

ALL SAINTS CHURCH BOYNE HILL MAIDENHEAD

PARISH NEWS

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LAST ISSUE OF 2020



Dear Parishioners and Friends of All Saints, Boyne Hill,

This is normally a week when families are excited about gathering to share Christmas. The time when young and not so young come together to enjoy Jamie's inspired Christmas dinner prepared and cooked in half the time and tasting delicious. It is a time when we watch our favourite films and listen to the Queen's speech and enjoy a glass or two of champagne, wine, sherry, piwo (Polish for beer), whiskey or any other favourite tippie you may like. It is a time when we open our gifts of unbelievably exciting socks like Robbie Williams wore on the One Show the other week and perhaps if you enjoy family games a time to dust down Cluedo or Monopoly (showing my age) and battle to the bitter end to see who wins!

This year will for many be different. There will be more people I suspect on their own and even if we have managed to meet up, left to feel as if we have escaped from Colditz – I used to like that game as well!

The Church of England's message for Christmas is to offer 'Comfort and Joy'. The good old COE love taking up challenges and I hope that we can put up a better show that my dear old Leeds United offered against the arch-rivals from Manchester last weekend when Leeds defence would have brought comfort and joy to Moses the way they parted! Anyway, what joy can we find?

Martha Collison, baker and food writer has offered one of the reflections in the Church of England's booklet on 'Comfort and Joy'. I don't know Martha, but her background encouraged me to turn to her piece rather than Archbishop Justin or Archbishop Stephen. No disrespect to our Archbishops but if I am looking for a message of hope I am going to turn to someone who can bake a decent mince pie, Christmas pudding and a beautiful sherry inspired trifle this Christmas.

Martha writes 'Christmas would not be Christmas without food, especially as we share with others. The restrictions of the last months have been hard for all of us. ' (They have just got a whole lot harder since Martha put pen to paper and finished off her brandy inspired Christmas Cake). Martha goes onto write 'We have missed the chance to gather together and share food.'

'As we sit and eat, we can discover that God sits and eats with us. Whether alone or with others, whether in celebration or stillness, in our companionship and our gratitude God's presence is made known.'

'It's the heart of Christmas. Not surprising really that Bethlehem means House of Bread. In Jesus, God meets us where we are, God sits with us. God shares his bread and eats with us.'

Martha concludes, 'God's love discovered, God's love received and God's love shared. That is the message of Christmas.'

I visited St Peter's Church last Sunday. Our church alongside other churches across Maidenhead had been invited to share in St Peter's invitation to 'Love Christmas'. Sandy and Reverend David and other volunteers had followed the

challenge from Holy Trinity Church, Brompton to spread a little joy. I could not believe it as I saw 500 boxes of beautiful Christmas gifts laid out to share with people we thought might like to receive Christmas goodies within the community. I went out with a few boxes and the delight on people's faces was wonderful to behold. I have said to the people of St Peter's if this happens next year, we should make teams from all the churches to help.

Let us this week share in the 'Comfort and Joy' of being in the presence of our Lord at our Eucharistic worship this week and having received, share a little of that love with others.

As you know we need to keep safe, so we are asking you to book places for Midnight Mass and Christmas morning. At the time of writing, we have 20 people booked in for Christmas morning and 33 for Midnight Mass. Some of these are families able to sit together so there is still space. We will be keeping two metres distancing, wearing masks, washing hands, not socialising before or after the services and trying to keep everyone safe. Please do not come if you are showing any symptoms of Covid. I will not be talking to people after the services as we are expected to return home as soon as the service finishes. Oh, the joy of having a miserable Welshman for your vicar!

For those that are not able to join us at church I will be making, with the help of Monika and Rod, a recording. On Sunday 27th December there will be no 10am Eucharist but there will be private prayers from 10.00am until 11.00am. For those wanting to watch a service over the Christmas period the Diocese of Oxford are offering services for Midnight Mass, Christmas morning and Sunday 27th December.

RESOURCES

Wednesday 23 December 10.00am Eucharist with music from Dr Relf Clark

11.00am – 12 noon Church open for private prayer

Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve – 2.00pm – 5.00pm

No Crib service this year but thanks to Alan Ketley and Pauline Hole the Crib will be set up and there will be the opportunity for families to visit the church and say a prayer at the crib. Recorded Christmas carols will be playing and we have the wonderful Open the Book zoom recordings of the Christmas story and the Visit of the Wise Men. I will be present for the three hours and I am happy to pray with families individually as you visit. It was wonderful to see a good number of families on the Zoom Christingle last Sunday which was, I think, a joyful service.

24th December 11.30pm MIDNIGHT MASS – we would love to see you at the service for the Nativity of The Lord.



If you would like to come PLEASE BOOK a place or a number of places for a family bubble via jeremy-harris@outlook.com or allsaintsboynehill@gmail.com Or telephone 01628 621933 or 01628 626921 (Fr Jeremy) Groups of people from the same family can sit together on one pew.

