

Church Newsround – January 2010

COFFEE MORNING will be held in the Church Hall on 23rd January from 10:00 to 12:00.
There will be Bric-a-Brac, Cakes and Book stalls. Raffle.
Bacon Baps and Coffee or Tea all for £2. See you there !

Happy New Year to all our Readers, Contributors and Deliverers.

BISHOP'S LETTER

For God's sake give and take

One day Jesus sat watching as people put money into the Temple collection box. Many of the rich were making large contributions. Then a poor widow came and put in two small coins – just a couple of pence. Jesus turned to His Disciples and told them how she had in fact given more than all the rest, because what they gave, they wouldn't miss; but she gave what she couldn't afford – she gave her all.

This story challenges and disturbs us.

It challenges us because we who are relatively rich know that Jesus has us in His sights. He knows that we give less than we can afford.

It disturbs us, because the Temple authorities were apparently prepared to take the widow's pence and so leave her with nothing to live on. Jesus commended her generosity – but surely the religious leaders should have been less ready to take her money and more ready to give her a share of what the rich had contributed.

Christian stewardship of money should always be a matter of give and take. Whilst 2010 will be a year when special efforts will be made to help us all to take Christian Giving seriously, whether to the Church or to Charity, it must also be a year when we make it easier for those in most need to receive their share of what we have at our disposal.

The Archbishop of Canterbury once asked: "For whom is your wealth good news?". If the answer is "me and mine", then we fall well short of what would be an appropriate Christian response to that question. Whether we are talking about surpluses on our personal Current Accounts or our Deanery Share Accounts, the challenge is there: for whom is your wealth good news?

Christmas is a time of giving. But why stop at Christmas? Every day is Christmas Day insofar as we receive many gifts from God including, above all, the gift of life itself. So make every day a giving day, then those who need to take because they cannot give will be able to do so. And there will be plenty left over to fund the mission and ministry of our Church as well as those many other good causes which are so dear to our hearts.

Don't give in order to receive – that way giving simply becomes another way of purchasing! Give so that others can take what they need, just as we take from God what He provides to meet our needs day by day. + John Lincoln

What happens if you take Christ out of Christmas. M&S (attributed to Aled Jones apparently – nice one !)

CONFIRMATION

One or two people have expressed an interest in Confirmation and in the absence of a Vicar of our own, permission has been obtained for us to have a series of classes in our Group of Parishes.

Others may also be interested in finding out what this entails.

You might like to compare it to a series of Evening Classes in the Christian Faith (as practiced in the Church of England)

The aim is to give those taking part to learn about what the Church believes and does and to present them with a chance to become a fully participating Member, this includes admission to the Holy Communion.

The classes will be at a time and place agreed amongst those taking part, they will be entered into a spirit of "Let's find out first, then decide". And they will be informal but thorough without being too academic.

If you are interested and would like to find out more without making promises in advance, there will be a preliminary meeting at St Wilfrid's following the 10.30 service on Sunday February 14th. Why not come along and find out ?

CAN YOU HELP WITH THE LENT LUNCHESES ?

Could you help Serve, Clear Up, Make a batch of soup ?

Fridays March 19th and 26th and April 2nd.

Watch this space for more info nearer the time.

St Wilfrid's Church

The builders are starting work in January so the church will have to be closed for safety reasons.

The contract is for six weeks but until they open the roof we will not know how long it will take.

On Sunday the 10th, 17th and 24th January services will be held in the Church Hall.

There will be no Thursday morning services.

We will keep you informed of progress.

A BIG CLEAN UP will be required when the works are finished.

Don't forget to keep filling you jars with small (or large) change to help pay for the works.

Funerals

May they rest in peace

John Pollard aged 75 years. Died 16th October.

Edith Ellen Reuill aged 78 years. Died 11th November.

Michael John Hancock aged 68 years. Died 31st October.

William (Bill) Bows aged 75 years. Died 23rd November.

Jerzy Fufalko Died 8th December.

Wedding

Best wishes for the future

Charlotte Rebecca Roland & Toby James Dunham 12th December.

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2010 IN THE THREE PARISHES

Sunday 3rd The Second Sunday of Christmas

8.00am Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

9.00am Holy Communion – St. Peter's

10.30am United Service – Metheringham Methodist Chapel

Thursdays - There will be no 9.15am Services in January at St Wilfrid's.

