleigh Baptist Church Leadership Team Vision Meeting

Wednesday 6th  
Premier Staff Meeting in London

Thursday 7th  
Meeting with C's Play Therapist  
Waterlooville – pastoral visits and Church Members' Meeting

Friday 8<sup>th</sup>  
Mentoring in Oxfordshire

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>  
Waterlooville Baptist Church Deacons' Away Day

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>  
Worshipping at Newbury Baptist Church

Monday 11<sup>th</sup>  
Southern Counties Baptist Association Leadership Conference in Cheltenham

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>  
Leadership Conference

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>  
Leadership Conference

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>  
Postcard Auction south of Reading  
Waterlooville Baptist Church Deacons' Meeting

Friday 15<sup>th</sup>  
Newbury Office

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>  
Day Off

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>  
Morning - Preaching at Eastleigh Baptist Church  
Evening – Preaching at a Celebration in Swindon

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>  
On holiday in Somerset

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>  
Morning - Preaching at Wycliffe Baptist Church  
Evening – Preaching at Waterlooville Baptist Church and leading a conversation about the future of the evening service

Monday 25<sup>th</sup>  
Newbury Office

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>  
Oxford visits

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>  
Enabling Church Course promotion

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>  
Interviews for Premier Radio

## **INTRODUCTION TO JONATHAN'S PRAYER DIARY**

**MY FAMILY** — We live in Newbury and I am married to Sue. We are members of Newbury Baptist Church which we joined when I became General Secretary of the Baptist Union and the church has always been very supportive of my

ministry. I aim to worship with the family at Newbury Baptist Church at least once a month. I also preach there and play the organ from time to time.

Our children are Hannah (28) who lives in London and is a senior social worker in Kensington. She will be getting married to Ian, a barrister, in 2020. Tom (25) lives with us and works for Marks and Spencer. Beth (20) studies theology at Glasgow University and is getting married to Duncan at Newbury Baptist Church this summer. Duncan is at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and has just landed a long-term acting contract.

C is our foster daughter and she is nine years old. She joined us in March 2016 and we are her long term foster parents. In the prayer diary and when I speak in public I always refer to her as C. This is obviously not her full name but I use it because this is a confidential placement and her family are not allowed to know where she is. My prayer diary can easily be found on the web and so it is important that she cannot be linked to us by that means.

**MY ROLES** — This is where it gets complicated!

**MODERATOR** - After thirty years of ministry (15 in local churches in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk and Orpington, Kent; 8 as Regional Minister for the South West and then 7 years as General Secretary) I was keen to continue a commitment to local churches and so I am willing to be a moderator of two churches at any one time. In 2018 new ministers were called to Caversham Baptist Church and Abbey Baptist Church in Reading and so I moved on to support Eastleigh and Waterlooville Baptist Churches. I give two or three days and one Sunday to each church per month.

**TORCH TRUST for the blind and partially sighted** — I am a special advisor to this brilliant charity. I speak for them and, as the need arises, advise the charity. I was recently involved in overseeing the process for the appointment of a new Chief Executive. They are, at present, promoting an initiative to encourage all churches to become Sightloss Friendly Churches and I am very happy to support this.

**THROUGH THE ROOF** — I am an advisor to this charity which seeks to help churches to reflect on how they welcome people with disabilities. At the moment I am engaged in promoting a course called the “Enabling Church Course” which helps churches to think through how they can become more welcoming to people with disabilities.

**PARISH NURSING** is a brilliant charity which encourages local churches to appoint a registered nurse who can give support to people in the church and community on health issues. It doesn't do any of the tasks that the NHS does but offers training, advocacy, care and support with a Christian dimension. I am a trustee of this charity and also an Advocate for them, going into churches to describe how they can get involved.

**PREMIER MEDIA** — Premier run three radio stations (Premier Christian Radio, Premier Gospel and Premier Praise) and publish Christianity Magazine, Youth and Children's Work and Voice of Hope. I am their Ambassador for Churches which means that I not only promote the things they do as I travel around, but also take back to them honest reactions to their output. I give them a day or two a month.

**MENTORING** — I have a number of people who I mentor. They are all in leadership of one kind or another. Most of them are ministers and some of them are involved in disability charities. Generally speaking I meet with them every two months for two hours.

**POSTCARDS AND STAMPS** — When I completed my time as General Secretary I was very keen to spend some of my time doing non-church work. It has always been a delightful privilege to work in churches but it is easy to overlook the “real world” outside the church. Since a boy I've been a collector and so I have used that long term interest to shape a small business through which I sell old postcards and stamps. I now sell them through 11 Antique Centres (mainly in Oxfordshire and Berkshire) and this has proved to be not only a hugely enjoyable but also a wonderful way of developing deep relationships with people most of whom are not church goers. I constantly have amazing opportunities to talk about life, the church and faith with people in the Centres. This part of my life normally takes up about one day a week.

**RETIREMENT?** - I am still three years away from state retirement age, but even after that point I would expect, God willing, that I will probably do a version (!) of what I am doing at the moment. We'll wait and see!

Thanks for reading this.

Every blessing,

Jonathan