

# Topics for talks and sermons



Thinking about Christmas starts early for many people. It would be good, therefore, to start equally early in budgeting for it. Churches may be able to help not only by possibly rescheduling some of their services and celebrations (see Leaflets: 'Advent to Epiphany' ) but also by promoting charitable giving. There could be a special service focusing on Christmas giving on Christ The King Sunday (see Free Resources: 'Gifts For A King'). The more people do it, the less pressure others will be under to go overboard with their own Christmas shopping and the more charities will benefit! Tightening our own belts means more cheer to go round!

Here are some suggestions for sermons, talks and group discussions to accompany our leaflet, 'Whose Birthday Are We Celebrating?'.

- An appropriate text may be found in Matthew 2:11. The questions usually are: who were the Magi? Where did they come from? Questions less frequently asked are: to whom were they giving their gifts? What was their significance?
- Although frequently cited as the reason for our annual festive gift exchange, the fact is that the Magi were giving gifts to Jesus, not to each other. How did our practice of exchanging presents originate? What might we do to emulate the Magi, both in the nature of our giving and in the recipients of our gifts?
- How much should we give? See Luke 3:11, in which John the Baptist admonishes his followers to prepare for their encounter with Christ by giving away half of their possessions to the poor. In 2015, our estimated total high street spending at Christmas was roughly £26bn (and this is likely to be a conservative figure). So maybe...
- The solution to world poverty lies as much in our own hands as in those of our various governments and may begin with our own individual giving. What better time to increase our charitable giving than at Christmas? Jesus came that we 'might have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10). Let's find ways of giving that gift of life to others this Christmas.

