# **Parish News**

### St Mary's, Woodkirk

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Don't Miss: Children's Nativity
Sunday 11th December
10:30am

### This Month:

Advent Uncovered; Contemplating Christmas; Who was St. Nicholas?; Archangels Get-together; All Souls Remembered. www.stmarywoodkirk.org

#### Who's who at Woodkirk

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Woodkirk, WF12. 7JL

01924 472375

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Lay Pastoral Minister

and Legacy Advisor.

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Neal Pinder-Packard 0113 252 4001

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Glyn Jennings David Townsend

Verger: Gail Townsend 0113 252 8710

Organist: Samantha Hawkins PCC Secretary: Dawn Tattersfield

**PCC Treasurer** Barbara Tate

Social Chairman: Brian Gledhill 01924 405790
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and Legacy Officer

Magazine Editor & David Townsend 0113 2528710

Weekly News Sheet:. Email: dave2408.townsend@gmail.com

Magazine Articles by the 20th of the month.

Mobile: 07745 301746

Contributions for the Weekly News Sheet

by Thursday evening please.

**Deanery Synod reps:** Glyn Jennings & Gary Mortimer

#### **Elected Members of the Parochial Church Council:**

Brian Gledhill, Julie Hyde, Gary Mortimer, Neal Pinder-Packard, Dawn Tattersfield, Dave Townsend, Barbara Tate, Liz Aveyard, Gail Townsend, Glyn Jennings.

If you enjoy the magazine— a donation of 50p really helps to keep it going!

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#### Welcome!

Enjoy reading this Parish magazine and, if you wish to know more about Church Groups, please get in touch with the Movers and Shakers - their names are on the inside front & inside back covers

Service times are on the back page. You'd be most welcome to join us. May God bless you and all whom you love.

#### Parish News by Post

This magazine can be delivered monthly by sending a minimum donation of £12 a year to cover magazine costs including post and packaging to: Margaret Longden, 64 Woodkirk Gardens, Dewsbury WF12 7JA. Call Margaret on 01924 473064. It's a brilliant gift for friends or family living near or far. Cheque's to Woodkirk PCC please.

#### Web site & Twitter

Further news and pictures of what is happening at St Mary's can be found on our web site located at: <a href="https://www.stmarywoodkirk.org">www.stmarywoodkirk.org</a> Copies of the magazine can be downloaded from the web site from the middle of the month of publication.

We are on Twitter: twitter.com/stmarywoodkirk

#### Wheelchair Access

A wheelchair is available to help people move easily between the church and Dewsbury Road. Just ask.

BE PATIENT. OUR PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS ANSWERED, BUT NOT ALWAYS ON THE EXACT DAY WE WOULD LIKE THEM TO BE

GLYN

# What is Advent? ...and why should we celebrate it?

It's Christmas time. How does your to-do list look?

There are sales to shop and presents to wrap. There are cards to send and decorations to unpack. There are parties to attend, events to plan, and trips to make.

There are long lines, traffic, stress, delays, and expectations.

That's the time of year it is. It's Christmas time.

But in the midst of all this, we're supposed to remember that it's the time of Christ, the time we remember and celebrate His coming.

What if there were a way to put aside all the trappings of Christmas so we could look forward to the joy of Christmas?

Well, there is.

For hundreds and hundreds of years, believers all over the world have observed Advent.

For four Sundays before Christmas Day, Christians have paused to reflect on the longing Israel had for their coming Messiah, and the joy we as Christians have knowing He is with us.

The colours of Advent may seem strange to those of us used to the red and green of Christmas. Purple represents Christ's majesty. Pink, the hope of His appearance. And white, the promise that one day He will come again.

Christians have even sung Advent hymns many of us know as Christmas carols: hymns such as "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," and "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Every Christmas, Christians try to remember the "reason for the season." We struggle to hold onto the joy and peace we know is there, but that we often can't find amidst the clamour and urgency of the "holidays."

Through Scripture readings, songs and prayers, Advent can become a time to focus your mind on Christ and to prepare your heart for the coming Christ child, A child who will grow into the man Jesus, who went to the cross, who died for our sins, so that we may be blameless in the sight of almighty God.

It's a paradox that the babe whose birth we celebrate at Christmas has to be held in tension with the pain and desolation of the cross of Good Friday.

As Christians today, we know that it doesn't end there, but those first Disciples didn't. They had to wait in fear and dread.

Advent is a time of waiting, a time of preparation, a time for reflection on our relationship with the coming Saviour of the World. Are we truly ready to welcome God's Son? Are we prepared to carry the cross of Christ? Are we ready to put Jesus first in our lives?

Advent is the time we see the darkness of the world, and wait for the light of Christ, a light that no darkness can quench!

Revd. Sharon

#### Advent Reflection

Week 1 - Faith (Weeks 1, 2,3 & 4 will be given out in Church so come along and collect the set!)

Scripture Verses

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and courageous. Wait for the LORD" (Psalm 27:14).

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him." —Hebrews 11:6

What's the longest you've had to wait for something? We expect everything to be at our fingertips the moment we have the desire for it. Yet God finds ways of making us wait.

Waiting and faith go hand-in-hand. Waiting is the embodiment of faith.

In Hebrews 11:13 we are reminded that faith involves trust in God's promise even if the promises of God are fulfilled long after we're gone. The writer says, "These all died in faith without having received the promises, but they saw them from a distance ..." (Emphasis added.)

We are asked to remain faithful in our waiting

Advent is about faith and waiting.
What are you waiting on God for this year?

Remember the years of silence as God's people waited for the Messiah.

Take time today, to reflect on the fact that God's timing is quite different from ours.

The story of Jesus' birth gives us assurance and joy because even though the waiting lingered for decades, God broke through at just the right time.