Sunday 10th The First Sunday of Epiphany – The Baptism of Christ

9.00am	Holy communion – St. Oswald's
9.00am	Morning Worship – St. Peter's
10.30am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

Sunday 17th The 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Peter's
10.30am	Morning Worship – St. Wilfrid's

Thursday 21st

2.15pm	Family Service with St Peter's School
6.00pm	Christingle Service Dunston Chapel

Sunday 24th The Third Sunday of Epiphany

9.00am	Morning Prayer followed by Communion – St. Oswald's
10.30am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's

Sunday 31st The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany – Group Service

10.30am	Holy Communion – St. Oswald's
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February 2010

Thursdays There will be no 9.15 am Services in February at St Wilfrid's

Sunday 7th The Second Sunday before Lent

8.00am	Holy Communion – St. Wilfrid's
9.00am	Holy Communion – St. Peter's
10.30am	United Service – St. Wilfrid's

W.I. Report

The meeting on the 16th December was the end of year social, where cards, crackers and presents were exchanged. Everyone contributed towards refreshments.

There were some inventive games, Irish Bingo – a Jean Simpson idea. Everyone was given a playing card. If your card was called you sat down. The last person standing was the winner – a lowly 2 of Diamonds which earned me a box of Irish Toffee.

There was a 50p tag draw which won Emily Pearson a bottle of Baileys. Also pass the parcel.

The evening concluded with Carols and Santa's Sack – members contributed a gift.

A very happy evening.

Next Meeting to be held at the Martin Moor Golf Club on Wednesday 20th January 2010.

JS

Christmas Health & Safety

We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are

Bearing gifts we traverse afar

Field and fountain, moor and mountain

Following yonder star

Whilst the gift of gold is still considered acceptable - as it may be redeemed at a later date through such organisations as 'cash for gold' etc, gifts of frankincense and myrrh are not appropriate due to the potential risk of oils and fragrances causing allergic reactions. A suggested gift alternative would be to make a donation to a worthy cause in the recipients name or perhaps give a gift voucher.

We would not advise that the traversing kings rely on navigation by stars in order to reach their destinations and suggest the use of RAC route finder or satellite navigation, which will provide the quickest route and advice regarding fuel consumption. Please note as per the guidelines from the RSPCA for Mr Donkey, the camels carrying the three kings of Orient will require regular food and rest breaks. Facemasks for the three kings are also advisable due to the likelihood of dust from the camels' hooves.

While Shepherds Watched

While shepherds watched
Their flocks by night
All seated on the ground
The angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around

The union of Shepherds has complained that it breaches health and safety regulations to insist that shepherds watch their flocks without appropriate seating arrangements being provided, therefore benches, stools and orthopaedic chairs are now available. Shepherds have also requested that due to the inclement weather conditions at this time of year that they should watch their flocks via CCTV cameras from centrally heated shepherd observation huts. Please note, the angel of the lord is reminded that before shining his / her glory all around she / he must ascertain that all shepherds have been issued with glasses capable of filtering out the harmful effects of UVA, UVB and Glory.

Jingle Bells

Dashing through the snow
In a one horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way

A risk assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to travel on. The risk assessment must also consider whether it is appropriate to use only one horse for such a venture, particularly if passengers are of larger proportions. Please note, permission must be gained from landowners before entering their fields. To avoid offending those not participating in celebrations, we would request that laughter is moderate only and not loud enough to be considered a noise nuisance.

C of E Launches 7-Year "Church and Earth" Climate Change Action Plan

The Church of England has launched its environmental strategy for the next seven years, as global faith leaders and UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, recently met in Windsor to discuss commitments on climate change, before the world's political leaders meet in Copenhagen in December. PP

Anthony of Egypt (251 -356)

