

Confessions of a Vicar at Christmas

I need to tell you this. I love Christmas. I love the Christmas tree and the smell of a pine or a spruce in the house. I love the decorations. Some of ours I have had since my 3rd birthday. I love the new decorations we give each of the children every year. I love the antique decorations that Carol collects, and I love teasing her about her obsessive collecting of them. I love the food. Mince pies and short bread. Turkey dinner and all the trimmings. I love the idea that people might give gifts for the joy of doing it. I love the school Christmas concerts and the memories of ones that I was in. I love the excitement and anticipation of Christmas. I love Christmas crackers, noise makers, and a glass of mulled wine with friends. I love sending and receiving Christmas cards, and telephone calls from half way around the world.

More than all of that, I love the story of Christmas. The Christmas story is played out for us every year in the Carol Service (Carols by Candlelight, Sunday 21 December – St James at 4:00 pm and St Francis at 6:00 pm). Before I took my faith seriously, I used to wonder why anyone would go to Church on Christmas Eve or, even more curious, on Christmas Day. But you know, when you think about what Christmas means it doesn't make sense any other way. Remember those words that we hear every year from the Gospel of John (1:14): "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." Imagine that! God, who created the whole universe, who created you and me, came to earth to

be one of us.

No wonder this is an exciting time. No wonder those who don't worship God look for ways to have a share in the excitement.

I know that for some of us, Christmas will be difficult. Perhaps something has gone wrong in your life, with work, in a relationship, with your children or your parents. Some of us are grieving. In the newspapers and on television we see people suffering in Zimbabwe or India or Iran. But knowing that God is real, that he is close, that no matter how difficult things become he is with us – this allows us to begin to move through the pain toward hope, and find renewal and strength to face tomorrow.

People try all sorts of other things that don't have the seal of authenticity. Presents, rich food and drink, and time with friends are lovely, but they are not what brings peace and hope. It is the knowledge that God came, that he loves us, and that he desires a living relationship with us that makes me want to shout it from the roof top: "God loves you, too!"

Because he came, there is hope. Because he loves us, we know how to love and be loved. Jesus' birth gives us every reason to live in hope.

May God's love touch you and bless you this Christmas

With all best wishes from

The Thorntons

Chronicle

December 2008 / January 2009

Who's that in the parish office?

The parish office has been open in St James Church Centre for a while now, and a parish secretary has been appointed to support the ministry team. Some of you will know Elaine already, but we've asked her if she would write a short article to introduce herself, and she kindly agreed. If you haven't met Elaine, why not take a moment some Tuesday or Friday to pop upstairs to the office and introduce yourself?

My name is Elaine Ulett and I was born and grew up in Oxford where I currently live. Five years ago I moved to Town Furze with my 2 boys, Ryan and Marlon, but within a year, in December 2004, we moved to France for a year and a half. We lived in two regions of France, where we learned about the French culture and some of the language. I attended a language centre for missionaries (I was the only one who wasn't a missionary) in Albertville, which had close links with the local church. My boys really enjoyed the Sunday school there and became very interested in the church. After seven months we moved to Buhl, where I worked for a Christian holiday camp as part of the service team, cleaning and serving the meals. I was a volunteer with the camp, and

meals and lodgings were provided. My boys attended a private Christian school in the nearby town, and I cleaned there in order to reduce the fees charged for my boys.

During our time in Buhl, we rekindled our faith in God, through our connection with the churches we attended and the people we worked with. On our return to Oxford, I started to attend my local church, St Francis, and I am now an active member, giving a monthly reading and helping out at special events. I am also the treasurer for CEF, the community emergency food bank that collects food from local churches and distributes it to those in need. CEF started operating in April 2008 and I joined the team in May.

Dear Readers,

I wonder if you are the kind of person who makes New Year resolutions? I don't mean "to lose a couple of pounds after the excesses of Christmas feasting" or "remembering to chat to a friend on the phone rather more often", I mean big decisions. I made a resolution on New Years Eve 1977 and when I explain a bit more you'll see where it has brought me.

At the time I was a busy, full-time working mum with a baby son and a teenage daughter, to say nothing of a home to run and husband Frank, to look after (say no more!). I found myself at a very jolly party with a crowd of friends and new acquaintances swapping our resolutions. I don't know where it came from (well, I can guess) but I heard myself saying, "I want to get more involved in my parish church". Me, with P.T.A. meetings, school planning meetings, parents' evenings, school productions, school club nights once a week on top of my other responsibilities. Of course, in the immediate year ahead it was almost impossible. But God was listening and year by year He'd present me with "doable" things and He led me on to more and more. Now I really am "more involved in my parish church". So, if you're going to make a New Year resolution this year, be careful – God might have plans for you – maybe you could be co-editor of The Chronicle when I'm too old, or boring, to do it any more! Don't worry, this is NOT my notice to quit.

Continued on back page

Saint of the Month St Nicholas

Saint Nicholas was born during the third century in Patara, which was at the time a Greek village, on the coast of the present Turkey. His wealthy parents raised him to be a faithful Christian, but they died when he was still young, and he inherited money and property. Faithful to Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," he used his inheritance to help those in need, dedicating his life to serving God. When he was still a young man, he was made the Bishop of Myra, which was a provincial capital in the Roman Empire and the place of a growing Christian community. Nicholas gained a reputation as a thoughtful and humble man.

The Roman Emperor persecuted Christians fanatically. It was said that the prisons had no room for murders, thieves and robbers, because they were so full of bishops, priests, deacons, and Bishop Nicholas was soon thrown in among them. He was eventually released, and when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Nicholas was among the bishops gathered at Nicaea for the first Ecumenical council. He lived to a ripe old age, dying on 6 December, AD 343, and was buried at the cathedral church in Myra. When Islam swept through Turkey his remains were transferred to Bari, in Italy. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration.

Although there are many stories about St Nicholas, it is hard, when so many centuries have passed, to separate the truths from the legends. But they help us understand how extraordinary he was. One story that may well have some grain of truth tells of a poor man who had no money to provide a dowry for his three daughters. They were so desperately poor that he considered selling them into slavery, which would have meant prostitution. Hearing of their plight, Bishop Nicholas sold some of his possessions, and went secretly to the man's house

at night. He threw three bags of gold into the house, which are said to have landed in shoes or stockings drying by the fire. It was meant to be an anonymous act but word somehow got out, and Nicholas became revered as the benefactor of children. And of course this led to our custom of hanging stockings on Christmas Eve. And those bags of gold are the origins of the three golden balls seen outside pawn-shops. Three golden balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St Nicholas.

Stories of St Nicholas include one about a young boy named Basilios, enslaved by pirates from Crete, but miraculously reunited with his parents many years later. Another tells of three students of theology, robbed and murdered by an innkeeper who hid their remains in a pickling tub, but restored to life when Nicholas prayed earnestly to God. From stories like these, Nicholas became the patron saint of children.

Another story tells that Nicholas, returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was on a ship when a terrible storm threatened to sink it. When Nicholas prayed, the terrified sailors were amazed when the sea became calm, and from stories like this, Nicholas was made patron saint of sailors and voyagers.