Are you struggling with a lack of faith? Jesus encouraged his frustrated followers this way: "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

Most of us try to grow a forest in one day. Jesus, however, invites you to begin with a tiny seed. Watch it grow and wait for it to become all that you dreamed it would be.

Are you willing to plant faith and wait upon God? Nothing seems to be appearing on the horizon today, but just wait! God always keeps his promises, even to those who have little faith. Just wait.

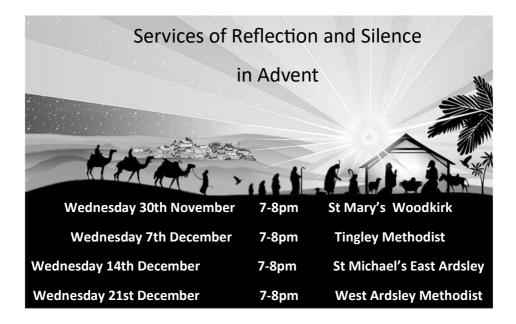
This week:- Share with a friend or family member something you are waiting for.

Encourage someone you know who is weary of waiting. Remind them of God's promises.

Take inventory of your relationship with God. Are you struggling with His silence?

Daily prayer for this week:

Lord, I remember the years of waiting for a Messiah. I'm often impatient with my life. Please teach me to enjoy You and not just the blessings I see in Your hands. Fill my days with laughter and joy through hardship and uncertainty. Remind me that when I think I'm waiting for an eternity, it really isn't. Life on this earth is infinitesimally smaller than a second in the light of true eternity.



#### Children's Society

A big thankyou to all box-holders who helped to raise £685 this year.

We have about 28 box-holders at present. If anyone would like a collecting box lease let me know. Your change will bring change to the most vulnerable young people this year.

Thankyou - Susan

#### In memory of Moira Holdsworth. 6/10/1946 - 18/10/2016

Trevor, Neil and Moya wish to thank all Moira's family and friends for their kind thoughts and sympathy cards and their support at Moira's funeral service.

A total of £475 was given in donations to be split between Wheatfield's Hospice Leeds and Leeds Institute of Oncology. Thank you for your Generosity.

Trevor

#### Prayerful Thought

Bah Humbug!!

Well not really, but I have had to rethink and change my prayerful thought a little as that there Vicar has 'pinched' my theme! That's not surprising really is it as we start the new Christian Year with the season of Advent, and the trappings of Christmas.

I've had to change things a little bit, but I thought I would still share some of my thoughts with you.

It was the night before...

Well bonfire night actually, and I received a text from a friend who I haven't seen in a while, one of a group of four of us who try and get together every few months or so, and I had been in touch with this group trying to arrange a date to meet. This one friend, at the end of her text added... "are you ready for Santa?" and it was this comment, and still having fresh in my mind last month's prayerful thought, that got me thinking about this month's article.

If you can remember back to my last article (or have a look on our Facebook page, past magazines are on there) you may remember that I was talking about 'reflection', and the importance of contemplation and 'developing forms of contemplation that work for us and open us up to the sense of wonder'.

I started thinking about the build up and preparation for Christmas, and that a simple question, "Are you ready for Santa?" seemed to encapsulate for me perhaps the most mundane preparation towards Christmas.

For many people, Christmas is just making lists, ticking things off lists, shopping for food and drink, shopping for presents, a process to be got through as speedily as possible. Getting things done early, 'Right, been there, done that, got the presents!' But wait a moment, think back to what I said about 'contemplation' what was it? Something about 'opening up to the sense of wonder?'.

This brings me to another thing some folks say, not untruthfully, but perhaps superficially, "Well, Christmas it's all for the children isn't it?" Well yes, I don't doubt that Christmas is a time for children, but then think about that a little deeper for a moment. If your children are all grown up now with children of their own, or perhaps like me you don't have children, it shouldn't stop us celebrating Christmas. After all we are all God's children!

Do you know why people say Christmas is a time for children? Because they remember perhaps Christmases many years ago, and in a lot of cases, so so different from the Christmases of today. A more simple time of stockings with a tangerine in the bottom and a few walnuts??!! And perhaps a new bicycle every few years. Not the hundreds of pounds advertisements tell us we must spend in order to have all the right food to eat and drink, the right decorations and the 'must have' toy for this year.

But not only that, are we remembering that sense of wonder when we as children, or our children when they were younger, with eyes almost popping out of their heads, opened their presents.

Yes, that is what we want, to bring back that sense of wonder, that wide eyed wonder.

It has become a greatly anticipated moment when the big retailers reveal their Christmas advertisements and it is great that this year they seem to be focussing on Christmas as a time for sharing and who can forget glamorous Mrs Claus, or Buster the Boxer and not sit transfixed as we see the wonder on people's faces.

So now then, what's the best way to get better at something? Practice...practice, practice, repeat things do them again and again. I challenge you again this month to take some time to contemplate.

Yes I know it's a busy time, and no doubt will get busier, I know we've lots to do, but do find yourself some time for contemplation if you possibly can.

Rev Sharon is providing us with a weekly 'Advent Reflection', the first week was 'Faith', did you manage to read through it whilst you were having a cuppa? Did you take it on the bus or train, WHATEVER! If you haven't had chance yet, do try and find time to read it, (you can read it on P11—Ed), you'll have the second one by now as well. Also, there are the Wednesday evening services of 'Silent Reflection' the first one was on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, there are three further ones at Westerton Road Methodist Church on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, St Michael's East Ardsley and finally at West Ardsley Methodist Church. This may be the chance for you to have time for contemplation, see if you can manage to get to one of them at least.

Let our preparation be so much more than lists and sighs of relief as we cross another thing off our 'to do' list. I'll repeat one of my favourite sayings to help you...

