

ALL SAINTS' MALDON



PARISH NEWS

December 2020

Photographic contributions for the front of this magazine sent to the editor will be most welcome.

£1



CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday Services	8:00am Holy Communion (BCP 1662) 10:00 am Sung Parish Eucharist (except first Sunday of the month). 6:30 pm Evensong and Sermon second and third Sundays of the month
1st Sunday in the Month	10:00am Short all age songs and prayers. 11:15am Parish Eucharist (CW) 6:00 pm Evensong at St Mary's
Last Sunday	6:30 pm Prayer and Praise Service

JUNIOR CHURCH

Each Sunday at 10:00am.in the

D'Arcy Room in Church

WEEKDAY

SERVICE

Evening

Morning Prayer is usually said in church at 8.30am on Monday - Friday.

Prayer is usually said in church at 5.30pm on Monday - Thursday

Thursday 11:00am Holy

**Cover Picture: Remembrance Day Service conducted by Canon Graham at the Maldon memorial.
Photo: G Dickman.**



NOT FROM THE VICARAGE

“So – what are your plans for Christmas?” How many times over the years have we asked and been asked that question. In most households, Christmas plans are a complex affair of planning meals and gifts, working out who visits whom on Christmas Day, whose turn it is to host the Boxing Day bash, who has uncle Norris to stay until Easter at least, and what are you doing for New Year? For those of us with smaller or scattered families, plans may be easier, but generally, whatever the household, plans are afoot. So what about this year - we don’t even know what we will be planning for yet. And even if we know by the beginning of Advent, who is to say things won’t have changed by Christmas Eve?

We know that dealing with uncertainty saps our energy; each day we are faced with more anxieties and decisions than we are used to – many of them really small, but necessary nonetheless: should I go out to the shop; does this count as a necessary journey; can I meet a friend outside for a walk; what if the supermarket is too crowded and I feel uncomfortable; when will I be able to buy Christmas cards and presents; what will I be doing for Christmas?

We know too of all the bigger issues people are facing this year; the spectre of illness, loneliness, bereavement, loss of livelihood, being separated from friends and family, unable to hold those we love, new lives together put on hold, family celebrations delayed causing not only a lack of celebration but the chaos, sadness and uncertainty of changed plans. I know some people who feel this may be their last Christmas with a loved one – and how do they make it the best Christmas ever? How do we create special memories when we are frightened to be close to those we love for fear of endangering them?

The Church of England has acknowledged that this is a uniquely difficult year to celebrate Christmas and so has put together resources for churches and individuals on the theme of Comfort and Joy. We in All Saints are using that theme for our Advent and Christmas seasons. Comfort and Joy holds in tension the hope for the joy of celebrating Christ’s birth with the recognition of a need for comfort – comfort for those who have lost something in this year – a loved one; physical, mental or spiritual wellbeing; livelihoods; the closeness of those we love and depend on. It recognises that not everyone can be joyful at Christmas – indeed every year, there are people who find



Christmas a particularly difficult occasion – we’ve had that long before a pandemic.

The Nativity story itself of course, isn’t to do with tinsel and turkey. It doesn’t have smiling new parents surrounded by family and friends. The first nativity was difficult and messy, poor and lonely, overshadowed by death even as a birth was celebrated. A pregnant teenager – unmarried when the baby was conceived - and a reluctant husband, take a long and hazardous journey to end up somewhere where they know no family or friends. With little money and being too late to stay anywhere better, their baby was born in an animal shed, rented out by a fractious pub landlord. The visitors who came were strangers of no worth or status – working shepherds who no-one else would have entertained at the cradle of their new born baby; and the kings who came later with their gifts foreshadowed sadness and death.

And yet that first seemingly flawed Christmas, led to a Good News story for the poor and oppressed, the weak and the outcast, the poor in spirit and those who mourn. As the life of Jesus played out then, and as we interpret it today, many find hope that belief in God can give; that today’s sorrows can be healed and we can find peace and comfort in the Kingdom of God.