Other stories tell of Nicholas saving his people from famine, sparing the lives of those innocently accused, and much more. He secretly spread kindness and generosity among the needy.

From Christians in the fifth century making pilgrimages to Myra, celebration of the saint spread to the Protestants of Holland and then to Britain and America, eventually making him one of the most popular saints in the world. Hundreds of churches are dedicated to Saint Nicholas.

Today he patron of many different sorts of people: children, mariners, bankers,

Q. What is the fastest fish in the world?

pawn-brokers, scholars, orphans, labourers, travellers, merchants, judges, paupers, marriageable maidens, students, children, sailors, victims of judicial mistakes, captives, perfumers, even thieves and murderers! He is known as the friend and protector of all in trouble or need.

From the stories of Saint Nicholas, we eventually get to Santa Claus and to Father Christmas, bringing presents down the chimney.

St Nicholas was an example of hospitality, generosity and faith. Hebrews 13:2 says, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have enter-

tained angels unawares." It reminds us that rather than limiting our hospitality to nice people like ourselves who might one day share their hospitality with us, if we are hospitable and generous to those in need, we may find ourselves sharing with people who are very special to God.

The love of God and concern for one's neighbours are at the heart of the Hope of Advent. This Christmas season perhaps we can share our blessings with someone who is in need, offering generous hospitality and putting our faith into action, to honour the example of St Nicholas.

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS ABROAD

In Finland December 24th is often a "hot" experience in many families. Before the presents are given and the Christmas ham is eaten the whole family likes to visit the sauna together. In Belgium and France the meal on Christmas Eve plays a key role. Oysters and a glass of champagne together with the famous Bûche Noel (chocolate log cake) create a fitting setting for the festive day. This is followed by Midnight Mass.

In Sweden the Christmas period is, if possible, enjoyed within the realm of the family. After the presents have been distributed everyone relaxes with traditional treats like herrings, salmon, Köttbullar sausage and brown or red cabbage.

In the night before December 6th Sinterklaas and his helpers visit the children of the Netherlands and fill their shoes with sweets. Several weeks before St Nicholas arrives from Spain in his boat to mark the Christmas season. On 24th December the birth of Jesus is celebrated with Holy Mass and a festive dinner at which almond cake and special cookies are served.

The Christmas customs of Austria, Germany and Switzerland are very similar. Traditionally St Nicholas brings small gifts of sweets and toys on 6th December. In Austria he is accompanied by Krampus, who symbolises Satan and is said to punish disobedient children on the spot. In Germany St Nicholas travels with his companion and helper, Knecht Ruprecht and his rod. Swiss children are still visited by "Sanuchlaus" who gives them the long-awaited Grütli – sweet gingerbread men.

An appeal from CEF (Community Emergency)

The Community Emergency Foodbank CEF, based at St Francis Church, is going well and the number of people in crisis who are using our service is increasing week by week. We made an excellent collection of food through Harvest Thanksgiving services from churches and schools in Oxford.

However, certain items are in short supply, so I am appealing to those who are able to consider whether you might donate in particular the following items:

- cereal
- UHT and powdered milk
- sugar
- puddings
- fruit juice
- biscuits
- bottled sauces

something edible and special for Christmas!

Thank you so much for your kind support to this project.

Jane Benyon

Around Cowley

News Reports

MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

The October meeting had as its speaker, Mrs Alison Holden, who addressed the issues she meets day by day as headteacher of a Church of England primary school, set in the middle of a multi-cultural neighbourhood. She emphasised that whilst it is important to be fully aware of the faiths and backgrounds of all her pupils, she sees her role at St Christopher's School as that of a Christian leading her whole school to the understanding of Christian ethics.

In November the Mothers' Union enjoyed a quiet, contemplative afternoon in preparation for Advent and Christmas.

The December Christmas party will be held in St James' Church when (good news) two new members will be enrolled. Carols sung round the piano, mincepies, Christmas cake and mulled wine should all add to the party spirit. So too will Christmas readings, both religious and humorous. The party begins at 2.30 p.m. on December 15th.

Something for everyone to look forward to is another poems, wine and cheese evening in St James' Centre on Saturday February 7th. If you missed the one held earlier this year then make sure you come along and find out what a great evening it will be. Don't forget to put the date in your new diary.

CHRISTMAS BOXES

Last year 1.3 million needy children received Christmas boxes in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Africa, all kindly donated by people in the U.K. Helen Dorling and her mother-and-toddler group started filling boxes for the "Operation Christmas Child" in 2004 at St Francis Church. That year they sent off five boxes, followed by eleven in 2005. Thirty-

four boxes followed the next year and last year the total was seventy. We should really like to top that this year.

Most of the boxes have been covered in Christmas wrapping paper by my good friend, Mrs Pat Young from Kennington, who works tirelessly to collect, cover and fill them. "Operation Christmas Child" is a project run by Samaritans Purse International, a Christian relief and development charity.

For many children these are the only presents they have ever had. One little boy, on opening his box, cried with joy because he could, at last, go to school as now he had his own writing materials.

I would like to thank all those who have so generously filled boxes and also helped to raise money to transport them. Thank you – we couldn't do it without your support.
Joyce Titchell

RIDE AND STRIDE RESULT

Great news! The final amount raised and dispatched to the Oxford Historic Churches Trust is £430.26. That is a magnificent total from the parish. Thanks go to all the riders and striders from St Francis and St James, to all their sponsors without whom the money could not have been raised and to all the welcomers at both churches. Half of the money donated goes to support O.H.C.T. and half goes straight into our parish funds.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funerals

3 November – Thelma Earl
13 November – Ena May Tumer
24 November – Violet Roberts
25 November – Sharon Brown

CHRISTMAS GUESTS

What an interesting series of discussions this topic has inspired! Asked, “Which personality (or two) you would invite to join in your Christmas celebration meal?” these are the fascinating responses we have received.

Our new vicar, Suzanna chose Victoria Wood “Because,” she said, “She would be hilarious and I think she’d get on with everyone.”

It is interesting to hear how many people chose singers as their preferred guests. The ladies who serve parish lunch on Tuesdays named these: Bob Dylan with his guitar, to sing “Lay, Lady Lay,” for Doreen Werlinger. He also happened to be a favourite of her husband, Lou.

Tina Turner was Pat Chambers’ choice. She also told me that her husband, Terry, loved her singing and the little frilly skirts she wore! Pat took Terry to one of her concerts and it would bring back happy memories.

Christine Woodman told me that to have Neil Diamond singing “Hello Again” just for her would make her Christmas.

Always one for a pretty face, Cyril Room thought he’d in-

vite Katherine Jenkins. “She has one of the most beautiful voices. I could listen to her all day and all night,” he said.

Alison Kinnear has written this – As I have been a fan for a long time, I would invite Sir Cliff Richard. It would be an honour to meet the man who is still performing after 50 years, and I’m sure he would be charming company. I would ask him to sign my copy of his latest autobiography, “My Life, My Way,” and tell him how much I am enjoying it. Then we could chat on a variety of subjects such as his music, the charity work he was knighted for and how he likes to spend Christmas. It would be a magical occasion not to be forgotten.