# "You will never FIND time for anything, if you WANT to do something you must MAKE time"

I pray that all of us may make time for contemplation this advent, whether in our homes or with our church friends, I pray that God will help us all to prepare for Jesus' coming in Bethlehem so that we can all, as God's children, rediscover and share the wonder of Christmas.

With Love and Prayers and every blessing for Christmas. Dawn

Oh PS, thank you Rev Sharon, your article didn't 'steal my thunder' but helped me develop my original thought into what I really wanted to say.



# St Mary's Church, Woodkirk



# Sunday 18th December 2016 4.00pm







#### St. Nicholas, Santa Claus or Father Christmas

The Man behind the Story of Father Christmas/Santa Claus

St. Nicholas was a bishop who lived in the fourth century in a place called Myra in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it. There are several legends about St. Nicholas, although we don't know if any of them are true.

The most famous story about St. Nicholas tells how the custom of hanging up stockings to get presents first started! It goes like this:

There was a poor man who had three daughters. He was so poor, he did not have enough money for a dowry, so his daughters couldn't get married. (A dowry is a sum of money paid to the bridegroom by the bride's parents on the wedding day. This still happens in some countries, even today.) One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down the chimney and into the house (This meant that the oldest daughter was then able to be married.) The bag fell into a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry! This was repeated later with the second daughter. Finally, determined to discover the person who had given him the money, the father secretly hid by the fire every evening until he caught Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold. Nicholas begged the man to not tell anyone what he had done, because he did not want to bring attention to himself. But soon the news got out and when anyone received a secret gift, it was thought that maybe it was from Nicholas.

Because of his kindness Nicholas was made a Saint. St Nicholas is not only the saint of children but also of sailors! One story tells of him helping some sailors that were caught in a dreadful storm off the coast of Turkey. The storm was raging around them and all the men were terrified that their ship would sink beneath the giant waves. They prayed to St. Nicholas to help them. Suddenly, he was standing on the deck before them. He ordered the sea to be calm, the storm died away, and they were able to sail their ship safely to port.

St. Nicholas was exiled from Myra and later put in prison during the persecution by Emperor Diocletian. No one is really sure when he died, but it was on  $6^{th}$  December in either 345 or 352. In

1087, his bones were stolen from Turkey by some Italian merchant sailors. The bones are now kept in the Church named after him in the Italian port of Bari. On St. Nicholas feast day ( $6^{th}$  December), the sailors of Bari still carry his statue from the Cathedral out to sea, so that he can bless the waters and so give them safe voyages throughout the year.

In 1066, before he set sail to England, William the Conqueror prayed to St. Nicholas asking that his conquest would go well.

#### How St. Nicholas became Santa Claus

In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in Northern Europe, after the reformation, the stories and traditions about St. Nicholas became unpopular.

But someone had to deliver presents to children at Christmas, so in the UK, particularly in England, he became 'Father Christmas' or 'Old Man Christmas', an old character from stories played out during the middle ages in the UK and parts of northern Europe. In France, he was known as 'Pere Noel' in Germany. The 'Christ Kind'. In the early USA his named was 'Kris Kringle'. Later, the Dutch settlers in the USA took the old stories of St. Nicholas with them and Kris Kringle became 'Sinterklaas' or as we now say 'Santa Claus'!

Many countries, especially ones in Europe, celebrate St. Nicholas' Day on 6th December. In Holland and some other European Countries, children leave clogs or shoes out on the 5th December (St. Nicholas Eve) to be filled with presents. They also believe that if they leave some hay and carrots in their shoes for Sinterklaas's horse, they will be left some sweets.

St. Nicholas became popular again in the Victorian era when writers, poets and artists rediscovered the old stories.

In 1823 the famous poem 'A Visit from St. Nicholas' or 'T'was the night before Christmas' was published. Dr Clement Clarke Moore later claimed that he had written it for his children. (Some scholars now believe that it was actually written by Henry Livingston, Jr., who was a distant relative of Dr Moore's wife.) The poem describes St. Nicholas with eight reindeer and gives them their names. They became really well known in the song 'Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer', written in 1949.

Did you know that Rudolph might actually be a girl? Only female reindeer keep their antlers throughout winter. By Christmas time most males have discarded their antlers and are saving their energy ready to grow a new pair in the spring.

The UK Father Christmas and American Santa Claus became more and more alike over the years and are now one of the same

Some people say that Santa lives at the North Pole. In Finland they say that he lives in the north part of their country called Lapland.

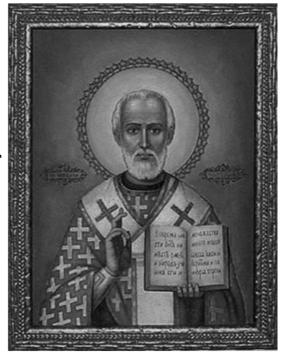
But, everyone agrees that he travels the sky on a sledge that is pulled by reindeer, that he comes into houses down the chimney at night and places presents for the children in socks or bags by their beds, in front of the family Christmas tree, or by the fire place.

Most children receive their presents on Christmas Eve night or early Christmas morning, but in some countries they get their presents on St. Nicholas Eve, December  $5^{\text{th}}$ .

St. Nicholas putting the bag of gold into a stocking is probably where the custom of having tangerine and satsuma at the bottom of your Christmas stocking came from. If people couldn't afford gold, some golden fruit was a good replacement - and until the last

50 years these were quite unusual fruits and so special.

St. Nicholas was a very special man. But we also have to remember that we are also celebrating a very special birthday on Christmas Day of Jesus born into to our world to give us love and peace in our Tives. So why not come and join us over this festive time at St. Mary's as we as Christians give thanks for the birth of our Lord into our world. Joy to the world and have a very merry Christmas.