Our challenge for this Advent and Christmas, more than ever, is to bring that Kingdom a bit closer for those who are struggling to see it or feel it - to help give others hope, to help bring comfort and joy into the lives of others, to be the salt and light in the world. And if we look through the difficulty and despair, we can be encouraged by the acts of kindness and generosity in everyday life which bring hope to those who are struggling -from the staggering sacrifice of health and care workers, and those working in essential services, to businesses whose own livelihoods are in jeopardy making up food parcels - and everything in between: volunteers packing emergency food and toiletries parcels for those in need; local foodbanks whose appeals are generously met; people who have increased their donations to charities; those who make more effort to keep in touch by telephone, email, letter; neighbour shopping for neighbour; people checking in on the vulnerable; smiles from a distance (and behind masks – you can still tell); there’s even a man ironing crisp packets together to turn them into insulated sleeping bag liners for the homeless. And when eating crisps helps to save someone on the street, then surely that is worth celebrating.

Wishing you all a season of comfort and joy,

Adrienne Knight



WHAT'S IN A CAROL?

Apart from the privacy of our home and bathroom we aren't allowed to sing in public spaces this Christmas. We're likely to feel this most keenly as we have to forego joining in our best-loved carols – gone is the 'comfort and joy' which used to mark our celebration of this wonderful Christian festival.

But this reminds us how dependent we have become on church-based religious festivities during Advent and Christmas. Whilst it makes sense to go to your parish church as a community resource (after all, not everyone who loves singing carols is religious) our forbears were rather more imaginative and informal. Medieval carols, with their close relation to secular songs and tunes, were community property as well as being encouraged by the church. Towns, villages and hamlets would be very musical places: squares, market crosses, fayres, taverns and private houses would resound with the rough and ready echoes of stentorian and treble voices carolling, often fortified by 'wassail' - a spicy and intoxicating punch.

The C17 Puritan parliament had replaced Christmas Day with a fast, which meant that during the Commonwealth, celebrations were only to be found outside the church. Amazingly the only carol to be recognised by the Church of England as late as 1700 was 'While shepherds watch'd' (words by Nahum Tate, poet laureate to Charles II); followed in 1782 by 'Hark the herald angels sing'. Certainly a very daring speed for the Anglican church!

However as the C18 gave way to the early 19th, country churches with a gallery came into their own. Singers and instrumentalists would perform as from heaven above: and many churches still did not have an organ. (This is the situation portrayed by Thomas Hardy in his short novel 'Under the Greenwood Tree'). The musicians would often elaborate upon the melody between the verses, forming a small and not always very accurate band. Borrowings from other people's tunes were either not known about or not acknowledged, Handel's best hits being often snatched (eg 'Thine be the glory', 'The Harmonious Blacksmith'). There were local peculiarities as well. Yorkshire Christians for instance used to sing a tune to "While shepherds watch'd" which later jumped ship to become "On Ilkley Moor baht' at" – an unusual reversal, since the tune permanently escaped its religious context.

As the early C19 heralded the momentous shift from agricultural life to industrial enterprise in towns and cities, so country musicians became better educated and exposed to new music. These new styles were not just confined to London society either. Take John Foster's grandiose setting of "While



shepherds watch'd", written in 1820 in High Green near Sheffield. To an original (and very catchy) tune, it is scored for full classical orchestra with kettledrums. Written no doubt for one of the emerging choral festivals which were springing up in the north, it is highly accomplished and sounds just like Haydn. A shorter informal setting of it is, I believe, still sung in pubs round Sheffield where it's known as 'Old Foster' – to complement that newer Foster's from behind the bar no doubt. Intriguingly, as well as a skilled composer, Foster was known as a coroner and humourist! His robust music proclaims him to be a most genial chap.

The majority of carols assume a social order which reflects the customs of their day. Generally that accords with the pecking order in the Nativity Story – 'the rich man in his castle' (the Wise Men), the 'poor man at his gate' (Joseph and the Shepherds). Of course the Prince of Peace himself is from a realm above our own, but most of the Christmas hymns achieve an appropriate balance between his impoverished birth and his divine glory. The medieval imagery of purity, innocence, wonder and devotion all survive into the later period: but they are overshadowed by a darkness of mood which exposes the harsh Victorian landscape with its frequent foreign wars and the plight of the urban poor :

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light,
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight

(Bishop Phillips Brooks, 1868)

Or; And man, at war with man, hears not
the love-song, which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

(Edmund Sears, pastor, 1847)

This Christmas I am sure we will all be seeking solace by listening to our favourite carols and discovering that this year's elusive 'comfort and joy' maybe hasn't disappeared after all. Perhaps you will also be able to tune in to our 'virtual Carol Service' on our website which is being compiled for us by Mike Kneller. You will see some familiar faces there and be reminded of happier times together. God never forgets us – 'the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it'. Yes, in 2020 the world may seem to have greater problems than ever; but the love of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords for his people is sure and unfailing.