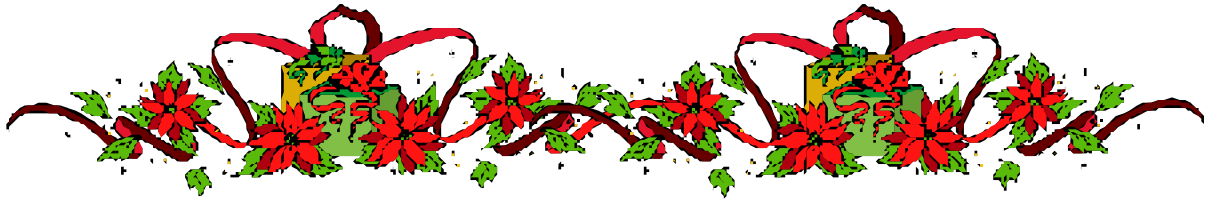
Unable to choose between two charismatic men Joy Harbison chose Daniel O’Donnell because she enjoys his singing but also she thinks he has a nice personality. And personality is the main reason she would invite

Paul O’Grady. She describes him as natural and funny. Another reason is



that he is a genuine animal-lover.

Now here’s an animal-lover with a difference, Thelma Telling. “As an animal-lover,” she said, “I find it difficult to choose amongst the many who have worked for the benefit of creatures, great and small. Finally I decided on my birthday saint - St Jerome, whose day is celebrated on September 30th. It is said that he removed a thorn from the paw of a lion.



The beast then became his guardian and followed him everywhere”. (Presumably Thelma would find room in her home for the lion as well as St Jerome were she to welcome him on Christmas Day!!)

Back to the world of entertainment. Nathan Phillips has written: “I think I’ll invite Justin Timberlake because much as I’d like to have Gordon Brown around, I’m not sure he’d particularly want to know how I’d run the country and Justin would probably be up for teaching me some of his dance moves.

Maggie Giles told me her choice would be Joe Pasquale just because he’s silly. She likes “silly” and so does the rest of her family.

Though “silly” is not his style, humour certainly is important to June Smiths wished-

for guest. She writes: Archbishop Desmond Tutu would be my guest of honour. With his infectious laugh he would keep the anecdotes flowing along with the Christmas food. He told “Songs of Praise” earlier this year that when he was a part-time curate in London, he and his wife asked a policeman directions around the City. To their amazement they were addressed as “Sir” and “Madam”. That had never happened to them when living in South Africa. After that they often asked directions even when they knew the way just to hear “Sir” and “Madam”. What a lovely man!

Mark Oxbrow and I seem to be on similar wavelengths when choosing our fantasy guests. He named Clarissa Dixon-Wright because he thought Christmas is just the

time to eat all the wrong, naughty food and she would be a great person to have in the kitchen cooking it, as well as a wonderful guest at the table, full of stories and fun. “I would just need to hide the extra wine bottles!” he added.

I, your editor, have known all along who my chosen guests would be Simon and Dave, the Hairy Bikers. If you haven’t watched them on T.V. you won’t know how funny they are nor what wonderful cooks. Frank and I love their northern sense of the ridiculous and when it comes to fabulous Christmas food I can think of none better.

And finally, Diana Pope has chosen Joe Swift, the T.V. gardener, because she admires the way he explains his allotment and his mistakes as well as his successes.

When the garden is asleep...

Do you have any odd jobs or dogs that need walking?
Phone Susie 0790 6007 602



Don't Worry about avoiding temptation...

ROSANNE INTERVIEWS

Jenny Bushell

I would never have guessed, had I not already known, that the evening that Jenny breezed into my sitting-room to be interviewed for The Chronide, she had just completed a full day's teaching at Cheney School. Similarly when she arrived at St James' Centre a few evenings ago with all the ingredients to cook a meal for our Alpha guests from scratch she gave the impression that she was as fresh as a daisy. Now, I'm sure most of us know that a day spent teaching science to a number of lively teenagers is not the easiest of jobs. However, Jenny loves her job, describes her colleagues on the staff as kind and lovely to work with and the students are really nice. That, undoubtedly, gives her the amazing energy which exudes from her. And while we are on the subject of energy, she and a group of her friends are spending their spare time giving the tired-looking Upper Room at St Francis Church a new lease of life with fresh paint, curtains and furnishings kindly donated by folk in the parish.

Her childhood was mostly spent in the beautiful county of Cumbria apart from a brief eighteen months when her father who worked in avionics components, was posted to America. On the family's return to the U.K. her baby sister, Claire, was born and it was also time for her to start school. She attended the tiny village school near her home where, with so few pupils, Jenny received very good tuition. However, at eleven she was sent to a small private school which she told me "didn't agree" with her. I got the impression that, as a bright little girl, she was not stretched intellectually. She added that she found it boring and sat at the back of the class causing trouble. Her parents decided to move her to a large comprehensive school with a policy for their more able pupils and things got a lot better. Science was her preferred subject especially physics where she obviously took after her father. For 'A' levels she took maths and several sciences and qualified for a place at

Oxford. She entered Jesus college five years ago. She found the whole Oxford experience "wonderful". She told me that she believes that you get from any experience what you are prepared to put into it and she seized all the opportunities she could. After her degree was behind her she studied for a post-graduate teaching diploma. Next came the decision of whether to stay in Oxford or leave. She is so pleased that she stayed for several reasons. She has a number of friends who are still studying at university. She found an excellent post at Cheney School but also, interestingly, she explained that living in a city is a completely different experience from studying there. It is an experience she much enjoys. She is happily sharing a house with a group of friends in Crescent Road. At this point she was quick to tell me how much she enjoys church at St Francis and listed a lot of people she has met there for whom she has admiration and affection.

Because of the demands of her teaching schedule she finds little time in the week for social pursuits. She played rugby at college so she does try to train once a week at the City of Oxford Rugby Club. Also, as I intimated earlier, she is at present fully involved in our Alpha course. On reflection I'd guess that she's probably one of the youngest P.C.C. members Cowley has ever had.

Hannah Seward, who used to play the organ at St Francis Church before she and her husband moved away, is a close friend. They were at college together and attended services at chapel together too. Once she had entered the world of work Jenny wanted a parish church to attend and it was Hannah who brought her into our midst. St Francis is her spiritual home at the moment and she intends to offer her undoubled energy to the parish in any way possible.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Fairly solitary – I loved reading. You'd usually find me in a corner with a book. Claire is very outgoing. On holiday she'd always find people to talk to. Me – I'd just have a suitcase full of books.

Have you any childhood memories you'd care to share?

When I was in reception class at school I had my first P.E. lesson. We were told to get ready by taking off our clothes. I was only five and didn't understand so I took everything off and took my knickers to my teacher to ask where I should put them!