Gail

St. Nicholas

# /Nary's, Woodkirk

http://www.stmarywoodkirk.org/ or follow us on Facebook



Nativity Service

Sunday 11th December

10.30pm

Christingle Service

Saturday 24th December 3pm (Under 7's)

Spm (Over 7s)

(However you are welcome to either service whatever your age)

Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 18th December 4pm

Midnight Mass

Šunday 24th December 11.30pm

Christmas Day

Sunday 25th December 10.30pm

We look forward to seeing you and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

#### Charlotte's Moroccan Adventure

Hello everyone!

Some of you may or may not know me but I'm Charlotte Sykes and I attended an expedition with Central Yorkshire Scouts to Morocco to help build a school for a village less fortunate than ourselves. Not only that but we also worked on irrigation and dry stone walling. A huge thank you to Gail and Sharon for making the presentation evening possible on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November and for all that attended I give you permission to skip past this section of the magazine as I will be giving a short overview of the trip and I am aware that it may have got to the point of too much of a good thing!

Anyhow, the trip started in a small village called Imlil, it was a magical place to be, we camped right next to the waterfall! The "squattie" toilet facilities were somewhat uncomfortable but no pain no...well, you get the picture I'm sure. The trees were a beautiful green and the air was clean and fresh. We were greeted very warmly by the villagers and split into girls and boys. The girls learned some household skills and the men did

work on the irrigation and dry stone walls around the village. For me, obviously, I went with some of the local women and learned how to make mint tea and flat bread all from scratch, it was quite extraordinary how these people lived. We then helped the women in weaving a blanket by hand and let me tell you, it's not as easy as it sounds, balls and balls of wool used to make the



beautiful design. But I have to say, I think the men earned their supper that night!

We went on a lovely walk to a peak, led by our guides in preparation for the walk up the mountain. It was amazing, the views from the peek were just breath taking, the blue sky, the trees, the village, all such humble imagery but to be there was just spectacular.

The Next phase of the expedition was the mountain phase. SO MUCH WALKING. Toubkal is 4,167m high and it took us 10/11 hours to walk up and down but it was SO worth it, the accomplishment not just for myself but as a group just gave

everyone this immense feeling of pride. My mountain guide Mohammed was honestly the most amazing man I think I've ever met, he was so encouraging and the amount of times he must've saved me from falling off that mountain is too much to count, he



kept us all going. The Refuge we stayed at was at the base of the mountain and had running water!! You can imagine the excitement when we haven't had a shower in 4/5 days! Actual toilets was a treat as well and I can confirm, EVERYONE took advantage of that...very smelly. Being in the mountains really tested my resilience and brought the expedition really close together and I can't out into words how magical that place was. I don't think I've ever heard such silence, or not heard I should say, it was peaceful.

We went back to Imlil after the mountain phase and the village arranged a party where we learned some traditional dance and showed them how to Strip the willow, safe to say that

everyone slept soundly that night! We then travelled by nonair-conditioned minibuses for 9 hours to El Borge where we worked on building the school. We started work at 8am every day



and didn't finish until 5pm. There were 4 shovels, 2 wheel barrows, lots of stones and lots rocks. We also had some cement powder with some small stones to mix. Everyone was put into groups and put on work shifts, some making cement, some on rocks and some on water (from the well for the cement). The shifts were 10-15 minutes long which doesn't seem a lot to you but temperatures got up to 55 degrees which was a dry heat so water was our best friend. We had a flood on one of the days which was a blessing at first, we danced and washed our hair in it but it came down so strong that it flooded the camp so we stayed the night in a nearby house. Bear in mind that there's 50 of us who turned up on this poor families door step and they welcomed us in open arms and made supper for everyone! Soup, then main and then mint tea for after. Imagine 50 people turning up on your door step asking to take refuge! The people were so humble and genuinely happy that we stayed in their house, I still can't believe it! When we left El Borge the whole village thanked us with a party and we got to meet some of the children who will benefit from the school and gave them clothes and coloring books. Some of them hugged us and didn't let go! The joy this expedition has brought not only us but them is amazing, it's good to give back.





How we left the site. (Foundations done). Compared to how it is now

The final two phases of the expedition was the desert phase and Marrakesh. The desert at night was so peaceful, the stars were so clear and again, the silence was soothing. This is where it started to dawn on us that we were leaving and it gave us time to reflect on everything we'd achieved. And the when it came to morning...well....the Camels are not creatures of early mornings I'll tell you that, in fact mine chewed through its ropes and ran off with me still on it! The guides again were so amazing, at the end of the phase they, like everywhere, threw a party with music and dancing, it was such a lovely cultured experience. Marrakesh was beautiful, a city that was bursting with life. We spent the final few days there and bought gifts and stayed in a youth hostel with working bathrooms! It was a significant improvement to the holes in the ground!

Finally I just want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported me and donated to the charity at both my fundraiser and my presentation. The at the fundraiser we raised over £250 for the Sahara Children's Charity and at the presentation evening your donations came to £77! A huge thank you to all who donated or attended these events. I'd like to thank especially Gail, Trevor and Gareth, without whom I would not have had this opportunity, they've watched me grow up over the years and shaped me as a person in the way they're so kind and encouraging.

Scouting IS a family but these guys are more than my family, I don't know where I would be without the experiences and opportunities them and Scouting as a whole has opened up to me. I just hope this inspires more young people to go out and

make a difference in someone's life because whether it be here or somewhere else in the world giving back is so important.

Charlotte.



#### All Souls Service of Remembrance

On the evening of November 2<sup>nd</sup> the Church opened its doors to all those who wanted to remember a loved one, regardless of circumstances. Those who attended were given a tea light candle and a leaf.

The Service started like this:

We welcome you to this Service for All Souls' and hope you find peace in this place.

'All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day have been observed for most of the Church's history. On All Saints' Day we remember all those saints who left a name, whose work everyone knows something about: St Paul; St Peter; St Francis.