25th December 10.00am Christmas Day Eucharist – a quartet of singers will offer Christmas Carols and I will offer a family Worship for All Talk. Again, we would like to know numbers so **please use the booking system mentioned above**. People have asked about capacity, but it is difficult to offer an exact number. If people come in groups and sit together then the number increases. We would estimate a figure of 50.

At the time of writing there is still room at both these services.

Sunday 27th December – PLEASE NOTE that there will not be a service this morning. The Bishop of Oxford has suggested that all clergy take this as a day off to spend with family as it is part of the five-day bubble. The church will though be open for prayers from 10am to 11am with Christmas music playing.

PLEASE NOTE – That there will be no services during the period of the 27th December through to the 2nd January 2021. On the 3rd of January we will be back in All Saints to celebrate ‘The Epiphany’. There will be a Sundays@6 Night prayer with St Luke’s on Zoom.

The week beginning the 4th January we will return to our Zoom Monday evening prayers at 7.30pm and Thursday evening night prayer at 8pm. On Wednesday 6th January we will have 10.00am Eucharist.

For those people who would like to join the Diocesan Eucharist please see the link. The Diocesan resources can be found without internet on 01865 920930.

The Church of England’s new resource ‘Daily Hope’ which includes comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections can be found on free telephone 0800 804 8044.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We continue to pray for Mandy Rogers, Danielle, Nick, Fr John, Sister Mary Philip, Roger Baldery, Doreen Hill and Mark.

We remember those who have recently died: Peggy Gardener, Angela Brewerton and Frank Daily.

Church of England to ‘Pray for the Nation’ via the link below that we have offered over the last couple of weeks.

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/15348%20PftN%20Booklet_6th%20PROOF.pdf

Monika, Jeanette, and our Churchwardens, Ken & Ann, join me in wishing you all a Christmas where you find comfort, hope and joy, and may you all be blessed by God’s love this week.

Fr Jeremy

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Sounds of Worship

Brian Graves

We all know what a Christmas carol is, but I expect we would all struggle to define it. It is a musical form that has evolved significantly over the centuries to encompass all sorts of literary and theological themes, forms, musical structures and styles. Take “Ding dong! merrily on high” as an example, nowhere does it mention the word Christmas or describe any particular Christmas event. It is, rather, an ode to bell-ringers but unmistakably a Christmas Carol! (It is also a relatively recent addition to the repertoire despite the archaic language. The words are by G R Woodward (1848- 1934) and first published in 1924)

The origins of the word “carol” are lost in the mists of the time, but it is thought to be derived from the French language and was originally a celebratory song with dancing. In other words, a carol represents an activity rather than a specific musical form. As such, carolling was not confined to Christmas but occurred at other time so the year and for many centuries did not occur in church. Carols were the preserve of folk singers and courtly musicians. By the 15th century some carols adopted a degree of sophistication by occasionally adding a Latin word or phrase into the English text a habit we see repeated in later texts. For several centuries, carols lived in an obscure half-life of all year use but not specifically focussing solely on a Christmas text or theme.

The evolution of carolling and carols was driven by adapting to changing circumstances over time. For example, the reformation was one such stimulus when reformist leaders such as Martin Luther and others in Germany

commandeered popular secular tunes and set them to religious texts to attract people into church. At Christmas time this provided the opportunity to use Christmas themed verses linked to a popular tune. One example, which has achieved fame outside of Germany is “In dulci jubilo”. It too has a mix of vernacular language and Latin phrases thrown-in for good measure. The tune appears to have been written around 1533. Such is the enduring quality of the music that Mike Oldfield made an instrumental arrangement and took it to number four in the UK charts in 1976. Its dance quality is infectious.

In France around the same time, folk-derived “Noëls” were collected and published which brought them to the attention of church composers. In the mid-seventeenth century in Britain the rather more extreme form of Puritan Protestantism put an end to wild Christmas celebration. However, with the Restoration in 1660, things returned to the time-honoured feasting and drinking washed-down with some appropriately raucous singing and dancing.

As we move into the 18th century, the development of congregational hymn singing in church led to the creation of church carols such as “While shepherds watched”. The theme is clearly religious, no added Latin or wassailing and is modelled on the prevailing metrical psalm style of hymn writing. One of the features of the Common metre syllable pattern for text of metrical psalms is that they could be used interchangeably with multiple tunes. Consequently, we find a variety of traditions for different tunes to “While shepherds watched” in different parts of the country. Guess where you would find choirs singing this carol to the tune “On Ilkla Moor Baht’at”.

Despite these various initiatives of introducing Christmas popular songs into church, carols were still mainly sung outdoors by village Waites and carol singers trying to earn a reward for their efforts with food, money and drink.