How brightly shines the morning star!
 with grace and truth from heav'n afar:
 our Jesse tree now bloweth.
 Of Jacob's stem and David's line,
 for thee, my Bridegroom, King divine,
 my soul with Love o'erfloweth.

Happy Christmas! *Canon Graham*



Church Warden's Chat

As I write this we are in lockdown again! It seems that every time I manage to get cover for our Sunday services, while we are still in vacancy, the government imposes another closure of churches and that cover of visiting clergy is no longer required! Hopefully we will be able to meet again in church for Advent and our Christmas services.

Having now learnt how to join Zoom meetings, Vicky and I attended Deanery Synod in November, from the comfort of our own homes. Our Area Dean, Peter Begley introduced the guest speaker, Rev'd James Gilder, from St. Edmund's Chingford, who is the Environmental Officer for the Diocese. He stated that due to the great impact that humans are having on the environment by selfishly using limited resources and our continuing consumption of "stuff", the situation of increasing global warming and destruction of wildlife was frightening. Due to this the Diocesan Synod unanimously endorsed the resolution to become carbon neutral by 2030.

James said that in 2012 we emitted a million tons of CO2 which was the equivalent to a string of double-decker buses, full of CO2 stretching from Chelmsford Cathedral to the Scottish border! Much of this was emitted by our diocesan schools, but churches were responsible for some 35%. All schools and churches have been asked to look into ways of reducing their emissions, not an easy task! There will be ideas and guidance from the diocese over the coming years. However it is also important that we consider how we, at home, can make a difference to our household output of CO2 and to be more environmentally friendly. The human race only has one planet, and we have to take care of it.

It is now dark outside, so I must go and have a conversation with my cat about dinner (well it's better than talking to myself, though I haven't yet learnt cat speak, so I can't translate her replies!)

I'm looking forward to seeing you all again in December, after lockdown, so until then, stay safe and healthy.

Jenny

**Maldon
& District**

At Maldon & District Citizens Advice, we can help you find a way forward, by giving free, confidential advice in all subject areas.

Warm Homes Energy Advice

This month we are highlighting the advice we can give about problems heating your home. With winter fast approaching you may be worried about your energy bills or be finding it difficult to keep your home warm. We have a dedicated Warm Homes adviser who can give you advice on the various options available. Please get in touch.

Warm Home Discount.

You might be able to get £140 off your electricity bill under the Warm Home Discount Scheme if you're either:

- getting the guarantee credit part of Pension Credit
- on a low income

Check with your supplier to see if they offer the Warm Home Discount - not all suppliers are part of the scheme.

Energy trust fund

If you're in debt to your energy supplier, you might be able to get a grant from a charitable trust to help pay it off. British Gas and other big supplier have their own charitable trusts. They like you to show that you have received debt advice before you apply. Debt advice can help you manage your debts and increase your chances of making a successful application. We can help you with this.

Home insulation and heating grants

You might be able to make improvements to your home - for example, adding insulation or installing a better heating system which will cut your energy bills. We can help you work out if you might be eligible for financial assistance with this.

Energy supplier switching

You'll probably save money on your gas and electricity bills by switching to a new supplier. You should start by:

- checking which type of meter you have



- finding out if your contract has an 'exit fee' for leaving early - it's usually on your bill
- looking at your current suppliers tariffs

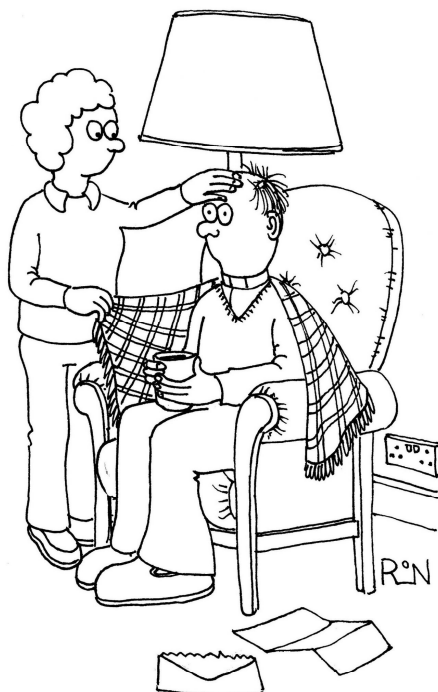
Once you've got this information we can help you get some quotes and you can see how much you could save. Citizens Advice have our own energy price comparison tool:

<https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Please contact us for advice on any subject by: ringing 01621 875774 – leave a message and an adviser will return your call that day or by emailing: bureau@maldoncab.cabnet.org.uk

Caroline Halfacre

Warm Homes adviser



Martin received the latest Christmas coronavirus regulations from the diocesan office.