Then on All Souls' Day we remember 'the faithful departed': the ordinary people may not have left a mark on the world, but who made a mark on us, their loved ones.

So this is a time to remember that those who have lived were made for God and were meant for heaven. Tonight we remember them, remember that they are still part of us, and that beyond our horizons, beyond our boundaries, beyond our understanding, they are held in God's embrace.

We are who we are today because of those whose lives touched ours.

God does not ask us to forget those we have known and loved: But sadness has to be tinged with gratitude:

for lives that shaped us, for hands that held us, for voices that inspired us, for love that enriched our lives.

Believing that those we remember tonight are held in God's embrace, we trust that we will meet them againing place where there can never be farewells.

So we make our prayers for those who now belong to whatever it is we mean by heaven.

During the service we placed the candle on the altar and the leaf on the carpet in front of the Altar, making a cross.

We listened to this poem ..

#### Fallen Leaves.

They do not leave They are not gone They look upon us still

They walk among the valleys now

They stride upon the hill

Their smile is in the summer breeze

Their memories whisper in the grass

Their calm is in the trees

Their light is in the winter snow

Their tears are in the rain

Their merriment runs in the brook

Their laughter in the lane Their gentleness is in the flowers

They sigh in autumn leaves They do not leave

They are not gone

'Tis only we who grieve

(anon)



David.

#### **Annual Meeting of the Archangels**

**GOD** This meeting shall come to order. Are all archangels present

and accounted for? Michael?

MICHAEL I'm here Lord.

**GABRIEL** At your service, Lord. At your command Lord. URIEL At your bidding, Lord.

GOD Good. All four archangels are present for the annual meeting of

the board. As you archangels know, we gather here each year

to hear a summary of what is happening throughout my

universe. I want a report.... Michael?

MICHAEL Yes, Lord.

**GOD** How are things in the black holes of celestial space?

**MICHAEL** Fine Lord, the universe is still expanding at the speed of light

into the black holes of space, just as you planned. Also, the outer edges of the universe are constantly being pushed back.

**GOD** Good. Gabriel, how are the stars doing?

GABRIEL This has been a good year for stars, God. In fact, I would say a

banner year. They are growing at such a rapid number, it won't be long and the whole universe will be dotted with stars.

GOD Magnificent. Raphael, how are the galaxies doing? I know they

are all bent out of shape.

RAPHAEL That's a good one, God..... The elliptical galaxies are taking

about a billion years to take form.... just as you planned. In contrast, the spiral galaxies... you know, with the lacy pinwheel shapes..... they are taking a little longer.... but as you designed

them.

GOD Uriel, how are things on earth.... that favourite little planet of

mine.... you know, that little planet where I put life so many

years ago. How is it doing down there?

**URIEL** You know, God

ALL FOUR Awful!!!!

**URIEL** Lord, there are wars and wars and more wars down on earth.

China. Persia. Gaul. And the Roman Empire... they have smashed everyone around them. It's Cain and Abel all over,

murder upon murder. Earth is not a safe place to live.

**MICHAEL** Hunger. So much hunger. Lord, there is plenty of food on planet

earth. The soil is good. The water is good. The food supply is good. But God.... those human beings are a greedy lot.... hoarding all the food for their own families and there own

nations.

**GABRIEL** Hate to tell you this God, but a whole lot of the human race has

forgotten you. They're so busy, they don't have time to think of

you.

**RAPHAEL** They say you don't exist... that you didn't create the universe....

the earth just happened.... an accident.

**GOD** Accident??

URIFI They say that when they die, that's all there is. No eternal life.

No eternal God.

GOD They never learn. But it was sooooo nice.... the earth... when I

> first created it. It was like a garden. A perfect garden. A paradise. Soooooo wonderful. Soooooo beautiful!

MICHAEL But you remember what happened? It was a looooong time

ago..... the snake?. The devil? The fallen angel? Lucifer?

**GABRIEL** You remember Lucifer used to sit on our board here.

RAPHAEL He got real proud.... thought he was bigger and smarter than

you, God.

GOD Those humans beings down on earth. I've got to get through to

them.... teach them.... to love... to walk in my ways. I've got to

get through to them!!

MICHAEL We archangels can come up with some ideas on how to

communicate with earth....

GOD Very good, archangels, but I have been thinking.....

ALL FOUR On no!

GOD About the possibility of communicating directly with the human

race.....

**ALL FOUR** Huhhhhh?

GOD Well..... I've been thinking about coming to earth.... myself.... as

a human being.

ALL FOUR NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.

GOD Yes.

MICHAEL You've got to be joking.

GOD No joke.... but there is some humour to the whole idea.... me as

a human being and all.

MICHAEL God, you can see, we archangels don't think it's fitting for you....

being God and all..... to become.... human.

GOD Aaahaa.

And besides, think of all the complications it will cause if you GABRIEL

choose to become human.

RAPHAEL That's right. What race will you come as? There are as many

colours of skin as there are colours in the rainbow.

MICHAEL And what sex would you choose?

GABRIEL If you come as a boy, people will think God is male.

**RAPHAEL** And if you come as a girl, people will think God is female. URIEL

So maybe you better come as a "boy-irl or "girl-oy"," but there

isn't such a thing as a "boy-irl" or a girl-oy".

GOD Aaahaa.

MICHAEL See God, it gets real complicated, if you come as a human.....

and besides, what nation would you choose?

**GABRIEL** People would expect you to come as an Egyptian... because

with their superiority they built the pyramids.

RAPHAEL And others would expect you to be a Roman.... because of their

mighty armies.

**URIEL** Yes, but I think you should come as Chinese... because they have an ancient artistic civilization.

**MICHAEL** So you see, God, it's not a good idea. Whatever nation you

choose, that nation would think they were the most favoured nation of the world.... that you loved them more than the others.