As we turn to the nineteenth century, there are several forces at work which help to create the Christmas Carol that we think-of today. First was the urbanisation of society and the availability of low cost, mass-production printing. This meant that anyone one regardless of musical skill could wander the streets carol singing. It would seem that rural carol singers were more skilled than their urban counterparts, One Victorian writer recorded this difference while on holiday in Gloucestershire; “I of course came in for a good share of carol singing. There, however, differed very much from the irreverent and discordant caterwauling (I cannot call it anything else) which greet our ears evening after evening in our suburban streets.”

These caterwauling townies would sell ballad sheets which had the words but no tunes. The singers would sing whatever tune they knew by heart that was appropriate. This oral tradition meant that there was very little standardisation of the best known and most used tunes. However there was growing awareness of the vulnerability of this oral tradition which prompted several notable collectors of folk songs to record and catalogue as many songs as they could.

The other key trend during the nineteenth century was the growth of surpliced choirs in churches and development of congregational hymn singing. As we saw last week concerning the establishment of the tradition of “Nine lessons and Carols”, Cathedrals and churches were using the time-honoured method of borrowing popular secular tunes and folk-songs and adapting them for church use. Simultaneously, many hymn writers starting writing Christmas themed verses and several notable hymn book and carol collectors started to mix and match words to music. For example, the words of “O little town of Bethlehem” were written by an American bishop, Phillips Brooks (1835 – 1893) but the tune with which we are most familiar, Forest Green, is a re-working of an English folksong collected and arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 -1958). The original folksong text concerned a ploughboy who had a dream about overworking and mistreating his team of horses and as a punishment he is about to be swallowed-up by an earthquake, that is, until he awakes from his dream.

As we move into the twentieth century the Christmas carol has become an established feature of church music which drew on, not only British music traditions but also assimilated other European and American influences. “Silent night, Holy night, which originated in Austria is an outstanding example.

The next evolution was the creation of integrated carols, by which composers wrote music specifically for the words and indeed in some cases wrote both words and music themselves. Benjamin Britten in his Ceremony of carols is one example and perhaps better known in the average church pew is John Rutter. Another feature of this trend is that choral societies and other groups have featured carols in their own Christmas concerts and have taken the carol to a



much wider audience than that found in church. Also, of course, the impact of broadcasting and recorded music has been immense in saturating everyone with Christmas carols.

I hope that it is the act of carolling whether in person, or on Zoom that will help keep our spirits up this year.

Ding dong! merrily on high!

COLLECT AND READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. **Amen.**

O T READING Isaiah 9: 2–7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

GOSPEL Luke 2: 1 - 14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

Worship for SUNDAY 3 JANUARY THE EPIPHANY

COLLECT

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen**

EPISTLE Ephesians 3: 1 - 12

I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles – for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the

mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

GOSPEL Matthew 2: 1—12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

REFLECTION by Greg Hurst

Our teenage daughter is in her first year of GCSEs. My wife works in a school. So the end of a long, difficult term was a cause of celebration in our house. The following morning, on Saturday, we sat down to plan meals within our designated household bubbles for each day of the Christmas period. With our son living away from home and due to return on Christmas Eve, we were excited. His city had been lowered from Tier 3 - a high risk area for coronavirus – to Tier 2 while Maidenhead had moved in the opposite direction. But our plans were unaffected.

We decided we needed more food. In addition to the large turkey in the freezer, we went shopping to get more things he likes: a gammon, chocolate log, more nibbles. Within hours came news that he was not allowed to come. Maidenhead had moved into the new Tier 4, with no visitors allowed. We were devastated: he must stay in a shared rented house in a city he barely knows.

He has since been invited to have Christmas dinner with his girlfriend and her mum. We have arranged to chat via Facetime on Christmas Day. But we won't be able to hug him or exchange presents. He won't have a proper festive break. We have each other. And he'll manage. Indeed, he is lucky: one of his university friends will be on his own over Christmas. And many more people are less fortunate.

But it's wretched nonetheless. My thoughts to those who are alone this Christmas.



I wish everyone in the All Saints Community a Christmas of Peace and Joy, and best wishes for a healthy and brighter 2021. Ken

With every good wish to the Churchwardens, to Jeremy and Monika, to Jeanette, to Brian and Helen, to David and Janet, George and Ursula, Mike and Jan, John, David and Sally, Barbara, the choir and all friends at All Saints.

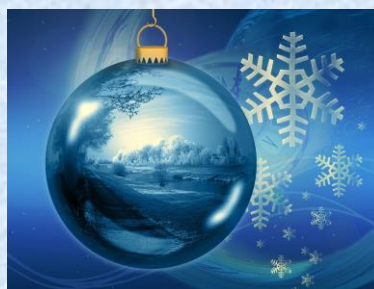
May the peace of the Christchild be with you, the joy of new life and the certainty of better times to come as the uncertainties and fears are left behind and we put our faces towards the sunshine.

Andrew Stafford



Wishing you all a hope-filled Christmas. The light shines in the darkness. God is with us.

Jeanette



To all my friends at All Saints. May you know the true blessings of the coming of the Christ child and all that means in your lives at this time of pandemic. Stay safe and keep well. Barbara.