If your Christmas and New Year break included just too many people and even a bout of indigestion, then St Antony may be the saint for you. He was a hermit-monk with a reputation for making poorly people feel better. Antony was born in Coma (Upper Egypt) in 251, and at 20 became an ascetic. He settled down in the complete solitude of a deserted fort in Pispir, where he spent the next 20 years busy fighting the whole range of usual hermit temptations, such as having queenly devils approach you for marriage, and other hazards like that. In 306 Antony felt able to face the world again, and so he began visiting with some other hermits. One was Paul, and the story goes that the day they met, a raven provided lunch for them by dropping a loaf of bread nearby. Antony was a godly man, and would pray for people. Stories went round that those he prayed for were healed, and so he became known as a miracle-worker. He was certainly brave: when in 311 the Roman Emperor Maximinus was persecuting the Christians, Antony went to Alexandria to encourage the church there to stand firm. Years later he was stoutly defending the Christian faith in disputes with heretics. Antony died in 356, but even hundreds of years later he was not forgotten. A medical band of people adopted his name: The Order of Hospitallers of Saint Antony was founded (c.1100, in La Motte). It became a pilgrimage centre for those suffering from ergotism (called St Antony's Fire - a serious form of fungi poisoning). Antony was a tremendously popular saint throughout the Middle Ages. By then he was seen as the patriarch of monks, and a healer of both men and animals. Antony even gave us the word 'tantony', a diminutive applied to the smallest pig in a litter, and to the smallest bell in a peal of bells. The early church father, Athanasius, wrote The Life of Antony. This moving biography helped to convert the great Augustine. PP Epiphany - the light has come!

At the start of a new year we celebrate the coming of light into our world. Epiphany asserts that Jesus came as the light foretold by Isaiah: 'Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you' (1). However, the prophet also reminds God's people that they are to be 'light for the Gentiles' (42:6; 49:6). How can we shine in 2010?

Shine With God's Love

'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.' (John 17:22-23).

How can God's love shine through the practical love demonstrated in our community life as Christians?

Shine With God's Word

'Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.' (Phil. 2:14-16). How can we make God real by holding fast to the Scriptures (both hearing and doing the Word) in our daily discipleship?

Shine With Good Works

'You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.' (Matt 5:14-16). How can we be a real influence for Christ in the places where we live and work in the coming year?

Where will good news come from in 2010?

For many of us, our first interaction with the world each morning is to tune into the news, whether by radio, TV or on-line. Sadly, some mornings it is so dreary or even appalling that our first reaction can be to want to go back to bed and cancel the rest of the day. As January 2010 begins, much of the news coming in from around the world is bad. The war drags on in Afghanistan; politicians continue to argue, an election is looming, the economy is struggling. There doesn't seem to be a lot of good news about! Perhaps, though, there is a different way of thinking about good news. Nowhere in the Bible did Jesus say that we should be looking to political leaders and our society for good news. Instead, he put the responsibility for bringing hope to people firmly on US, in the living of our everyday lives.

'For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' (Matthew 25:35-36 NLT)

What a challenge! Jesus put the responsibility on US to BE good news to other people, and to show his compassion in the ordinary actions and relationships of life. Sure he expects some of us to be involved in impacting the 'big issues' of society and government. But for most of us, our challenge is more straightforward, more immediate..

So today, ask yourself: 'The world may be a mess, but for whom can I be good news today? Who will have cause to be thankful today, whose life will be a bit brighter, who will be given fresh hope because of something I have done in the name of Jesus?'

Bringing good news to someone today.... that is the responsibility of each one of us.

Beware the 4th of January

On Monday 4th January, don't eat your lunch too noisily, keep your voice down on the phone, and for heaven's sake, don't sniff! You risk really irritating your colleagues if you do. The first Monday in January is reckoned the most stressful day of the year, and researchers have found that annoying personal habits are most noticed then. It is a day of when millions of us struggle with rising tension, soaring stress levels and increased blood pressure. The reasons are easy to find: Christmas festivities are finally over and it is time to return to work. The car needs scraping, and it is cold and miserable outside. That is depressing enough if you had a good Christmas, but suppose you had a terrible Christmas? More people visit divorce lawyers on the first Monday in January than at any other time of the year. Also, January is the month when we pay for December, and fight the urge to keep spending in the sales.... real economic gloom can set in. All in all, researchers warn: don't be surprised if you return to work feeling fragile. PP

Signs & Symbols: Church Design

Today's church buildings are rich and varied in their designs, sizes, materials, plans and groupings; from large cruciform churches to simple single room designs; from red brick to stone, and so on. Since buildings were first specifically designed and created as places for Christian worship – churches – they have undergone numerable changes and additions. When you look carefully at a church more than a few hundred years old in any part of the world you can trace the development of its use by its architecture. Perhaps you'll see a door or window bricked up or a new one opened. The widening of the nave by the addition of arches and one or more aisles. Change in stone or building materials as later technology was available or even a change in design as new techniques came into safe use. The closest we get in England to very similarly designed churches are those known as the Commissioners' Churches - 600 of which were constructed during the early to mid 19th century using £1 million from the Church Building Act 1818 and a further £1/2 million in 1825. Though even these have undergone changes in the intervening years.