GOD I've got a plan. Yes, I have a plan. I haven't told you about it.

MICHAEL Well, God, you could plan to go as a banker.... if the greatest

human need is for money.

**GABRIEL** If the greatest human need is technological progress, you could

plan to go as a scientist.

**RAPHAEL** If the greatest human need is education, you could plan to go

as a professor.

**URIEL** If the greatest human need is pleasure, you could plan to go as

an entertainer.

GOD Those are all good ideas, but (slowly, with authority) the

greatest human need is for forgiveness.... love... and eternal life.... so I plan to come as a saviour.... to save them from their

sin, so they can live eternally with me.

MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAPHAEL, URIEL But ....

GOD I have a plan, I told you. I have a plan. I am going to come to earth as a..... child.... as a newborn baby..... right out from the

womb of a young mother.... truly and fully human flesh.

ALL FOUR NOOOOOOOO

**MICHAEL** As a baby?

**GABRIEL** Crying and screaming? **RAPHAEL** Gurgling and pooping?

**URIEL** No one..... no one will believe this.

**GOD** Don't you understand. I want to be fully human.... so I fully

understand what it means to be human. Yes.... and I will be born in poverty.... to a poor family..... I'll be born in a barn.

MICHAEL In a barn..... with a bunch of animals?

GABRIEL With horses and cows and donkeys?

RAPHAEL And chickens and ducks and geese?

**URIEL** It'll smell. It could be cold out there in a barn in the dead of

winter.

**GOD** Yes, it will be really cold. And I will be wrapped in swaddling

clothes and put into the warmth of cattle straw. And I will grow up knowing what it means to be poor. That is my plan..... and

further, I will be born in the Jewish nation.

**MICHAEL** The Jews? I've barely heard of them. They are the nobodies of nobodies.

**RAPHAEL** How about the Egyptians? The Romans? The Chinese?

**URIEL** God, we archangels don't get it.

And so that you more fully understand, my occupation will be

that of a carpenter.

MICHAEL A carpenter? You gonna work with your hands? You'll never get

rich..... or respected. How about a governor, a ruler, a

president?

**GOD** And then.... this is the key to my plan... after having lived about

30 years as a human being, I, I, I, I..... (slowly) will be executed

on a cross.... and die..... for the sins of the whole world.

**ALL FOUR** Stunned silence.

**GOD** Don't be dismayed. And then I will be raised from the dead by

the power me, the power of God to demonstrate to them that my life and my love are for all eternity. (brief, significant pause)

**MICHAEL** God.... do we get a vote on this one? Being respectful and all,

this plan may not work.

**GABRIEL** Yes, somewhere in our constitution someplace, I think we have

a right to vote.

**RAPHAEL** That's seems fair to me. Let's vote.

**URIEL** I'll count the votes.

**MICHAEL** All against God's plan.... raise your hands (four hands go up)

GABRIEL That's it.

**RAPHAEL** The nos have it.

**URIEL** I'll record it in the minutes.

**GOD** You may vote, and, Uriel, you may record it in the minutes. But

you know the rules: I have the final say.... it's a good plan.... it will work.... (slowly) Just think..... pure love in human form.... (slowly and fully) pure forgiveness in the body of a human being.... my love is so great, I will die for the whole world.... yes

my plan will work.....

MICHAEL When? When?.... Soon?

GABRIEL A thousand years?
RAPHAEL A billion years?
URIEL Tomorrow?

GOD (laughs heartily) Today! My plan has already begun. My plan

has been moving forward for the past nine months.

**GABRIEL** That's the message I sent. (other archangels nod in surprised

understanding, whispering, "Gabriel, of course")

GOD December 24th....the night of December 24th... It's time to go.

It's time to go. It's time to go. She.... Mary that is, is ready to deliver. And the four of you? You will be in the choir.... above the barn.... up in the sky... with all the angels and all the hosts of heaven... you'll be there to watch.. and sing...it's time to go.

GOD

"FROM HEAVEN ABOVE .... TO EARTH I COME."

COME MICHAEL

COME GABRIEL

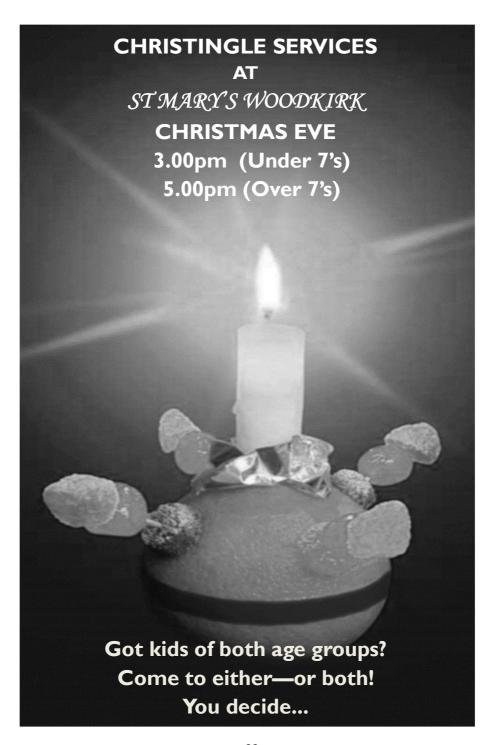
COME RAPHAEL

COME URIEL

COME.... COME... ALL OF YOU... TO THE HOLIEST NIGHT ON

EARTH!

Revd Sharon



#### 15th Morley Beavers

In November the Beavers have had a very busy time...