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Oh, yes, definitely. We were the family who went to church with a bag full of toys and books. There weren't any youth groups in our area so I hadn't really made a conscious decision about God until I got to university. As I did more and more thinking the Spirit began to move my mind to start demanding answers from God, myself and other people.

If you could make a major change in the world what would it be?

I'd like to see a lot less stereotyping of people. I'd stamp out bias against racism, homophobia and sexism.

Is there anything about the modern world which you find positive or en-

couraging?

I think the internet is amazing – having easy access to information is wonderful.

Do you have a treasured possession?

I have a teddy which I have had for a long time. We had to drive over a considerable distance of America to retrieve him once. He's called Pooh Bear.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

I read (still everything). A bit of rugby and I run for fun, to help me relax and keep fit. The sport I can't possibly miss is the Six Nations Rugby Tournament. I love giving dinner parties. I find cooking for friends very satisfying.

Are there any places in the world you'd like to visit?

I'm not much of a traveller. I'm not at all tempted to travel though I love Italy. Last summer I went to Rome.

Do you have ambitions for the future?

To continue teaching. Fairly soon I plan to move out of the classroom. I may find myself wanting to move on to a different city.

As you grow old it starts avoiding you!

Christmas Fare



From cheaper to more expensive there is nothing nicer than serving your own mincepies with home-made mincemeat. Here are three mincemeat recipes which have something different from the everyday mincemeat sold in the shops:-

Cherry & Walnut Mincemeat

Ingredients

2 ozs each of currants, raisins & sultanas
8 ozs glacé cherries
1 cooking apple
2 ozs chopped walnuts
2 ozs shredded suet
6 ozs Demerara sugar
½ teaspoon mixed spice
⅛ of a pint (one gill) brandy or rum

Method:

Peel, core and grate the apple and mix with dried fruit.
Stir in the walnuts, suet and sugar.
Add mixed spice and brandy or rum. Mix well.
Cover and leave to stand for about 3 days.

Tropical Apricot Mincemeat

Ingredients

4 ozs of "no-need-to-soak" dried apricots
4 ozs each of currants and raisins
2 ozs each of glacé ginger and glacé pineapple
7 ozs chopped mixed peel
8 ozs Demerara sugar
1 tablespoon orange marmalade
2 ozs flaked almonds
4 ozs shredded suet
Juice of an orange
1 tablespoon of mixed spice
2 tablespoons medium sherry
2 tablespoons of dark rum

Method:

With scissors snip apricots into thin strips and mix with dried fruit, ginger, pineapple, peel, sugar, almonds and suet.
Mix orange juice, marmalade, mixed spice,

sherry and rum and pour over fruit mixture. Stir well, cover and leave to stand for about 3 days.

Spicy apple and carrot mincemeat

Ingredients

1 cooking apple, peeled and grated
4 ozs carrots, peeled and grated
8 ozs sultanas
4 ozs currants
Juice of an orange
2 ozs shredded suet
2 ozs Demerara sugar
½ teaspoon each of grated nutmeg, ground cloves, ground allspice and ground cinnamon
3 tablespoons medium sherry

Method:

Mix the apple and carrot
Add all other ingredients with the sherry last.
Mix together well.
Cover and leave for about 3 days.

These mincemeats can be used after 3 days or stored in sterilised jars with waxed paper discs on top. Remember to label the jars!

Cyril Room's wonderful **fruit cake** recipe would make a great Christmas cake:

Ingredients-

16 oz Self raising flour
8 oz margarine
8 oz caster sugar
1 tspn baking powder
3 eggs
Cup of milk
12 oz of mixed dried fruit
* tin of crushed pineapple

Method:-

Rub margarine into flour until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
Add sugar and baking powder.
Whisk eggs and milk together, add to mixture and stir thoroughly.

Add dried fruit and pineapple, stirring thoroughly.

Line two 7 inch cake tins with baking paper. Divide mixture between the tins.

Bake in moderate oven for about 1 hour and test with skewer. If mixture still soft in middle return to oven and test again later.

* Can be obtained from Cowley Co-op.

TRAVELLERS' TALES

Today, 19th November, we should have been happily staying in The Chine Hotel, Boscombe, what lovely weather!

At the beginning of October I received a call from the group manager to say that the hotel was to be refurbished in the ground floor area, to include the reception area, the dining room and the bar area, during the month of November.

From the visit Brian and I made to the hotel yesterday, it was clear that the hotel could not accommodate a group as large as ours while this work is being carried out.

This was a great disappointment to us all: a lot of hard work had gone into the planning of this holiday, the itinerary arranged and bookings made on our behalf. All this has had to be rearranged.

The hotel is lovely, the setting overlooking the sea, and I, with Jim, have decided to accept the rebooking. We shall now visit the hotel in early October 2009, 6th – 8th inclusive (at an excellent rate). Please support this holiday.

We are meeting on 25th January, for Sunday lunch to pay the balance on the Newquay holiday, which begins on March 31st (4 nights D.B.B.) We are looking forward to seeing you all then.

Noah was the first entrepreneur – he floated a company when the rest of the world was in liquidation.

From Una

The days out to the theatre etc. are becoming increasing problems for Brian and myself, and Christine who takes the payments at the Cowley end. For us it incurs staying away from home, the added expense of coming to Oxford, and also having our dogs looked after. If there is anyone who can take over the responsibility of collecting payments, please let Christine or myself know.

The “Mama Mia” trip turned out to be a nightmare for me. Having made the bookings and had confirmation of the seats, when I came to pay for them, we had been quoted the wrong price. We have what they call “schools’ rate”. After four days of telephone calls, let alone the tears, I managed to prove to the Chief Executive, that the mistake was theirs and not mine, they suffered a loss to the theatre of approximately £1,000. All those who have seats for 23rd January, have an absolute bargain!!

All this has proved too much and I have decided to hand the day trips to someone else. We have two holidays booked next year, and hopefully we will be able to arrange a holiday for the following spring. Our number of required single rooms makes finding the hotels able to accommodate us increasingly difficult; the supplement they want is enormous. We have enjoyed ten happy years holidaying together, we have a wonderful coach driver in Jim, and hopefully we will be able to continue in 2010.

Brian and I wish you all a joyful Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you in January.

God Bless you all.

Barbara

Q. Why do bakers work so hard?

Advent

During the season of Advent, Christians remember that 2000 years ago, Jesus came into the world and lived among us, and that he promised one day to return in glory.

Advent (from the Latin *adventus* meaning arrival) is the first event in the Christian year, and is the church season that leads to Christmas Day. The Christian year (which follows the life of Jesus) begins with Advent Sunday, which could be thought of as the church's 'New Year's Day.' Advent always begins on the Sunday nearest 30th November (this year it actually landed on that day) and lasts until midnight Christmas Eve. As part of our Advent services, each Sunday we light a new candle in the advent wreath.

During the season of Advent, Christians across the world prepare for the celebration of the arrival of the Lord into the world through the birth of his Son Jesus Christ. Advent is a time to celebrate light in the midst of darkness. It is also a time to look forward to when Jesus will come a second time.