Parliament made this Act following the battle of Waterloo, when increasing populations were moving into towns and forming suburbs because of the industrial revolution and there was real concern that social upheaval might erupt in England. Ensuring that there were enough Anglican churches in the freshly created towns and suburbs was a chosen method to help prevent people from becoming involved in likely unrest. This month: Have a look at a couple of local churches and spot the changes in their buildings over the years. If we wanted to prevent social unrest today where do you think we would direct our monies and energies?

On how to mix town and country – or not

The Rectory

St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Your idea for our two churches to hold a combined New Year's Day walk was an admirable one, although I could sense a certain clash of cultures when your party arrived at the starting point with boots, waterproofs and GPS equipment. Our own group, rather anticipating tottering between tea shops, with a little light shopping in between, sported tweed suits, shopping bags and furled umbrellas.

Even the two sets of dogs seemed bemused with one another, with your Westies and King Charles spaniels making enough noise to scare all the wildlife in the county, and our Retrievers puzzled why the pheasants were not dropping from the sky. Dear Miss Mill's miniature poodle, with the painted toenails, will probably need life-long counselling; the furthest she had walked previously was from her bed to beside the dining room table.

The electronic navigation equipment brought by members of your group made me think that if only the wise men had had these blessings, they wouldn't have had to follow anything as unreliable as a star. Although I suppose that instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, they would then have arrived with an MP3 player, a mobile phone which would have been obsolete before Jesus' first birthday and a CD of Madonna's greatest hits.

I do concede that our two congregations learned much from one another. Our ladies were most interested to hear about the latest in personal trainers, while yours discovered how to bring a pan of jam to a rolling boil. Your men seemed impressed to hear of squirrel shooting while ours gathered useful tips for caravanning abroad. And poor Miss Mill's poodle learned that the great outdoors was a parallel and hostile universe.

By mid-afternoon, however, the balance of power shifted. When the leader of the walk from your group lost his SatNav, our members felt the need to assert themselves. The gentlemen navigated using wind direction, moss on trees and angles of the sun, while our ladies, with tweed skirts furled somewhat higher than one would have wished, showed yours how to wade through peat bog without complaining.

Perhaps town and country really can learn from one another. But if Major Bullock's wife arrives for Mattins next Sunday sporting the latest gym gear, you will have much to answer for.

Your loving uncle, Eustace

Overheard on the wise men's journey to Bethlehem

"OK, we got the gold. We got the frankincense. We got the myrrh. Think we should get something more practical, like nappies, maybe?"

"I thought this was supposed to be a weekend trip... my wife is going to be furious..."

"All this star-gazing from the back of a camel is making me sick."

“What's so WISE about wandering around the desert for three years?”

“You know, I used to go to school with a girl name Beth Lehem.”

That's telling

Young Jimmie finished his Christmas holiday and headed back to school. Only two days later his teacher was on the phone, telling his mother that he was misbehaving. "Wait a minute!" protested Jimmie's mum. "I had him here for two weeks over the Christmas break, and I never once rang YOU when he misbehaved!"

Prayer changes things

The little girl had been so naughty during the Christmas break that her mother decided to give her the worst kind of punishment. She told her she couldn't go on the New Year's Day family outing. But when the day finally came, her mother felt she had been too harsh. When she told her daughter that she could go after all, but the child's reaction was one of gloom and dismay. "What's the matter? I thought you'd be glad to go," her mother said. "But it's too late now!" the little girl protested. "I've already prayed for rain."

Some miscellaneous observations on life

When the Bible is put on the shelf, the church will surely follow it.

Going the speed of light is bad for your age.

Sometimes I think I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe.

Old age: the point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth.

Pray not for crutches to get you through life, but for wings.

A will is a dead giveaway.

He had a photographic memory - which was never developed.