

Sunday 5th
February 2017



Happy New Year

Chinese New Year of course. Just over a week ago we moved into the year of the rooster in a two week period of festivities celebrated by nearly 1.5 billion people worldwide. By way of comparison it is estimated that around 2 billion celebrate Christmas. For the Chinese this two weeks is the biggest of all the festivals and represents a time of family gatherings and new beginnings.

With a healthy dose of scepticism we as a family have googled our Chinese zodiacs. My daughter 'delights' in being a golden pig, which is apparently highly auspicious as an indicator of a prosperous and healthy life. I delight less so in being a rat and by all accounts should not be married to a horse.

More importantly – should we care what our Chinese Zodiac sign is (or our Western Zodiac sign for that matter)? Or should we treat it as being about as relevant as the slips of paper inserted in the fortune cookies from the Chinese takeaway. Diverting for a moment then put aside.

Ignoring the matter of superstition and the innate human desire to know what the future holds, there is the question of how much we are touched by the beliefs and practices of the culture around us. We are exhorted to 'be in the world but not of the world' which seems to derive from part of Jesus's prayer in John 17:16. Do we engage with certain practices or do we hold back? Is it okay to be involved superficially as long as we don't dig too deep? Would it be different if we lived in the country where the celebration was an intrinsic part of the culture?

As a young Christian I faced this question in Japan. Whereas in the Western world there is an argument that the practice of martial arts is little more than a variation on keeping fit: in the East there is undoubtedly a far stronger link to the spiritual origins. When my karate teacher took me to the ancestral shrine to pay my respects (so important in Shinto) I knew that it was time to stop attending lessons. It may have helped that I wasn't proving to be much

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good at karate anyway and ended up selling Encyclopaedia Britannica to jarheads instead.

Here in Battle we regularly face questions over our terms of engagement with the culture around us. Amongst others: May Day celebrations on Abbey Green and in Hastings Old Town; the 1066 battle re-enactment; the annual bonfire parade. Every Last Friday anyone? We may well come to different but equally valid answers as we seek the Lord's guidance on how to interact more: on how to fulfil the church's vision of being out there and not just stuck in here.

At Battle Baptist there is no doubt that we already have a wide variety of interactions each week thanks to the loyal service of members. That truly is a cause for celebration. In this new year may we build on that interaction and extend our rooster combs that bit further.

Yours in Christ,

Charles Dunn

News, notes and prayer-opportunities

● **Andrew and Claire Topliss's** new address in Nottinghamshire is: St Mirren, 53 Wood Lane, Gedling, NG4 4AD. ● An exciting new **Alpha course** begins at the end of February. There will be two separate groups (Thursday evenings & Friday mornings) covering the same material and running for 5 weeks. Please prayerfully consider who you would like to invite and use the postcards as invitations. Please speak to Pat if you can help with a crèche on any or all of the Friday mornings. ● February to April **'Word for the Day'** are now available for collection. ● On Monday 13th February, 2pm at Hastings Crematorium there will be a short service in remembrance of **Jenny Lockwood** to which everyone is welcome. Tea will then follow at the Manna House from about 2.45/3pm. ● *Church members:* There is another opportunity to attend a church **Presentation Evening** on Tuesday at 7.30pm when we will be making you aware of some key developments across church life. ● **Melvyn** is preaching at Sedlescombe church this morning and Ashburnham church this evening. Please pray for him. ● **Food Bank Update:** The cold weather and

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What's on this week...

Caterpillar Preschool (Monday to Friday) and Caterpillar Crew (Monday to Friday) plus:

Sunday, February 5th. ● 8am Breakfast in the Manna House. ● 8.20am: Pre-meeting Prayers in the prayer room. ● 8.45am Chapel Gathering plus Youth Group. ● 10am Refreshments in the Manna House. ● 10.20am: Pre-meeting Prayers in the prayer room. ● 10.45am Chapel Gathering plus Sunday Club and Creche. ● 5pm Informal Worship in the Chapel with Creche, Sunday Club and Youth Group. Refreshments from 4.30pm and after the service.

Monday, February 6th. ● 9.15-11:45am Caterpillars Parent and Toddler Group. ● 7.45pm Elders meeting.

Tuesday, February 7th ● 9.15-11am Caterpillar Explorers Parent and Toddler Group. ● 9.15am: Prayer-for-Healing Group (prayer room). At 10.45am there will be prayer for all who come. ● 2pm: Tuesday Fellowship. Speaker: Esther Dunn. ● 7.30-9pm: Church Presentation Evening in the chapel.

Wednesday, February 8th. ● 5-6pm: BBFC Youth training. 6pm: BBFC training at Claverham 3g. ● 7pm: Battle Baptist Runners meet at the church.

Thursday, February 9th. ● 9.15-11:45am Caterpillars Parent and Toddler Group.

Friday, February 10th. ● 7.30am: Early Morning Prayer in the Youth Room followed by a 'do it yourself' breakfast. ● 9.15am Chatterbox for mums, dads and carers (upstairs). ● 10.30am: Coffee Club (upstairs). 12.30pm: Lunch at The Manna House for retired people. (Advance booking essential on 772192, weekdays between 6pm and 7pm.) ● 3.30-5pm: After School Club. ● 4:12: Urban Jump!

Sunday, February 12th. ● 8am Breakfast in the Manna House. ● 8.20am: Pre-meeting Prayers in the prayer room. ● 8.45am Chapel Gathering plus Youth Group. ● 10am Refreshments in the Manna House. ● 10.20am: Pre-meeting Prayers in the prayer room. ● 10.45am Chapel Gathering and communion plus Sunday Club and Creche. ● 5pm Informal Worship in the Chapel with Creche, Sunday Club and Youth Group. Refreshments from 4.30pm and after the service.

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steadily rising food prices are taking a toll on people in any sort of crisis situation. Numbers of clients coming to the Food Bank are rising, and Wednesday saw our cupboard virtually emptied. In fact we were not able to give our later clients the full allocation of food. This is despite the generosity of the Battle churches and other Battle residents. We are therefore appealing for donations of all the foods on our list (please see the basket in the lobby). ● **The Churches Together unity prayer meeting** will be a week later this month on Wednesday 22nd February at 12.30pm in the prayer room here. *Everyone* is welcome. ● **Dennis** is preaching at Pevensey Bay church today. Please pray for him. ● Save the date: The next **men's breakfast** is Saturday 1st April.

This week's prayer pointers

- ◆ Pray for our outreach to under five year olds. Pray that children, parents and staff who work at the pre-school would encounter God here.
- ◆ Pray for home groups and home group leaders as they meet over the next few weeks. Pray that God would equip and inspire leaders and as folk meet God would be glorified.
- ◆ Pray for those no longer able to come to church because of ill health. Pray that God would bless them and meet their needs. Thank God for those who visit them.

Dates for your diary

- ◆ 7.30-9pm: 21st February Ordinary Church Meeting
- ◆ 1st April Men's breakfast.
- ◆ 7.30-9pm: 2nd May Church AGM

Battle Baptist Church is part of Life with Hope Trust; registered charity 1134288, Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EG. • Website: www.battlebaptistchurch.org.uk • Telephone and answerphone (01424) 774825 • Email: office@battlebaptistchurch.org.uk • Caterpillar Preschool direct telephone line: (01424) 774997.



Ed Jones (Pastor) Francis Willoughby and Mark Hirst (Associate Pastors).
Our other elders: **John Southam (Church Manager); Rob Duffill (Treasurer); Andy and Jo Garlick; Ben Garlick.**