The origins of the Advent wreath are uncertain. There is evidence of pre-Christian peoples using candles and wreaths in the dark of winter. By the Middle Ages, Christians had adapted this tradition, and incorporated the Advent wreath in their spiritual preparation for Christmas. Christ is "the Light that came into the world" to replace the darkness of sin with the truth and love of God.

An Advent wreath is simply a circle with four candles, one for each of the four Sundays in Advent, and in the centre, a fifth candle (traditionally white), the Christ Candle, lit on Christmas Day. The circle, which has no beginning or end, reminds us of the eternity and endless mercy of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. The candles symbolise the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son, Jesus.

The themes for the four Sundays are as follows:

1 – **The candle of Hope** – The Patriarchs: Abraham and the Old Testament ancestors of Jesus

Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the hope we have in Christ.

2 – **The candle of Peace** – The Old Testament Prophets

Peace is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the peace we find in Jesus Christ.

3 - **The candle of Love** – John the Baptist

Love is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the love we have in Christ.

4 - **The candle of Joy** – Mary the mother of Jesus

Joy is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the joy we find in Jesus Christ.

The fifth candle represents the birth of Christ. The flame reminds us that He is the light of the world and that if we follow him, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

We don't have to confine our Advent worship to the times when we're in church. Many people have an Advent wreath at home, and try to have a time of prayer and remembrance each day during Advent. If you would like to do this, here are some readings and simple prayers to get you started. You can change it or add to it as you see fit.

On the First Sunday in Advent

Light the first candle

Read Isaiah 60:2-3

"Lord God, we light this candle, and thank you for the hope we have in your Son, Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, born in David's city, and like him, born to be a King. Lord Jesus, be King in our lives, and help us to share with the people in our lives the hope we have in you. May this flame remind us always to be ready for the coming of the Lord."

On the Second Sunday in Advent

Light the first and second candles

Read:

"Lord God, as we light these candles we thank you for the peace that comes from knowing your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. We who like sheep have gone astray, have found our way to you through Him. We give you thanks and praise in Jesus' name, and in His name we ask you to uphold your peace in every part of our world."

On the Third Sunday in Advent

Light three candles

Read Mark 1:4

"Lord God, as we light this candle, we remember John the Baptist, who calls us out to the desert, proclaiming a time of repentance and renewal, for the day of the Lord is at hand. We thank you for your love, which sent Jesus into the world to save us. Help us to turn away from our sins, forgive us, and bring your Light into our lives."

On the Fourth Sunday in Advent

Light all four candles

Read Isaiah 9:6-7

"Lord God, as we light these candles we remember the fullness of time, when the Son of God became human, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. We remember that in Mary's "yes," the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. As we light these candles, help us, like Mary, to be willing servants of the Lord; may our "yes" welcome Christ into our world."

On Christmas Day

Light all four candles and the white Christ candle.

Read Luke 1:68-79 and 2:1-20

"We praise you, Lord God, because on this day your Word became flesh in our Saviour Jesus Christ, was born of a woman and walked among us as one of us, fully human. Help us to demonstrate our faith through our actions as well as in our speech. We give you honour, praise, worship and love, in the name of Him who is born today, because He lives and reigns with you in your glory, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit."

A. Because they knead the dough!

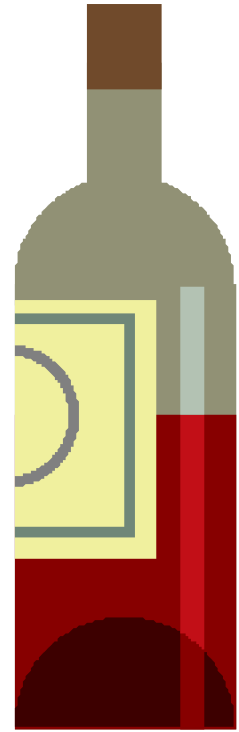
Mulled Wine

Every year when people enjoy the mulled wine served after St James' carol service, we get requests for the recipe, so here it is:

- 1 bottle red wine
- 1/3 bottle made up orange squash
- 1/3 teaspoon of each of the following:
 - Cinnamon, mixed spice, ground ginger and grated nutmeg
- 4-5 tablespoons brown sugar
- 4 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- Slices of citrus fruits (to float on top)

Heat all together gently, stirring. It is important not to allow mixture to boil. Float citrus fruit slices on top when serving.

This quantity serves about 10 people (depending on how much they drink!)



BIRTHDAY CAKES FOR JESUS

The children arrived at the scout hut behind St Francis church at 10.15. After registering we all began with a dance work-out – just to warm us up and to hopefully get rid of any shy feelings! Then the real business of Stir up Sunday began.

The children divided up into four groups, they went to one of the set-up tables with the adult helpers. Lyn Lord and myself called out the ingredients the children put into the bowls and gave the meaning of each of the ingredients, e.g. sugar represents sweetness, eggs – new life which Jesus gives us. A lot of mixing and beating of ingredients went on and a great deal of laughter and chatter. After the stirring up of the cake ingredients the children each decorated

a box – this will be used for a slice of the cake to go into. We then had time for juice and biscuits and a game or two. Somebody from church let us know when the peace was about to take place, and that was our cue for going into church and joining in the rest of the service.

Lyn and I take the cake mixture home and make it into two large fruit cakes. These are stored until Christmas Eve, when we slice up the cakes, decorate them with an iced star shape and pop a gold candle on the top, and put them in the prepared cake boxes. We then take them along to the crib service, where the children collect them at the end of the service, to take home to celebrate Jesus' Birthday the next day.

