

# The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

We can't imagine Christmas without shepherds. They stand around the crib, and look out at us from Christmas cards. They add to the romance and charm of the scene. The gospel writer includes them for a much better reason than these. Israel's greatest and most glamorous king came of shepherd stock, King David, and Luke, in his gospel, is careful to tell us that Jesus belonged to the House of David. The one born in a manger had a royal pedigree and he was to occupy the throne of David. All that people had hoped for in David and his successors would be fulfilled - and much more.

Secondly, Jesus received the adoration of the shepherds. They were the first to greet him. Much is made of the simplicity of the shepherds, but they were not the lowest of the low. They were skilled, resourceful, intelligent people. When David slung stones at Goliath, he had probably learned the art because he was a shepherd, and knew how to ward off attacks from wild beasts. The shepherd was a nomad; his work didn't give him the opportunity to participate in the customs of his people - like going to the synagogue. Because of that shepherds tended to be despised by the orthodox religious people of the day. Yet in the Christmas story they are placed first. Christ welcomes all of us, it doesn't matter what others think of us. Jesus accepts us as we are, he welcomes us to worship him.

Thirdly, Jesus was to be one of them. In St. John's gospel he is described as the Good Shepherd - he is the one who searches for his sheep, who cares for them and leads them to pasture.

So, as we look at our Christmas cards, let us think of the shepherds and their significance in the Christmas story. Not poor, helpless men, but intelligent people who prefigure what Jesus is to become. The Good Shepherd who gives his life for us all.

Wishing you a very blessed Christmas,  
Andrew

## **ADVENT**

Waiting is not popular in our culture, when so much can be obtained simply at the press of a button! Advent, when we wait for the coming of Christmas, is also an opportunity to learn what it means to be waiting for the promised return of Jesus. He says: *'It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back'* (Mark 13:34-35).

We live between Jesus' first and second comings and this parable reminds us of the need to watch and wait, as disciples living faithfully for Him. It reminds us of two kinds of waiting: *passive* and *active*. Imagine you're at the railway station, awaiting the arrival of a train. On the platform a man is asleep, as he thinks there is plenty of time before the train arrives. He is *passively waiting*. There is also a small boy on the platform who is excited about the train coming. He can't sit still and constantly looks down the track to see if the train is coming. He is *actively waiting*, for he expects the train to arrive at any moment.

Advent gives us a choice: *how will we wait for Jesus' coming?* Passive waiting doesn't require much attention on our part. We can live our Christian life pre-occupied with our own concerns, rather than looking to God. However, active waiting involves an eager expectation, as we await Jesus' return or simply look to him coming to us today. All we want is to be found faithful as His disciples. There is nothing more important than being ready to meet our Master!

*The Rev'd Canon Paul Hardingham*

## **MUSIC FOR THE MESSIAH**

Have you noticed that, in the Christmas story, singing is featured on three occasions?

Firstly, after Mary was given a message from the angel Gabriel, and was visiting her elderly and pregnant relative, Elizabeth. Mary was so overwhelmed with happiness at the forthcoming miraculous births, she started to sing.

Over the years, her words, known as *The Magnificat*, have been set to music by various composers. The hymn *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord* is one example of it. Of course, we don't know Mary's melody line, but her words express God's promise that He would rescue His people and through them save the world. Mary sings of God's mercy and benevolence on the helpless, the humble and the hungry.

Months later, in the fields of Bethlehem, shepherds were confronted with an angel and given an incredible message: the Saviour, the Messiah had been born. This was followed

by a host of angels who could not help but sing glory to God. Later, the shepherds saw the baby Jesus. They then returned home: not in silence and awe, but in song. They were overwhelmed with an encounter with Almighty God! Heaven and earth had been brought together. They simply couldn't stop themselves from praising and glorifying God.

For Mary, the Shepherds and the Eastern Men too, that first Christmas brought in a time of hope: hope for the helpless, pardon for the guilty, and forgiveness for the conscious stricken. Good news for those who had had nothing but bad news!

From that time on, people have tried to express their gratitude, thanks and wonder at God's love and mercy. Over the centuries, countless poets and musicians have composed music for us to sing. At no other time in the year, is so much music used to describe and express one moment in history.

Traditionally, December is a time for concerts and services of Christmas music. We come together to sing carols and other songs that express the wonder of God's Gift to us. Unfortunately, last year, the coronavirus restricted or even cancelled our musical festivities. This month, we may be in a better position to worship together.