A Christmas Poem

As we keep being told, this Christmas will be like no other if the Pandemic still holds sway. Even during the dark days of world war 2 there was no restrictions on seeing family providing that one had the means of making the journey and that transport was still operating. At the time of writing there are some signs that it may yet be possible to be with those close to us and we can only hope and pray that is the case. Some sections of the media have even suggested that Christmas be cancelled. I don't think that would be possible as it is the festival of the birth of Christ and no legislation or decree could alter history or the will of people to celebrate it in any way they can. In the past I have sometimes had to celebrate Christmas in foreign countries including Singapore, Korea and Japan due to work commitments and Christmas is always a big celebration and holiday in those countries even though Christianity is a minor religion there. If they can celebrate the birth of Jesus then so can we.

Thinking of Christmas, I had a thought that I should read some of my favourite Christmas poems until it dawned on me that I didn't really know any Christmas poems except, if one counts the mushy doggerel that is found in many Christmas greeting cards. As so often nowadays, I then went 'on line' and soon found a very serious poem by a very serious poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.



Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
(1806 - 1861)



This great poet was an avid reader and devout Christian and in order to be able to better understand classic literature and the Bible in the original language, taught herself Hebrew and Greek. Browning suffered constant ill health and in the early 1840's after the tragic death of her brother, she confined herself for five years to her room where she wrote many of her poems. Five years, and we complain over a few months! In 1846 She met and married Robert Browning and they eloped to Florence where they lived very happily until Elizabeth died there in June 1861.

The Holy Night By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

We sat among the stalls at Bethlehem;
The dumb cows from their fodder turning them,
Softened their horned faces
To almost human gazes
Toward the newly born:
The simple shepherds from the star-lit brooks
Brought their visionary looks,
As yet in their astonished hearing rung
The strange sweet angel-tongue
The Magi of the East, in sandals worn,
Knelt reverent, sweeping round,
With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground,
The incense, myrrh, and gold
These baby hands were impotent to hold:
So let all earthlies and celestials wait
Upon thy royal state.
Sleep, sleep, my kingly One!

The English used might be a little old fashioned to us now, but the message is clear and powerful.

However you spend it, a Happy Christmas to you all and may the New Year bring new hope.

Ken Downham

.....
Drive

He was a careful driver during the Christmas period. At the railway crossing he stopped, looked and listened. All he heard was the car behind him, smashing into his boot.

.....



RICHARD GETS BENCHED FOR CHESS HOMELESS!

This year's organised CHESS Sleepout was cancelled due to you-know-what, but this event is normally the rough sleeper charity's biggest single fundraiser of the year, and so Richard Knight responded, to the appeal to supporters, to do their own thing to raise money safely to make up the deficit. By the time you read this, he will have slept out on the night of **Friday 27th November** on a wooden bench in his back garden. It's not too late to sponsor him though if you would like to. You can sponsor him through the Just Giving page he set up: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/richardknightchess20> where he will also post an update of the sleepout. Or if you would like to sponsor him but can't access the web page you can still do so by putting money through his letterbox in an envelope. Please get in touch via knight@heybridgeknight.plus.com or 01621 841 329, and we will work out how you can donate.

Many Thanks

Richard Knight

CHESS works to ensure that people who find themselves homeless in Essex are supported in ways that enable them to move forward purposefully and in good health.



Here's a picture of Richard testing out his new accommodation before his big night out.



Paul J King

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Christmas C 202



Helen Robinson
would like to wish
everyone at All Saints a
Very Happy Christmas
and
New Year



Jean & Ken

Wish all our friends at All
Saints
a Happy Christmas and New
Year



Jackie & Alan Marjoram

Wish everyone
Joy and Peace,
Celebration and
Wonder.
As you welcome
Christmas this year



Eddie and Gift

Send their greetings
and good wishes to
you all, for a Happy
Christmas and
Peaceful New Year



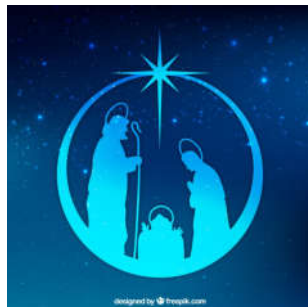


Greetings 20



Peter & Vivien

Send Christmas
Greetings to you all,
especially contributors
to this magazine, with
the hope that the
contributions will
continue during 2021.