Shirley Costar

A winter's day

Soft winds whispering through bold, leafless trees,

Echoing slowly,

Coldness surrounds,

A fall of frozen raindrops,

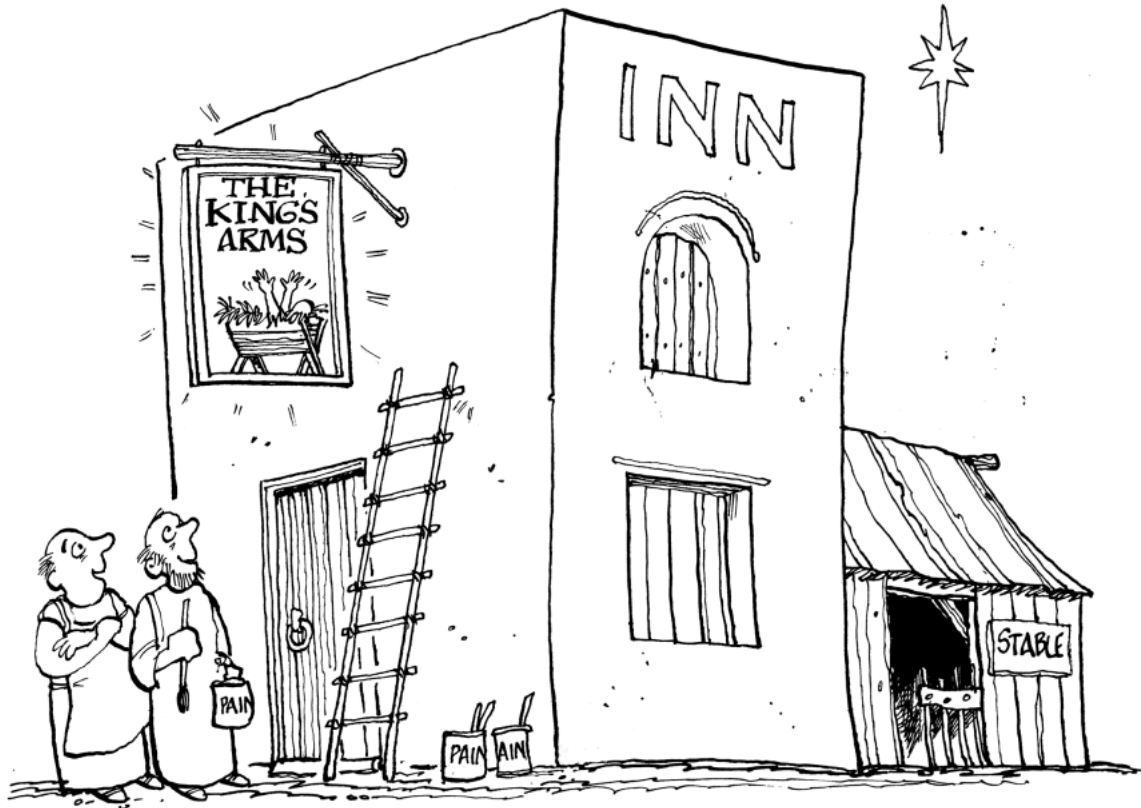
Slowly drifting to the ground,

No kids to be seen,

No people outside,

But the sound of sleigh bells has slowly arrived.

by Tamzin Stallard (aged 10) a student at St James Church Cowley School



We're under new management...

Welcome to the Parish of Cowley

Throughout the parish, excitement is building as we prepare to officially welcome our new Team Vicar, the Reverend Susannah Reide. The Bishop of Oxford will preside at the Installation Service at St Francis Church, **Thursday, 9 January at 7:00 pm**. Refreshments will follow.

It will be wonderful to welcome Susannah, her husband Fergus, and their children, Benjamin, Max and Otilie.

It just won't be the same if you aren't there, so please mark the date in your diary and plan to come. What a great opportunity this will be for St Francis and St James to celebrate together, looking forward to the years ahead.

'09

What shall I ask of the year dawning?
 What shall I ask as I face the new day?
 What shall I ask of the first morning?
 What shall I wish and for what should I pray?
 Ask for an eye that is open to beauty,
 Ask for faith that no sin can break,
 Ask for the patience to do every duty –
 with a good humour that nothing can

shake,
 Now at this years new beginning
 Pray for these gifts; For without these
 there's
 naught worth winning.
 Ask for these things that your days may be
 blessed
 from this new beginning.

Gwen Fancutt

Q. What do snowmen have for supper?

Church wardens' report

To be honest, when we took this on it did not make much sense in terms of the time we could commit and what was going on in our lives. We both work full time and we have no grandparents that we can call on. However, being nudged persistently by the Holy Spirit, we took our lead. Being tied into the church has been really inspiring and challenging for both of us. We have so valued getting to know people, in particular having a weekly presence at Alpha. This has not only had an impact on us in terms of serving those who come but has been 'super good' in getting to know the people who are also helping out. Isn't getting stuck in a great way to get to know each other!?

The challenges in terms of Wardenship so to speak have been the upkeep of the build-

ings and the grounds. We never knew that there were so many trees, and setting up all the things that come with being an employer has been a learning curve.

We are also so thankful to the people who carry on doing the things that they do. We just don't have the capacity to do or oversee everything, and we have some really skilled people in our church community. Thank you to all who work so hard and keep the show on the road. What we have noticed is that this very special parish functions so well because people just get on with it! We pray that others will feel empowered and encouraged to use their gifts and talents, and help us reach out to all of Cowley in 2009.

Christmas is a very special time, but it can also be ex-

tremely challenging or lonely. In looking to the weeks ahead, let us get together to celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Saviour, Emmanuel. But we pray that as a church community, we do not forget to look to the needs of others – not least the cook or the person sitting next to us at church or on the bus – and wish them both joy and peace.

Much love. May God bless you richly. And have a Joyful Christmas!

Clare, Dan, Molly & Daisy Edwards

PS. Friday is Howard's day off - please encourage him to take it off to do something refreshing. If you catch him working on a Friday please let me know – he will be in trouble the following Monday!!

Christmas Boxes

Last year 1.3 million needy children in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Africa received Christmas boxes, all kindly donated by people in the UK.

Helen Dorling and her mother-and-toddler group started filling boxes for "Operation Christmas Child" in 2004 at St Francis Church. That year they sent five boxes, followed by 11 in 2005. 34 boxes followed the next year, and last year the total was 70. We should really like to top that this year.

For many children these are the only presents they have ever had. One little boy opening his box cried with joy because at last he could go to school, now that he had his own writing materials.

Most of the boxes have been covered in Christmas wrapping paper by my good friend, Mrs. Pat Young from Kennington, who works tirelessly to collect, cover and fill them.

"Operation Christmas Child" is a project run by Samaritans Purse International, a Christian relief and development charity.

I would like to thank all those who have so generously filled boxes and also helped to raise money to transport them. Thank you – we couldn't do it without your support.

Joyce Titchell

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

St Christopher's CE Primary School

Our new Foundation Stage classroom is proving to be a wonderful teaching environment for our children and staff and we are hoping to have a small celebration to mark the building of the classroom, early next year. The school has bought a bench for the Foundation Stage garden in memory of Gwen Ranklin who was a Governor of the school for many years and was a very loyal friend to everyone here.

Our preparations for Christmas are underway. This year sees a new Christmas performance called 'Witnesses.' The children in Key Stage 1 and 2 will sing, dance and narrate their way through a story based on the Nativity. There will be two performances on Tuesday 16th December, one in the afternoon, one in the evening. Anyone wishing to join us please see Rosanne for details.

On behalf of everyone here at St Christopher's I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Alison Holden – Head teacher

Two generations meet to share their stories

Church Cowley St James School is celebrating its 50th year in Cowley. The Isis partnership, an organisation which initiates extended educational activities in schools, suggested an intergenerational project and brought in Adele Moss, a storyteller and reminiscence worker, to run it. She began putting in an appearance at the lunch club and chatting to people who had spent 50 years or more in the area...

The result was a warm and lively group of eight seniors and eight children which meets once a week and will carry on till mid January, when it will share its discoveries with others in the school and the lunch club. Each child has an older 'partner' and the pairs seem to be developing close and lively relationships. Vivid episodes from the life stories of both age groups are emerging both in the pairs and in the group. Who would have guessed that Una stood on a coke pile to peer into the boys' playground at break time or that Cyril had a dual personality; bell monitor at school, pear scrumper in his spare time?