Jesus has given us hope; forgiven our sin; and continues to impart faith and heal our spiritual wounds. Isn't that something to always sing about? *O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!*

*Lester Amann*

## **LOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE** (Part 2)

*Following on from last month, the other lessons that I learned following my wife's death were:*

- 1 That it helps to talk about your loss and the person you have lost. Sharing helps you to put things together in your mind, and is healing in itself.
- 2 Don't be afraid of pain, and don't anaesthetise it or avoid it – acknowledge it, face it, and you will heal more quickly.
- 3 That crying is normal, even for men, and it is a healing part of the grief process. Don't be afraid of this, even in public.
- 4 It may surprise you, to discover which people draw near to you in your grief, and who steps away. Appreciate those who come closer, without judging those who hold back.
- 5 Not everything people say to you about grief and your response will be helpful. Decide for yourself what is important for you, and let the rest go.
- 6 That grief may expose some of your inner fault-lines, but don't be afraid of this – learning more about yourself is a gift that comes with grieving.
- 7 No-one grieves perfectly. Following the death of your loved one, you will make mistakes, bad choices, and errors of judgment. This is normal, so forgive yourself.
- 8 That hope will rise again within you. The human spirit, in combination with God's grace, has its own remarkable resilience.
- 9 Don't be afraid to live again. God has a good purpose for you, and a plan for your life.
- 10 That your faith is an asset, not a liability. When you are tempted to be angry with God, remember that He is an ever-present help in time of need. Lean on Him.

11 That you have a part to play in your grief journey, so don't be passive and allow it to overwhelm you – begin to do what you can to rebuild your life.

*Tony Horsfall*

## **REMEMBERING DOROTHY WORDSWORTH**

Two hundred and fifty years ago, on 25th December 1771, Dorothy Wordsworth – writer, poet and diarist – was born. She was sister to the poet William Wordsworth.

She had no ambitions to be a published author herself, but her diaries – particularly the Grasmere Journal, eventually published in 1897 – reveal her to be a talented, poetic writer, from whom her famous brother borrowed freely, and without attribution.

She was born in Cockermouth, one of a family of five, and her early childhood was happy until her mother died, followed by her father when she was 12. She was sent to live with an aunt in Halifax while her four brothers remained together, but she was reunited with William 12 years later, and they became extremely close.

In the intervening years she had lived for about six years in the isolated village of Fornsett, in Norfolk, where her uncle, the Rev William Cookson, was vicar – and where she set up a small school.

Later, it seemed that she was in love quite passionately – though probably not sexually – with her brother William, and she continued to live with him after his marriage to Mary Hutchinson in 1893, when Dorothy was 31 and

regarded herself as too old to marry herself. She never did marry, though she may have had a brief liaison with poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a friend of William's.

In later life she was chronically ill – possibly from the after-effects of opium – and she remained an invalid in what her biographer described as “a deepening haze of senility” for at least the last 25 years of her life, dying near Ambleside at the age of 84.

Her journals describing walks with William and others in the Lake District reveal her importance to her brother's work and her own extraordinary talent.

*Tim Lenton*

## CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING

Come and join us at our Christmas Coffee Morning on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30 am for coffee and mince pies. Everyone welcome. This will be our only Coffee Morning in December.

**We will restart on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 10.30 am.**



## CHRISTMAS LIVE NATIVITY

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 2.30 pm we will be having a live Nativity on the children's play area opposite The Canford Hotel in Canford Cliffs. There will be a telling of the Christmas story, carols and a real donkey! All proceeds will be in aid of the Children's Society as this event will replace the Christingle Service on Christmas Eve this year.



## **WHAT A CHRISTMAS**

The Bethlehem manger, shepherds, wise men, Jesus, Mary and Joseph – it's all so familiar to older people, who are shocked to hear that younger generations may be hazy or ignorant of them. Aren't they part of everyone's education?

Yet the first Christmas was restricted to just a few. What 21st Century Christians proclaim as the most significant event in history began in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, without the pomp and publicity we associate with kingship and power. What modern media have called 'The Greatest Story Ever Told', escaped everyone's attention in first century Palestine.

This year, Christmas is going to be a busier celebration than last year, but probably not yet back to the normal fuss we usually make each December. The streets will be crowded, but shops may struggle with supplies. Parties will take place, but many people will feel reluctant join in. Family gatherings are allowed again, but the vulnerable may hesitate. Christmas services will be held, but as singing has the potential for droplet and aerosol transmission, music will be muted this year. A Christmas without many carols!

Many will struggle to hold their 'usual' Christmas. Yet God does not neglect us. This may be the very opportunity to rekindle or deepen our faith in what really matters about Christmas. Away from the hordes, perhaps completely alone this Christmas, we may sit quietly and allow our heavenly Father to draw near to us. We may picture Mary inviting us to gaze with her at her Son, born to save us from our sins. In the silence of our imagination, we may join the chorus of angels announcing His birth to the shepherds:

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."*

It was that chorus which inspired an American Minister, Edmund Sears, to write the Christmas hymn, 'It Came Upon a Midnight Clear'. Sears, troubled by the world's turbulent history and failure to hear the Christmas message, was himself recovering from a breakdown. Written in 1849, his words have a timeless ring about them:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
The world has suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled  
Two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hears not  
The love-song which they bring;  
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,  
And hear the angels sing.*

*The Ven. John Barton*

### TO MAKE YOU SMILE .....

In Jane's Christmas drawing, two of the camels were approaching the inn, over which was pictured a large star. The third camel and its rider were going directly away from it.