With love to our
All Saints' family this
Christmas

**Richard, Adrienne and
George Knight xxx"**



Ken and Joan

Wish everyone a
peaceful, happy and
healthy Christmas



**Wishing a happy and
peaceful Christmas to
all our friends at All
Saints',**

**From Canon Graham
and Liz**



Christmas

2



**Jenny and Debbie
Clinch**

Wish all our family at
All Saints' a Happy
Christmas and a
healthier and more
normal
New Year



Yvonne and Mike

**wish everyone at
All Saints' a very
happy Christmas
and a better New
Year in 2021**



***May this Christmas end the
present year on a cheerful note
and make way for a fresh and
bright New Year.***

***With Love to our All Saints' family,
Mike and Julie. xx***



Anita and Brian Withrington

**Wish you all a Happy Christmas and a
Peaceful and settled year ahead in 2021**



Christmas Greetings 2020



Wishing everybody at All Saints' a Joyful
and covid free Christmas and 2021

Mike and Laura Gibson

THANKS

We extend our grateful thanks to all who have posted greetings
this year and wish everybody in our All Saints family the happiest
of Christmases and hope for a healthy New Year in 2021.

Thanks to you all we have raised about £200.00 for the
much needed church funds.

Ed.

Picture

The teacher asked her Sunday School class to draw a picture of a Bible story with a Christmas theme. She was puzzled by Kate's picture, which showed four people on an airplane. She asked her which story it was meant to represent.

'The Flight to Egypt,' was the reply.

Pointing at each figure, the teacher ventured: 'That must be Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. But who's the fourth person?'

'Oh,' explained Kate happily, 'that's Pontius – the pilot!'



Dec20 © deborah noble • parishpump.co.uk



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Luke 2 verses 22-38

God promised the Jews that when times were bad, He would send a leader to save them. He told Simeon it would happen in his life time.

God told Simeon to go to the Temple.



He saw a couple with a baby.

Mary and Joseph had come to give their offerings for their first-born, Jesus, and for childbirth.



Simeon held Jesus and praised God.



I can now die in peace because You have kept Your promise.



I have seen the one You have sent to save Your people and all the world!

Mary and Joseph were amazed! Simeon blessed them, but said...



This child will show what people are really like inside and this will mean pain for you as well.



Anna the prophet was also in the Temple.



Her family was from the north of Israel and she was very old.



She spent every day praying in the Temple.

When she saw Jesus she praised God.



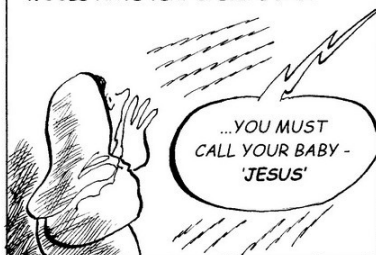
Anna spoke about Jesus to everyone who was waiting for God's Saviour.



JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.



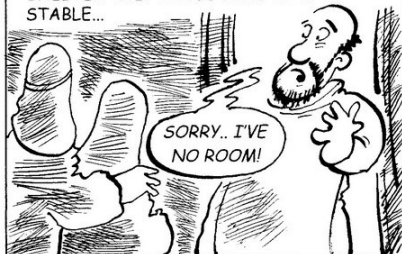
AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE VERY SPECIAL BABY



MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE BY THE CENSUS.



BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL... THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE...



...WHICH IS WHERE THE BABY JESUS WAS BORN.



SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY. AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAS BEEN BORN.





GOING TO CHURCH IN THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

More than 17,000 online services and events have been provided by Church of England churches since the introduction of the lockdown and restrictions on public worship earlier this year.

Figures from the Church of England's A Church Near You website, which allows people to search for church services and events, show that more than 17,000 online services or events are now listed, including Sunday Communion services, Bible studies and morning or night prayer. Many of these services take place regularly and this figure represents a snapshot of the likely total number.

The statistics do not include the Church of England's national online weekly services broadcast on Sundays and shared on Facebook and YouTube. There have been nearly three million views of the national online services and posts about the weekly broadcasts have been seen 23.6 million times. Contributors have included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Duke of Cambridge and Pope Francis.

