

born as one of us, into poverty and uncertainty, as a light to shine in the darkness. In Epiphany, we see that He came not just for the nation of Israel, but for all, as the Magi, the Wise Men, shown through their long journey from other nations to pay homage. And as we read on and look at Jesus's ministry as an adult, we see how time and time again he triggers change in people's lives: Simon, Andrew, Zacheus, Mary Magdalene, the woman healed in Matthew chapter 9. . . People believe in Him and hope in what He can offer.

I have written before (in our Facebook Thursday Thoughts) about how God prompts change, and how we are called to join in with His work. The scripture sentences that I chose to start this article were both read in Morning Prayer on the day on which I was writing this, and both highlight God's action in doing different things, new things. God Himself is changeless, but He is also creator of a universe that is ever changing. The challenge for us is to identify those places where God is at work in change, and to join in with that. This can be difficult, not least at times like these when there seems so much uncertainty and change all around us, but then the world has always been this way.



A secular cliché often seen on social media is "Be the change you want to see in the world", and of course like all clichés there is a strong basis of truth and wisdom in it. I would suggest that, as Christians, we make one small change and "be the change God wants to see in the world".

A very Happy New Year to you all, and every blessing for 2019.

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GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY
PRISON PRAYER LETTER JANUARY 2019**

"See, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5)

**"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"
(Isaiah 43:19)**

A new year is upon us, and with it comes the inevitable pressure, be it from others or from ourselves, to think about resolutions; changes that we should make in our lives. I'm not a great fan of New Year resolutions in one sense. I think that this is the hardest possible time to



set ourselves new challenges – the weather tends to be cold and damp, the house is much more likely than usual to be full of leftover chocolate, alcoholic drinks and other temptations that may lead us astray, and January can be just a little bit depressing, what with the long nights, the dark days and the anti-climax after the festivities of Christmas (yes, I know Christmas doesn't finish until 6th January, and the season of Epiphany continues until February, but in our increasingly secular culture it often feels as though everyone begins the season too early and by boxing day most have had enough!) This said, perhaps it is at least a good time to think about how we would like to change and where we would like to adjust our lives.



It seems to me that two things are needed to make sustainable change in our lives: firstly motivation (a belief that something will be better as a result) and secondly hope (a belief that we can achieve that change). This is true for all of us as we try to eat more healthily, to exercise more or to give up bad habits, and it is true for our clients as they try to make a new start in or after release from prison. As we round off the season of Christmas and move into Epiphany we have an opportunity to recharge our belief and our hope. At Christmas we are reminded that God was

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1. Give thanks for the work of Prison Fellowship, and in particular pray for all those children of prisoners and their parents who benefited from the Angel Tree scheme over Christmas.
2. Pray for K, who was recently released from Styal, that she will find the support that she is seeking on the outside.
3. G has been recalled to prison after a few years out after many years inside and is feeling very angry and frustrated. Pray that he will find peace and accept his circumstances.
4. Pray for B, who is due for release from Forest Bank today, and for his partner as he returns home to her.
5. Pray for R who is recovering from a break down in Buckley Hall.
6. Pray for F, whose dad died in jail a couple of months ago, but who has heard nothing about the funeral, that he may receive information soon and will be able to mourn his loss.
7. Pray for L, who is due for release today, and is very anxious about the next steps in his life.
8. Pray for all those suffering bereavement, some recent and some many years ago, who will be attending a Living with Loss course in Buckley Hall in January and February.
9. A is continuing to struggle with alcohol misuse on the outside; pray that he might be prompted to engage with support in a meaningful way.
10. Pray for K, who is struggling to find out information about family with whom he has lost touch, that he might receive news that will set his mind at rest.
11. Pray for all probation teams and Community Rehabilitation Companies as they seek to support those on community sentences and those released from prisons.
12. J's wife has died recently, but none of her family have come forward to plan the funeral. Pray for a resolution to this situation, and for comfort for J and all his wife's family and friends.
13. Pray for B, who wishes to get married soon and is hoping to move from Buckley Hall to a category D prison.
14. Pray for J, who has recently been diagnosed with cancer.
15. M feels the voices in his head are getting worse, and is very vulnerable in jail. Pray for healing and protection for him.
16. Pray for S, in HMP Manchester who feels under threat everywhere there and is desperate to move on.

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17. Pray for S, who after hearing the gospel from the Message Trust Oaks Team said the "sinner's prayer" as he starts his journey with Christ.
18. Pray for the Prison Fellowship team as they prepare to deliver the Sycamore Tree course in Styal next month, and that the women who would benefit most will find out about it and have the courage to participate.
19. Pray for H, a long term client of GMCC, that his circumstances might improve.
20. Pray for L who was assaulted last time he was in prison and is very anxious about being back there after being recalled.
21. J has a lot of mental health problems and seems stuck in a vicious cycle; pray for support and healing for him that he might be able to break with this pattern.
22. Pray for O who has been regularly attending chapel courses at Buckley Hall and has stopped self-harming.
23. Pray for the chaplaincy team at Forest Bank during a period in which they are short-staffed.
24. Pray for J, who has started to attend church and is making positive steps in his life, that he may continue on this path and that his faith and understanding may deepen.
25. K has a lot of problems with anger and knows he needs help; pray that he will find and engage with the help he needs.
26. Pray that L who was recently released is getting the support that he needs, and will be able to stay out of trouble.
27. Pray for the new "progressive unit" at Buckley Hall, and that those on indeterminate sentences may soon be ready to be released.
28. P has returned to drinking; pray that he may have the courage and strength to try again.
29. Pray for J, who has been told that he cannot be in touch with his child, that he might come to understand and accept this.
30. Pray for M, who has cancer and is waiting to find out if he will be able to have treatment.
31. Pray for L, a client of GMCC who has not been seen for some time, that he may be kept safe and will return if he needs support.