We had a wonderful time on the 4<sup>th</sup> November at the miniature railway ground on Bradford Road where we had a bonfire party with the Cubs, Scouts and Explorers lovely fireworks and great food,

On the 11<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Revd. Sharon who told us about remembrance Sunday. We also had a film show and a little service with one minute silence—the Beavers were very good and asked lots of questions. A big thank-you to Rev. Sharon for explaining the reason behind the Remembrance Services held around the world

On the 18<sup>th</sup> we celebrated Children in Need. The Beavers came in spotty t-shirts and each Beaver brought one pound to give to Children in Need. We made Pudsey biscuits and face masks.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> we welcomed the volunteers from the Teddy Bears Hospital. Each Beaver brought in their teddies which they were able to use bandages on. Some of the poor teddies did not have much fur left without a plaster or bandage on!

The Beavers were also told what all the internal organs do in our bodies, how to take our blood pressure, and what it should be; how to take of care of ourselves and keep ourselves safe; what to do if we hurt ourselves, like scrapes, bruises, burns and also if we find any one badly hurt what number to ring—plus how to care for our teeth!

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December we are having a craft evening with lots of paint and glue.

The  $9^{\text{th}}$  December is our last evening before Christmas we shall be having a great party at Tingly headquarters, everyone is looking . forward to a great time and a wonderful Christmas Holiday

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Gail, Joanne, Jess and Trevor

#### Albert's 'D' is for December Quiz

- 1. What Nationality was the writer Hans Christian Andersen?
- 2. Who starred with Rock Hudson in the 1959 film 'Pillow Talk'.
- 3. With which type of Entertainment is Wayne Sleep associated?
- 4. In TV's 'Magic Roundabout' what was the Rabbit's name?
- 5. Which cartoon series featured Baron Greenback and Penfold?
- 6. Who was the villainous driver in the 'Whacky Races'?
- 7. Which French town is famous for producing Mustard?
- 8. 'Glad all Over' was a 1960's hit for which Pop Group?
- 9. Muskie & Vince assisted which cartoon law enforcer?
- 10. In Britain what are Red, Roe or Fallow?
- 11. Which Football Team is nicknamed 'The Rams'?
- 12. Which group had a 1981 hit with 'Romeo & Juliet'?
- 13. In Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' stories which character begins with 'D'?
- 14. Americans play a game called 'Checkers'. What do we call it?
- 15. Which Football Team's home ground is the Keepmoat Stadium?
- 16. Which State of the USA is the only one beginning with 'D'?
- 17. What is the capital city of this State?
- 18. Who won Best Male Oscar in 1989 for his role in 'My Left Foot'?
- 19. Who had a 1960's hit with 'Mellow Yellow'?
- 20. Rex Harrison played the title role in a 1967 film based on a story by Hugh Lofting?

#### **Albert**

Answers on P38

#### Poetry Corner

#### Christmas Card List

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book And every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look And that is when I realise that these names are a part Not of the book they're written in, but really of my heart.

For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime.

And in the meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme. And while it sounds fantastic, for me to make this claim I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.

And while you may not be aware of any special link.
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think.
For once I've met someone, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word, or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between. For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you It is because you're on the list that I'm indebted to.

For I am but a total of the many folks I've met And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget. And whether I have known you for many years, or few In some ways you have a part in shaping things I do.

And every year when Christmas comes, I realise anew The best gift life can offer is meeting folks like you. And may the spirit of Christmas that forever endures Leave its richest blessings in the hearts of you and yours.

Helen Stiner Rice.

With thanks to Glyn for finding this.



#### Albert's 'Household Items' Quiz.

Yes, folks 2 quizzes for the price of one! Why not save one for New Year's Day and try it with a hang-over???

- 1. Might this be the wettest place in Somerset?
- 2. Garden plants are usually grown in this.
- 3. A pollen seeker's hurry to clean up?
- 4. This could be a dog in a Daimler!
- 5. A male or female meeting controller?
- 6. Could this be a fashionable filly?
- 7. A closer's opener?
- 8. Duck feathers?
- 9. Oddly, this mustn't be used to ice a cake.
- 10. Sickness treatment and an upper body part?
- 11. You might look into this Daily!
- 12. Literary Peter who supports Great Ormond Street Hospital.
- 13. Almost until now has provided seating?
- 14. An old fashioned kiss and cuddle.
- 15. A furniture list?
- 16. Retail Owl (Anagram).
- 17. This sounds like it's Very French!
- 18. The initials of a former England footballer and manager.
- 19. Is this an appliance that cleans nothing?
- 20. Part of a hospital and an article of clothing?

Albert

#### Church Mouse Tales

that.'

My friend Hubert, the Black Canon seems to have recovered from our little joke on him last month. My cousin Jethro is over for a visit from the USA and we couldn't resist. Anyway Hubert has been back to his usual serene self, floating around the place in a most harmonious way. Those Gregorian chants he sings in a morning create a very soothing atmosphere – that is until yesterday. I could hear him singing softly as I awoke, and, wanting to enjoy the moment, I made my way up the chancel steps and into the quire. He usually sits on the north side rear pew for his meditations so I hopped up the step and peered along the way. No sign. He wasn't in the front pew either so I could only think to look over in the south side pews...

'SURPRISE!' shouted Hubert and Jethro as I reached the ornately carved pew end. I jumped back in shock.

'What are you doing?' I asked as my heart rate started to slow a little.

'HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!' They sang together. Now in mouse world we don't really do birthdays so I wasn't sure if it was or wasn't so I stood there looking puzzled whilst they finished the little rhyme.

'Yes', continued Hubert, 'it is your birthday - four years old today - congratulations!'
Oh - well I er - that's very nice', I said meekly.
'I've bought you a present', went on Hubert smiling.
'Oh', I said cheering up, 'what is it?'
'A new sweeping brush.' He brought it out from behind his back, with a glint in his eye.
'Oh yes, very funny,' I said, 'I suppose I deserved



Misha

Dec Quiz Answers: 1. Danish 2. Doris Day 3. Dancing 4. Dylan 5. Dangermouse 6. Dick Dastardly 7. Dijon 8. Dave Clark Five 9. Deputy Dog 10. Deer 11. Derby County 12. Dire Straits 13. Dick 14. Draughts 15. Doncaster Rovers 16. Delaware 17. Dover 18. Daniel Day-Lewis 19. Donovan 20. Dr. Dolittle.