The national online services are being watched by a wide range of ages and around one in five people viewing go to church infrequently or not at all.

Other figures in the report show that official Church of England apps from Church House Publishing – the most popular being Daily Prayer, or the Daily Office of morning, evening and night prayer – have been used more than seven million times so far this year, up from five million in 2019. Church of England social media posts have been seen 86 million times so far, nearly double the total for last year.

The growth in online services has been helped by the Church of England stepping up its digital training programme for congregations. More than 4,200 vicars and local church leaders have taken part in remote digital training courses so far this year, four times the number as in 2019.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "At a time when many have felt isolated and fearful, Church of England parishes and clergy have broadcast thousands of online church services and events, seeking to bring comfort and hope to their communities. We know that tens of thousands of those tuning in will never have had contact with their local Church of England parish before and may never have heard the Christian message. Their welcome presence is a sign of the great hunger we all have for spiritual meaning in our lives."

Taken from the Parish pump website.



To the nation 4 November 2020

Dear Friends,

These are deeply challenging and difficult times for us all. When we are surrounded by fear and suffering, it can be hard to feel hopeful. This coming winter feels like it will be longer and darker than usual. There is a story in the Bible where Jesus and his disciples are caught in a storm. The disciples are understandably terrified as the wind and waves threaten to overpower them. 'Why are you so afraid?', Jesus asks. This year, we too have been caught in a storm which often feels overwhelming. And yet we can look to Jesus, in the boat with us, who calms the storm and comforts us in our fear. We are writing to share our belief that whoever you are, and whatever you happen to believe, you are loved by God. Beyond measure. We also want you to know that we are praying for you, particularly asking that Christ's love will comfort us, calm our fears, and lead our nation and our world through this terrible pandemic. Starting this week, we have asked every church to pray each day at 6pm. We invite you to join with us. You'll be able to find simple resources on the Church of England website and social media channels. There are three other responses that we want to encourage everyone to consider - First, let's be calm. By only buying what we need and not hoarding, or by reaching out to our neighbours as we did during the first lockdown, we can be stronger together in ways that are impossible if we go it alone. When things go wrong - as they always will with such complex challenges - let us look for good and right ways forward together. Secondly, let's be courageous. There are many reasons to be fearful at the moment, but the story of Christ calming the waves calls us to give our fears to Jesus and have faith in Him. The British willingness just to get on with things is one of our very best characteristics - let us not be paralysed by fear. We will all need each other's courage in the months to come. Thirdly, let's be compassionate. So many of us are holding so much pain - our own and the pain of those we love. We will need to be gentle, kind and patient with each other. In the first wave we showed we are a nation of compassion and kindness. Let's dig deep and keep that love for our neighbours strong.

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The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell Archbishop of York

*This is a joint letter from the Archbishops and was taken from
the Church of England Website*



Continuing our correspondence between Eustace, rector of St James the Least, and his nephew.... Taken from the Parish Pump website.



The Rectory
St. James the Least

On the best ways for a vicar to disrupt Christmas

My dear Nephew Darren,

I am sorry I was not alive during that wonderful four-year period when Oliver Cromwell abolished Christmas; no Christmas parties, no carol services, no cards to send and no frantic last-minute shopping. That man was a hero.

Planning for Christmas at St James' normally starts on 2nd January. By Easter, the flowers for church have been carefully chosen to be colour coordinated, and the seating plans and table decorations for the Christmas party have been allocated (with nominated reserves in case someone should inconveniently die in the intervening eight months). Long before Summer is over, the tree lights have been tested, music for the 9 Lessons and Carols Service has been chosen and the service sheets printed. Way before the dark nights set in, car parking attendants will have been found, those who are to light all the candles will have been rehearsed to perfection, and the brass lectern has had its annual polish.

We do not do spontaneity at St James the Least of All. If ever there was a service when time for something unexpected had to be allowed, its place would be announced in the order of service, how long the unexpected thing would happen for would have been decided by a committee, and who was to be spontaneous would have been allocated on a rota.

But the one person none of these well-meaning, efficient, committed organisers can control is the Rector. You could call it a staff perk.

Carols will (accidentally, of course) be announced in the wrong order; if verse 3 was to be omitted, I announce it will be verse 4. This keeps the organist on his toes while the choir hovers on the point of a collective nervous breakdown. At the Christmas supper, my introductory welcome speech and extensive grace make those in the kitchen wonder if the vegetables being boiled should better be served as thick soup.