The sessions are playful and creative, involving so far drawing poetry and some fictional storytelling. There are plans to include singing and some acting too. The children record their recollections of the session in diaries which are read out to the group. We have the help of a writer, Jenny Lewis, a documentary film maker, Mikey Watts and wonderful support from the school, particularly in the shape of Denise, the school's learning mentor, who comes and helps us all every week. Please watch this space for the news of the 'sharing' in January.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Yes, a nice tin of biscuits or a pretty pot plant are very acceptable Christmas presents for someone who entertains friends or spends a lot of time in their own home, but I suspect that the best present we can give to a housebound person is us. Last year I visited just such a friend with a few home-made mincepies and a box of chocs and stayed for a chat. It only took up a couple of hours of Christmas but you'd have thought I'd brought her the Crown Jewels! It's so easy to do but it's awfully easy to forget.

The other kind of gift for someone who doesn't get out much is a trip out, for a ride, or even better for lunch or tea. Of course, if you are planning such an excursion you need to do a bit of homework first as some restaurants or hotels do not have easy access for walking frames or wheelchairs. May I recommend "The Four Pillars" at Sandford for afternoon tea? They have chairs which are high enough for easy rising in their lounge as well as soft, sinky sofas for those

who enjoy them. They serve a lovely tea with scones, little sandwiches and cakes, in front of a log fire in the winter. What a treat!

If you have a friend who enjoys a good curry "The Karma" restaurant in Oxford Road, has excellent disabled access and the staff there cannot do enough for you. They serve lunch as well as dinner but do check when you book.

I'm sure there are lots of other excellent places to take friends and what a memorable gift for them especially if you enjoy a lovely long chat over your meal, too.

By the way, don't forget the offer made in last month's "Chronicle" to help with Christmas mail. Anyone who can't get to the post office and would like to call 453257 will receive a visit from my husband, Frank Butler. He is more than happy to pop round and collect letters and cards for posting.

Rosanne

Are you missing out?

Will you be making any New Year's resolutions this year? As you think about what the year ahead might include, consider joining a home group. It might be the best thing you could do. Home Groups are exciting and an important part of life as a member of the church. At a home group you can enjoy other people and get to know them better. The home groups help our churches to be places where people feel supported and cared for. Home Groups are also places where you Also, you can explore the Bible. If you've ever wished there was a way to find out what the Bible says about "life and the world and everything," you'll find lots of other people are exploring what the Bible through their home group.

Some people feel their home group intro-

duces new and exciting ways to be a church member. Right now there are four Home Groups operating in the parish, and there are plans for two more. You could join an existing group (spaces are limited), or be part of a brand new home group.

Here are some ways to find out more. Contact one of the home group leaders below, or speak with any member of the ministry team. Or come to a party!!

**– Home Group Open Party – Tuesday
20 January – 7:00 pm – St James
Church Centre –**

We'd love you to come. It's open to everyone. And if it's anything like last year's version, it will be a lot of fun!

Are you missing out?

Home group leaders, with day and time of meetings:

Una Dean – meet alternate Monday mornings at 10:30 in Una's home

Connie Uren – meet alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2:30 in the St James Church Centre Lounge

Tony Beetham – meet alternate Tuesday evenings at 7:30 in the St James Church Centre Lounge

Rosanne Butler – meet alternate Thursday mornings at 10:30 in the St James Church Centre Lounge

(With the Christmas holidays, meeting times may change from normal, so please contact the leaders to confirm when December and January meetings will take place.)

New ways of Gardening

Well, we have just “enjoyed” our second snow of the winter, so the children could yet get their wish for a white Christmas.

Many gardens need a little more tidying up now. Some of the seed heads you left before may be rather straggly and torn. Cut them down now, but still leave some foliage if you can, to protect the new young shoots. The last of the tulips should now be planted. Broad bean seeds can still be sown. They showed you how on **Gardeners' World** on 22 November. Make a shallow drill, scatter the seeds a hand-span apart, and cover the drill up. Simple! What is stopping you?

Maybe you are an indoor gardener now, just choosing from the glorious Christmas plants in the shops. Don't forget the hyacinths you planted in August/

September. If the bulb shoots are well up and the pots full of roots, gradually bring them indoors to a cool place, and then when they start to flower, enjoy their perfume in your living room. Try not to leave any plants or flowers in a hot room overnight - take them out into the cooler hall for a few hours to lengthen their lives. The Christmas favourites of Poinsettia, cyclamen and azaleas are all glorious additions to the Christmas house. They do not like direct sun and all prefer cool conditions – not on a window sill above a radiator. Cyclamen like to be moist because they are naturally found in boggy soil. Mine do best on a north window sill. Azalea need rain water - our very limey water is not for them. During the summer they appreciate going onto the patio for a summer holiday, and, if they need re-potting, use eri-

aceous compost. Poinsettias also need to be moist but not wet. Their actual flowers are small yellow flowers right in the centre of the red, which are really bracts [modified leaves].

Many plants like growing alongside other plants - through the moist air around the plants, they benefit each other. Small ferns or Kalanchoes are favourite companions. Go on, make up your own festive arrangement in a basket or other container [remember to leave a drainage hole].

I do not find that my plants all stay in tip-top condition for long – but they do live for a lot longer than a simple bunch of flowers. So if they die, just consider them as transient cut flowers and hope that another plant will soon fill that space. Have a floriferous Christmas.

Diana Pope



Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Sung Eucharist
"Church at the Centre" every fourth Sunday
Also Sunday Lunch : every second Sunday

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – <i>St James (3rd Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells Toddler Group : <i>St James</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis – <i>St Francis (2nd & 4th)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break – <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>

Team Rector

Revd Howard Thornton, Cowley Rectory, Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 747680

parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk
Please note Howard has a day off on Fridays.

Team Vicar

Revd Susannah Reide
From January 2009

Non-Stipendiary Minister

Rev Canon Mark Oxbrow,
13 Annesley Road
Oxford, OX4 4JH
Tel: 01865 461953
markoxbrow@aol.com

Churchwardens:

Dan and Clare Edwards
Tel: 01865 774002
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

Deputy Wardens:

Margaret Martin Tel: 718532
Pat Chung: Tel: 773792

See the *Chronicle* pull out insert for Advent and Christmas services, dates for your diary in 2009 and The *Chronicle* 2009 deadlines

Continued from page 2

Carol and I have already made our resolution for 2009, that we will try to make The *Chronicle* a good monthly read and make it as inclusive of all that happens in our parish as we possibly can.

We welcome your contributions to keep it lively and interesting. By the time you read this Christmas will be just around the corner so we'd like to wish you all a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. We'll be back in February! God bless,
Rosanne & Carol

Advent and Christmas Calendar

Invite your friends to something new: the Parish of Cowley Christmas Concert happens at 7:00 pm, Saturday, 13 December. The event features the Jubilee Brass Band (who performed at the Cowley Proms) as well as music from our own Brian Tidy. After the concert we'll have mulled wine and mince pies. There will be a retiring collection.

We look forward to Christingle Services on Sunday 14 December, at 4:00 pm at St James Church and 4:30 pm at St Francis Church. We have invited students and parents from St Francis, St Christopher and St James schools to enjoy these services. We hope you'll come to show our support for children all over the world.