Albert

Household Quiz Answers: 1. Bath 2. Bed 3. Brush (Bee Rush) 4. Carpet 5. Chair 6. Clothes Horse 7. Door Key 8. Eiderdown 9. Freezer 10. Medicine Chest 11. Mirror 12. Pan 13. Sofa (So Far) 14. Spoon 15. Table 16. Towel Rail 17. Tray (Très) 18. TV (Terry Venables) 19. Vacuum 20. Wardrobe.

Albert

Diary for the coming weeks

December: (Morning Prayer will take place at 9.00am Mon, Tues, Thurs

& Fri.\*)

Sun 4th 10:30am Holy Communion

12:30pm Baptisms

Wed 7th 10:00am Holy Communion (Healing)

7:00pm Quiet Hour at Tingley Methodist

Sat 10th 10:30am Christmas Fair in the Parish Centre (to 3pm)

Sun 11th 10:30am All Age Nativity Service

12:00pm Holy Communion

Mon 12th 7:30pm PCC Meeting in Church
Tues 13th 7:00pm Service of Silent Reflection

Wed 14th 10:00am Holy Communion (God's Goodness)

7:00pm Quiet Hour at St, Michaels East Ardsley

Thur 15th 7:00pm Westerton School Service (School Only)
Fri 16th 9:00am Hill Top Primary Service (School Only)

Sun 18th 10:30am Holy Communion

12:30pm Baptisms

4:00pm Carols by Candlelight

Mon 19th 6:00pm Carol Singing at Lydgate Lodge

Wed 21st 10:00am Holy Communion (Iona)

7:00pm Quiet Hour at West Ardsley Methodist

Thur 22nd 11:00am Holy Communion for Xmas at Lydgate Lodge Sat 24th 3:00pm Christingle mainly for the Under 7's

5:00pm Christingle mainly for the Over 7's 11:30pm Christmas Eve Midnight Mass

Sun 25th 10:30am Christmas Day Holy Communion

No Morning Prayers Monday 26th to Friday 30th December\*
Wed 28th 10:00am Holy Communion: Book of Common Prayer

**January:** Morning Prayer will take place at 9.00am Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri.

Sun 1st 10:30am Holy Communion

Wed 4th 10:00am Holy Communion (Healing)
Sat 7th 9:30am Church & Churchyard clean up

Sun 8th 10:30am All Age Service 12 Noon Holy Communion

Mon 9th 7:30pm PCC Meeting in Church Wed 11th 10:00am Holy Communion (Iona)

Sun 15th 10:30am Holy Communion

Wed 18th 10:00am Holy Communion (God's Goodness) Thur 19th 11:00am Holy Communion at Lydgate Lodge

Sun 22nd 10:30am Holy Communion

Wed 25th 10:00am Holy Communion: Book of Common Prayer

Sun 29th 10:30am All Age Holy Communion

12:30pm Baptism

February:

Wed 1st 10:00am Holy Communion: (Iona)
Sun 5th 10:30am All Age Holy Communion

12:30pm Baptism

# FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS BAPTISMS

We welcome into our church family:-Harriet Ann Hirst-Sewell Hope Andie McLeary Emmie Grace Kerr Albie James Naylor



#### **DEATHS**

We give thanks for the lives of:-

Sandra Whittlestone



WEDDINGS

We congratulate:-

Matthew John Smith & Joanne Greensides.



An old Irish Prayer:



May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Amen

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#### **Parish Centre Rentals**

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**Contact: Sally Shaw** 

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#### What's on

Mothers' Union 3rd Monday in the month 2:00 pm

Brenda Dixon 0113 253 4078

Playgroup Monday, Tuesday & Thursday

9:30am to 12:00pm

Becky Schofield 07811 146958

Girl Guides Tuesday 7:30pm

Vikki Springett 07841 513530

Toddler Group Wednesday 9:15-11:00am

Sally Shaw 01924 475048

Rainbows Thursday 5.30 - 6.30pm

Ruth Osenton-Brown 01924 607393

Brownies Thursday 6.30 - 7.45pm

Hannah Tombling 01924 501892

Keep Fit Class Thursday 8:00pm

Margaret Hampshire 01924 476721

Young at Heart 1st & 3rd Thursdays 2:00pm

Brenda Dixon 0113 253 4078

Beavers Friday 5:00pm to 6:15 pm

Gail Townsend 0113 252 8710

Cubs Friday 6:30pm to 7:45 pm

Marianne Ingham 07778 542302

Scouts Friday 8:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Trevor Holdsworth 0113 253 0927

**Explorer Scouts** Friday 7:45 pm to 9:30 pm

Chris Ingham 07816 517838

#### Services

1st Sunday of the month:

10:30am Holy Communion

2nd Sunday of the month:

10:30am All Age Worship for adults and children

12:00pm Holy Communion

3rd Sunday of the month

10:30am Holy Communion

4th Sunday of the month:

10:30am Holy Communion

5th Sunday of the month

10:30am All Age Holy Communion for adults and children

Wednesdays:

10:00am Holy Communion

3rd Thursday:

11:00am Holy Communion at Lydgate Lodge

Morning Prayer 9.00am—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

To arrange for **Baptisms** please contact: Liz Aveyard on 07791 324221

Baptisms held at 12.30pm on 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays

To book weddings, funerals, or the reading of banns please contact our Coordinator, Gail Townsend (0113 2528710) email: Gail.Townsend12@gmail.com