



December 2007

Christmas

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Gift of hope

In 2006, 43% of the population planned to attend a church event around Christmas (that is about 27 million people).

Give thanks: for all those who will be explaining the Christmas story at services and outreach events.

Pray: for many people to discover Jesus this Christmas; for God to raise up and equip more people to be able to communicate the good news; for any Christmas outreach events taking place in my community; for opportunities to share with friends/work colleagues the meaning of the season.

Consider: offering to pray for a local outreach event/service in my area.

Children we know

Children are a blessing from God and are to be protected, encouraged and blessed.

Give thanks: for children who love and know Jesus.

Pray: a blessing for children you know that need to discover Jesus; for those who work with children in schools, church groups etc; for young carers looking after family members (estimated at 175,000 young carers in 2001 census); for children under pressure from family, health or other issues.

Consider: How can I bless/support a family I know who have children?

Blessing families Christmas is one of the most stressful times of the year in terms of family and relationship breakdown, affecting all generations.

Confess: that as a nation we do not honour and respect marriage and family life.

Pray: a blessing for a family I know who need God's touch at this time; for those working on national policy to protect marriage and family life; for my church and each church to become more 'family friendly' ministering to all seeking Christ.

Consider: practically helping a family under pressure this Christmas time.

Prayer suggestions taken from Friday Focus, produced by the World Prayer Centre. Reproduced with permission.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be
upon His shoulders.
And He will be called
Wonderful Counsellor
Mighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government
and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and for ever.

The zeal of the Lord God Almighty
will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9: 7

Colchester 2020

On 18th October I attended the Assembly meeting of Colchester 2020 to represent Colchester Prayernet. It was inspiring to see so many people committed to a transformed town that will then lead other towns and cities. Colchester was defined as "a place where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential" (Sustainable Community Strategy).

Carbon reduction

This is such an important issue that achieving this is built into all the priorities. Professor Jules Pretty from the University explained the effect that carbon emissions are having on the earth. He called for Colchester to lead, to raise up leaders who lead even when they don't have to, and to be an example in adopting lifestyle habits that reduce carbon.

London 2012

Leaving Colchester with a legacy for future generations

Colchester has bid to be a preparation and training centre. This is one of 100 bids in Eastern region and 1000 in country. If successful we will be on the Olympic map! We will hear in January 2008.

Transport

More choice and less congestion

The emphasis in this area is no longer just on infrastructure but also on changing habits; making it more attractive and possible for people to adopt new habits.

Business and Employment

Moving the Colchester economy to a prestige performer

Businesses are still finding it difficult to see the opportunities of working together and the potential for Colchester this will bring. Ewan Dodds, the lead partner in

this area is hoping to publish a "little book of big facts" about businesses in this area but is finding it difficult to establish communication. One piece of good news was that a Power Breakfast had been held the day before the assembly, and organisers were very pleased with the turn out (over 100 businesses attended) and the positive feedback they had to the event.

We prayed for the BID vote last month and we continue to pray for our businesses to unite.

Life Opportunities

Making opportunities available to all throughout our lives

How will we enable vulnerable people in our community to achieve their full potential? Although we thank God for the many wonderful answers to prayer for Colchester, there remain pockets of deprivation and inequality. For example, life expectancy in one ward is 6 years lower than in the neighbouring ward. We continue to pray for communities transformed by God's grace.

Heritage and Culture

Making Colchester a premier destination

There was a suggestion that this should include rural areas and/or the environment. Good progress is being made on the new football stadium which will be open for the 2008/09 season. Excellent progress is also being made on the new VAF which will have its official opening in Autumn 2008 though it will be finished long before this. I sensed good collaboration between different groups on this. *Marie*

"So by necessity our role is to be visionary, highly ambitious, strategic but very selective about what we are trying to

achieve at any moment in time....We are passionate about Colchester and its exciting future – our future. We are in absolutely no doubt that with your help, we can all pull together to achieve our Vision." Dr Elizabeth Hall, Chair Colchester 2020

Temporary Prayer rooms in schools.

A few of us met together to discuss the possibility of running temporary prayer rooms in some of the secondary schools in the new year. This would be a CYO led initiative supported by CBRC, CPn and others. We will be offering prayer and support for this exciting initiative (more details available later on). The primary aim of the prayer rooms is to enable young people to slow down enough to connect with God and express prayer to God.

Please pray for Tim, Amy, Tom and others at CYO as they continue to work with young people in Colchester's schools.

Prayer Hearings. On Wednesday 21st November over 50 people gathered at Alderman Blaxill School to share the evening with Bishop of Barking. Tim Abbott and Tom Haward from CYO led a question and answer session with four teenage people which was incredibly inspiring! Mrs Spinlove the Headmistress shared with us some of the challenges faced by the school, which is under Ofsted 'special measures'. We had opportunity to pray for the school.

The Bishop led us in conversation about our experiences of prayer and some of the difficulties Christians face in this area. The prayer hearing team have travelled around Essex and plan to share their findings at Chelmsford Cathedral on 28th January 2008.

Through the gateway

Coastlands and Gateways prayer.

This is a national prayer network, linking us with other towns to unite in prayer for our nation. The first Coastlands and Gateways prayer gathering was held in Liverpool on 27th September. As Colchester Prayernet are involved in this new initiative here is a report from the gathering.

"We have had fantastic responses from across our nations to the first Coastlands and Gateways gathering. We were privileged that so many people had managed to join us and participate in the day. We have people signed up representing England, Jersey, the Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. We appreciate that so many of you are already praying over our communities. However we would you ask you to forward this email on to your networks to encourage them to participate in Coastlands and Gateways?"