I offer the helpful suggestion that the tree, having been installed and decorated in the chancel, may perhaps look better in the sanctuary and I turn all the heating off throughout the season, explaining that it will help the

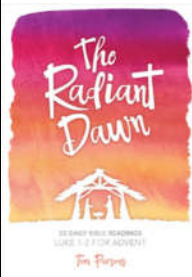


flowers to last. All Services will start five minutes early (was my watch rather fast?) so I can look disapprovingly at those still coming in while we are singing the first carol and making it clear that I think they had spent too long in the pub next door.

And so we all reach Christmas morning, with 12 months of planning having gone yet again slightly awry, with parishioners exhausted and I exhilarated at the chaos that has been created with such ease. Mr Cromwell, your spirit lives on.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



Book Reviews

The Radiant Dawn –

Luke 1-2 for Advent

By Tom Parsons, 10Publishing, £3.99

“You will conceive and give birth to a son ... And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by ... You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke’s opening chapters ring with the familiar well-loved lines that herald the warm solemnity of Christmas. This book on Luke’s first two chapters will guide you through Advent in 25 daily Bible readings and prayers.

Lights sparkle in the darkness that enfolds the Northern Hemisphere at this time of year – until they are taken down and put back in the box in January. Luke points us to Jesus, the Radiant Dawn of a day that will never end. Let these Advent reflections direct your heart’s gaze towards Him, who is the shining source of confidence and joy in whatever darkness we experience.

Taken from the Parish Pump website.

N.B.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY 2021

MAGAZINE 20th DECEMBER



HOLY DAYS

26 December

St Stephen – the first martyr

Have you ever stopped to consider that the very first martyr of the Christian Church (Stephen died c 35 AD) was a deacon? (But no, he wasn't worked to death by his church.) It was Stephen, one of the first seven deacons of the Christian Church. He'd been appointed by the apostles to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful poor, and to help in the ministry of preaching.

Acts 6 and 7 tells us all that we know of his life, and the passages seem to suggest that he was an educated Hellenistic Jew. Certainly Stephen's famous challenge to the Jews reveals him to have been learned in the Scriptures and the history of Judaism, besides being eloquent and forceful.

Stephen's proclamation on the day of his martyrdom pulled no punches. He told the Jews that God did not depend on the Temple. The Temple was but a temporary institution destined to be fulfilled and superseded by Christ, who was the prophet foreseen by Moses as the Messiah for whom the Jewish race had so long awaited.

Stephen then challenged his hearers for resisting the Spirit and for killing the Christ, as their fathers before them had killed the prophets. The Jews were so outraged by this that they stoned Stephen on the spot for blasphemy.

As he died, Stephen saw a vision of Christ on God's right hand. The men who were witness to the stoning placed their clothes at the feet of Saul (afterwards Paul), who (to his deep regret later) consented to Stephen's death.

By the fourth century Stephen had his own feast day in both East and West Churches. When his supposed tomb was discovered in 415, his popularity soared. His (supposed) relics were taken to Constantinople and then Rome, along with some stones (allegedly) used at his martyrdom.

Early on the Church made Stephen the patron saint of deacons. In the late Middle Ages he was also invoked against headaches (?!).

In England, 46 ancient churches are dedicated to him, most of them built after the Norman Conquest. In art Stephen is usually given a book of the Gospels and a stone, and sometimes the palm of martyrdom.

Taken from the Parish Pump Website



REFLECTED FAITH: GRACE FOR ALL

The Revd Dr Jo White continues her series on symbols in our churches.

Last month we thought about one key element of gathered worship – the Welcome. It is for everyone, regardless of how they look, or dress, their faith or their behaviour. This month, being the month of Advent and Christmas, let's focus on Grace.

God, in Jesus, did not wait for us to become perfect or reach up to Him but rather He came to us, in the daily mess of our lives; as and where we are.

I recently heard someone say: 'God's nature is goodness', and the Bible confirms that this is true. He cannot help it. That's what He is. He is goodness, and grace, and forgiveness, and faithfulness, and all those wonderful attributes that come from the pure essence of love.

It's what we strive for – to be more like Him every day. Then our welcome to others will also be full of grace, His grace, and not guided by our own likes or prejudices. Instead, we can reach out to others spontaneously, from a heart of love.