Our Candlelight Carol Services take place on Sunday 21 December, at 4:00 pm at St James, and 6:00 pm at St Francis. Wouldn't it be great if we could all take part in both of them? (If you planned your diary from last month's Chronicle, please note that since publication, times of three services have changed.)

7 December - 2nd Sunday in Advent

- 10:00 am St James Church Communion Service
with Junior Church
- 10:30 am St Francis Church Communion Service

13 December

- 7.00 pm Christmas Concert with the Jubilee Brass Band and Brian Tidy— St James Church and Church Centre

14 December - 3rd Sunday in Advent

- 10:00 am St James Church – All Age Communion Service
- 10:30 am St Francis Church – Communion Service
- 4:00 pm St James Church – Christingle Service
Note time change
- 4:30 pm St Francis Church – Christingle Service

21 December – 4th Sunday in Advent

- 10:00 am St James Church Communion Service
- 10:00 am “Church at the Centre” – All Age Service in St James Church Centre
- 10:30 am St Francis Church – Communion Service
- 4:00 pm Carols by Candlelight – St James Church
Note time change
- 6:00 pm Carols by Candlelight – St Francis Church
Note time change

24 December – Christmas Eve

- 4:00 pm St James Crib Service
- 4:00 pm St Francis Crib Service
- 11:00 pm St James – Candlelight Midnight Service
- 11:00 pm St Francis – Candlelight Midnight Service

25 December – Christmas Day

- 10:00 am St James – All-Age Christmas Communion
- 10:30 am St Francis – All-Age Christmas Communion

calendar

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Last recommended posting dates for Christmas:

U.K. Second Class Thursday 18th December
 First Class Saturday 20th December

International Airmail: South Africa, South and Central America, Caribbean, Middle East, Far East, Asia, New Zealand and Australia Friday 5th December
Japan, U.S.A., Canada & Eastern Europe Wednesday 10th December
Western Europe Friday 12th December

Thursday 11th December at 1.00 p.m.

C.M.S. Watlington Road

Talk by Rev. Toddy Hoare, trained as a sculptor, served in the Army and later became a parish priest. He had always combined sculpture with his ministry and now preaches in bronze as well as conducting retreats in sculpture. Lunch before £7 to be paid on the day but seven days notice required.

01865 787400

Saturday 13th December 7.00 p.m.—A Concert of Christmas Music

St James' Church

Free entry – retiring collection – mulled wine and mince pies

Saturday 20th December

Join Bishop John and Howard at Templars Square

Christmas cake – mince pies – a sparkling house, tidy enough for a visit from a King – a string of cards – a beautifully decorated tree – and under it, the perfect gift for each person on the list. What ingredients are missing? What's your recipe for a happy Christmas? The Diocese of Oxford is attempting to offer some answers to these questions with its Christmas Ingredients campaign. You might like to go along to Templars Square on Saturday, 20 December, 10-11 am to help Bishop John and our rector, Howard meet Christmas shoppers and give out free mince pies, along with smiles and friendly greetings.

Sunday 21st December

Carols by Candlelight

St James at 4.00 p.m. followed by Christmas Tea – ***please note the change of time***

St Francis at 6.00 p.m. – ***please note the change of time***

Saturday 10th January

Parish Christmas Dinner

This popular annual event will be held this year in the Church Centre. Tickets will be on sale from the beginning of December, price £10. As usual the price includes a three-course meal with sherry and wine and all the festive trimmings. Entertainment will include a light-hearted quiz (with prizes) and, of course, a raffle. Only 72 tickets will be available so don't leave it to the last minute to buy yours.

The Chronicle – Details and Deadlines

The Chronicle is the monthly magazine of the Parish of Cowley Team Ministry. It is published ten times a year, with no publication in January or August. Issues going back as far as January, 2000 can be found online at this address: www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk/chronicle/

The parish has a good archive of past issues, but if we have no copies pre 1938 or 1984-2000. If you have copies that you would be willing to donate to the archives, please contact us.

The Chronicle is edited by Rosanne Butler and Carol Thornton, and published by Philip Hind. Material from St Francis church members is collected by John Shreeve. This is the email address: chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk
Or you can ring the parish office on (01865) 747 680.

We encourage contributions from everyone at St Francis and St James churches. If you have a submission, here are the copy deadlines for the year ahead:

February issue: 18 January
March issue: 15 February
April issue: 22 March
May issue: 19 April
June issue: 24 May
July issue: 21 June
September issue: 23 August
October issue: 20 September
November issue: 18 October
December issue: 22 November

If you miss a deadline, we will endeavour to get the material into the Chronicle, but after these dates, inclusion cannot be guaranteed.

February 2009

Snowdrop Weekends

Many of our readers will remember that in 2008, after snowdrop weekends, a big clear out of invasive aconites occurred. Thanks to Catherine Gawne-Cain we have made room for the snowdrops to develop. This year we are holding St James snowdrop festival on Saturday and Sunday 7th and 8th February and the following weekend 14th and 15th February, and we really hope that our visitors to St James' will have a spectacular display to enjoy.

Tuesday 20 January – 7:00 pm — Home Group Open Party
St James Church Centre – See article in Chronicle main section.

2009

January

5 January Twelfth Night
6 January Epiphany
8 January Installation service at St Francis
10 January Parish Christmas Dinner
13 January Baptism of Jesus
26 January Chinese New Year

February

2 February Candlemas Day
7, 8 February Snowdrop Weekend, St James
14, 15 Feb. Snowdrop Weekend, St James
14 February St Valentine's Day
14—22 Feb School Half-Term
24 February Shrove Tuesday
25 February Ash Wednesday

March

9 March Commonwealth Day
20 March Vernal Equinox
22 March Mothering Sunday
25 March Annunciation Day
29 March British Summer Time begins
(Put clocks forward 1 hour)

April

5 April Palm Sunday
9 April Maundy Thursday
10 April Good Friday
12 April Easter
13 April Easter Monday Bank Holiday
21 April Queen's birthday
23 April St George's Day

May

4 May Early Spring Bank Holiday
17 May Rogation Sunday
21 May Ascension Day
25 May Spring Bank Holiday
31 May Pentecost

June

2 June Coronation Day
7 June Trinity Sunday
13 June Observance of the Queen's
Birthday — Trooping the Colour
21 June Summer Solstice
Fathers' Day
24 June Midsummer's Day

July

25 July Feast Day of St James the Apostle

August

1 August Lammas Day
31 August Summer Bank Holiday

September

8 September Nativity of the Virgin Mary
22 September Autumnal Equinox

October

4 October Feast Day of St Francis of
Assisi
18 October Feast Day of St Luke
25 October British Summer Time ends
(Put clocks back one hour)

November

1 November All Saints Day
2 November All Souls Day
8 November Remembrance Sunday
11 November Armistice Day
22 November Stir-Up Sunday
29 November Advent Sunday

December

21 December Winter Solstice
25 December Christmas Day
28 December Boxing Day Bank Holiday