Prayer points:

Pray for the protection of our nations spiritually. For God to give people the vision and burden to be positioned where God wants them to be and to start linking together in prayer around the coastlands and across the gateways. That there will be strategic prayer and worship in all the coastlands and gateways around the UK; not just the large cities but in small towns and villages too. Please pray for the raising up of the Watchmen where there are gaps.

Repentance – for apathy and complacency where we have failed to stand in the gap for our nation. Repentance for the state of the nations and the ungodly influences that we have allowed in and that are robbing us of our spiritual

heritage. For a waking up and a shaking off of the apathy. That there would be a determination and diligence to make our borders more secure. That the Government would start to regain control of what is coming in and out of the nation ie. through legislation, increase of customs and excise staff and increase in coastal patrols.

Pray about all illegal things coming into the nation that are causing suffering and affecting us in a negative way eg drugs, sex slaves, illegal immigrants, gangs. The police are concerned about the criminal gangs coming in from Eastern Europe.

Pray for the continued protection of our nation from terrorism. From those that are already here and those who are going in and out of the country. Please pray that anything hidden in the darkness will be brought into the light and that any terrorist attempts will be discovered and their efforts thwarted.

Pray for our government, police and security forces as they deal with dangerous people. For protection, wisdom, insight plus success in detection and conviction.

Why not use Psalm 121 to pray protection for our airports and shipping, road and rail networks, the river and canal systems, tunnels and bridges etc. That the vehicles and routes that are being used to bring harmful things into the nation would be revealed.

For those who have been brought into the nation as slaves and who are suffering eg women and children brought in as sex slaves, illegal workers who are treated as little more than slaves.

Please pray for the release and healing, that they will see God's love and compassion through the Church Luke 4 v 18 -19

Abundant blessings"

Sue and Val

Prayer Breakfast

Saturday 1st December 2007

Time: 8.30 am - 10 am

Venue: St Peter's Church, North Hill, Colchester

Smile Mega Kids Club

Friday 7th December 2007

Kingsland Church Lexden

Contact Ella Havell.

Tel 01206 735925

www.smilepuppetministry.org.uk

Prayer walking

In the coming year we would like to see the streets of Colchester prayer walked.

We would like to hear from you, as we are aware that many congregations regularly prayer walk their locality.

In an attempt to record where Colchester has been prayer walked, and locate areas that have not been prayed for in this way, we need your help please either:

- Letting us know where you or your congregation are prayer walking
- Getting in touch if you would like to prayer walk your part of the town

Contact Teresa :

01206 242235 or email

admin@colchesterprayernet.co.uk

Thank you

Town News

CO1 Youth Café . “Great news - I have now collected the keys to Holy Trinity Church. This will give us unlimited access and allow us to use the church as necessary. We have raised (or have been allocated) approximately £50,000 and are applying for a substantial grant of £150,000 (minimum). Please pray that this will come through. The Cory Environmental Trust have recently awarded us £15,000 and this application would solve many of our problems and let us go straight ahead. There are now opportunities for you to help CO1:

The Christmas Charity Auction is on **Saturday 1st December** - viewing the lots from 12pm and the Auction is from 2pm. I hope you will be able to support us - either in continued prayer support or, if able, visit us. Please forward this information to any interested parties, youth groups and church notices etc. Many thanks”, Phil Toms, CO1 Trustee.

Journey Into Wholeness (JIW)

“The JIW Colchester Group has so appreciated prayers from friends that we must tell you how God worked in and through us. All the planning and Training Day went very well, with 20 people attending and Penny Horseman giving an excellent review of *Art as an Expression of Cultural Change*.

At the Exhibition, we had a rota of three friends "on duty" at our stall all the time, for both Saturday and

Sunday. David, our resident Artist created a painting during the Exhibition which became an excellent talking point - "what is your view of Jesus?" was often the starting point of a conversation and then prayer - of which there were many. There were always two or three visitors, despite lower attendance overall at the Exhibition. At our seminar, the visitors were deeply impressed by David's testimony, and they went away promising to investigate further, and perhaps find a local church.

The prayer support provided by the Boiler Room Community was creative and relevant.

The Follow-up Event at the Odd One Out was attended by 15, including four visitors. Two of these had extremely colourful backgrounds, and they were impressed by David's testimony and we felt it was a useful evening as well as enjoyable. Shalom my friends”. Howard Gardner

Out For Good. This is a new Christian initiative being piloted in Colchester. Run by Frontier Youth Trust, The Jacob Project is looking to house young offenders offering opportunities to integrate back into society by finding employment, healthy communities for them to flourish. The initiative in Colchester is called Out For Good. Next month we will hear from Peter Hope the project leader and pray further into this, but for now lets pray for:

- Houses to become available
- Christian mentors and more job opportunities
- Finances—including a salary for a part time project manager

Friends International

Praise God that:

1. Eileen Warner (from Eld Lane Baptist church) was recently able to visit 7 Japanese graduates from the University of Essex who had become Christians in Colchester. The encouraging fact is that they are all attending a local fellowship and are showing signs of spiritual growth.
2. Over 600 New Testaments were distributed at Freshers' fair by the Gideons.
3. The international café is going well every Thursday.
4. Michael and Caroline are speaking at a church in Southend to envision the church as to the work that can be done amongst international students.
5. Several dozen students have and are attending local churches.

Pray for:

1. The two Christmas meals which Friends International are holding on 8th December 15th December
2. Enough hosts over the Christmas vacation as many students feel very lonely at this time. (To help with hospitality please phone the Michael and Caroline White on 825060).
3. The new contact we have with the Colchester Institute. Pray that we can help international students there.

Blessings! Joan (Davies)