This Advent and Christmas it will probably be harder to welcome people into our times of worship. Virtual is not the same as actual, and actual will include facemasks. But that does not mean that we should give up on reaching out to those who visit our church. This year, more than ever, they may need us. Many will be lonely this Christmas, far from their families.

So, although our normal church services may be disrupted, we have to remember that services are not the church; WE are the church. In what has been an extraordinary year, perhaps we can each of us find an informal way of sharing our Christmas joy with anyone whom God sends our way.

Taken from the Parish Pump Website

.....
We are better givers than getters... The Christmas story – the one according to Luke, not Dickens – is not about how blessed it is to be givers, but about how essential it is to see ourselves as receivers. – *William Willimon*
.....



Dates for the Diary

Due to the current situation we are not including Dates for the Diary

Lunch at All Saints

Soup – hot food- cakes

12:00-2:00

**No Lunches Until
Further Notice**



From the Registers



FUNERALS

4th November **Bernard Gore** aged 88 years of Highlands Drive

16th November **John Speakman** aged 90 years of Maldon Hall Farm

18th November **Bob Collings** aged 91 years of Wantz Haven

18th November **Leonard Thurkettle** aged 87 years of Fambridge Road



Prayer Diary

DECEMBER 2020

1	Those making decisions about our health and wellbeing
2	Those who will struggle financially this Christmas
3	All Postal Workers
4	Those who are terminally ill
5	The Salvation Army
6 Second Sunday of Advent	All charities planning care for those less fortunate than ourselves
7	Those who have lost their faith
8	All Infant and Junior school teachers
9	The work of The Children's Society
10	The Dean, Chapter and Staff of Chelmsford Cathedral
11	Workers in the hospitality industry
12	Those addicted to alcohol
13 Third Sunday of Advent	All who live in our Parish
14	The work of Chelmsford CHESS
15	Places of conflict throughout the world
16	All those unable attend our Church during the Christmas season through Covid restrictions
17	The housebound and elderly
18	Distant friends and relatives
19	All street pastors
20 Fourth Sunday of Advent	Our preparation for Christmas
21	Volunteers working with Crisis at Christmas
22	Children estranged from their parents
23	Those who will be alone this Christmas
24 Christmas Eve	Christians in the Holy Land
25 Christmas Day	Our family
26 St Stephen	The homeless and the deprived
27 Christmas 1	All shop workers
28 Holy Innocents	Religious broadcasters
29 St John	All who are in residential care
30	All who work on public transport
31	For peace in the world in 2021



ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	CONTACT	TELEPHONE
Choir Practice (Thur 7:30pm)	Dr. Stuart Pegler	01621 850530
Junior Choir (Thur 7:00 pm)	"	"
Junior Church	Elaine Brown	01621 853238
Sunshiners (Pre School Group Thursdays 9:15 am)	Gill Nelson	01621 852119
Tower Bell Ringers	Peter Chignell	01376 571170
	Dennis Johnson	01621 842410
Handbell Ringers	Susan Duke	01621 851623
Flower Group	Betty Smith	01621 854143
Bible Society	Joan Downham	01621854655
Childrens Society	Elaine Brown	01621
Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts (14-18yrs)	(Joanne Maloney membership1stmaldon@gmail.com)	
Meeting Point	Barbara Gale	01621 928538
Maldon Pioneers	Mike Frederick	01621 840951
Maldon Ladies Group	Vivien Clark	01621 869667
Ramblers Club		
Prayer Group		
Messy Church	Elaine Brown	

To register your daughter's interest in joining either:
Rainbows, Brownies, Guides or Rangers
please visit www.girlguiding.org.uk
or call 0800 169 5901.

PARISH OFFICE

Requests for Baptisms and Marriages should be made at the Parish Office situated in the Church - entrance via the main entrance door from the High Street - on 1st and 3rd Wed of the month between 7:00 and 8:00 pm



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VICAR

Vacancy

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Rev. Canon Dr. Graham Blyth

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LOCAL PREACHERS

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Tel 01621 841329

Alan Marjoram

Tel 01245 243868

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Dennis Johnson

Tel: 01621 842410

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4A Belvedere Place

Tel: 01621 840057

DEPUTY
CHURCHWARDENS

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Mrs Vivien Clark

Tel: 01621 869667

HON TREASURER

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Tel: 01621 851961

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Tel: 01621 858803

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Tel: 01621 850530

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