"Why is the third man going in a different direction?" her mother asked. Jane replied: "Oh, he's looking for a place to park."



## CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER

|         |          |                                      |
|---------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Wed 1   | 10.30 am | Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i> |
| Thurs 2 | 10.00 am | Parish Art Group                     |

Sat 4 11.00 am

### **CHRISTMAS FAYRE**

#### **ADVENT 2**

|        |                     |   |
|--------|---------------------|---|
| Sun 5  | 8.00 am<br>10.30 am | Holy Communion<br>Parish Communion                            |
| Wed 8  | 10.30 am            | Holy Communion and<br>Patronal Festival <i>at St. Nicolas</i> |
| Fri 10 | 10.30 am            | <b>CHRISTMAS COFFEE<br/>MORNING</b>                           |

#### **ADVENT 3**

|          |                                |  |
|----------|--------------------------------|--|
| Sun 12   | 8.00 am<br>10.30 am<br>6.00 pm | Holy Communion<br>Matins ( <i>Sunday Club in hall</i> )<br>Carol Service |
| Wed 15   | 10.30 am                       | Holy Communion   |
| Thurs 16 | 10.00 am                       | Parish Art Group   |
| Fri 17   | 10.30 am                       | Mums and Toddlers  |
| Sat 18   | 2.30 pm                        | Live Nativity at pirate play<br>area                                     |

#### **ADVENT 4**

|        |                     |                                    |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sun 19 | 8.00 am<br>10.30 am | Holy Communion<br>Parish Communion |
|--------|---------------------|------------------------------------|

Thurs 23      3.30 pm                      Magazine collation

**CHRISTMAS EVE**

Fri    24      11.00 pm                      Midnight Mass

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

Sat 25              8.00 am                      Holy Communion  
                         10.30 am                      Parish Communion

**BOXING DAY**

Sun    26              8.00 am                      Holy Communion

Wed   29            10.30 am                      NO SERVICE AT ST. NICOLAS

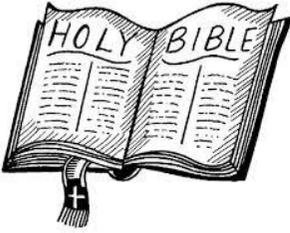
**EPIPHANY**

Sun    2              8.00 am                      Holy Communion  
                         10.30 am                      Parish Communion

## **Bell Ringing**

Would you like to join our small team of bell ringers? We would really appreciate a few more people who would be interested in joining our rota so that the bells can be rung each Sunday after the 10.30 Service. Our bells are rung by one person only using the Carillon – do come into the office after the service to have a look! Tuition can be given, but it isn't difficult! Wendy Bales [01202 709850]





## **SUNDAY READINGS** **IN DECEMBER**

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December - Advent 2**

OLD TESTAMENT: Malachi 3.1-4

*The Lord will send his messenger to prepare for his coming which will be sudden. God will judge and purify the lives and worship of his people.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Philippians 1.3-11

*The opening verses of this letter highlight three things. First, that of sharing in the Gospel, second, the meaning of the Gospel and third, the good work that God does in the life of the disciple.*

GOSPEL: Luke 3.1-6

*The gospel establishes the time when John the Baptist preached, foretelling the coming of salvation and fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah.*

### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December - Advent 3**

OLD TESTAMENT: Zephaniah 3.14-end

*The prophet foresees that Israel, broken and scattered, will be healed and renewed by God's love and forgiveness.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 3.7-18

*John preaches to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him the good news of the coming of Jesus, who will baptise them with the holy spirit.*

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December - Advent 4**

OLD TESTAMENT: Micah 5.2-5

*God promises there will be a ruler from Bethlehem of a lineage rooted in ancient times and of the dynasty of David.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Hebrews 10.5-10

*Christ came into the world to do God's will. We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Christ which he made for us.*

GOSPEL: Luke 1.39-45

*Mary is perceived by Elizabeth as the mother of God, the person who will bring God into his creation.*

### **Christmas Eve**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 9.2-7

*For the prophet Isaiah, God comes to us as a child endowed with sovereignty and called by various names - Counsellor, mighty God, eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Hebrews 1.1-12

*The Epistle to the Hebrews attests that God spoke decisively through the prophets and that he finally and fully revealed his character and will through Jesus Christ.*

GOSPEL: John 1.1-14

*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.*

### **Christmas Day**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 9. 2-7

*For the prophet Isaiah, God comes to us as a child endowed with sovereignty and called by various names - Counsellor, mighty God, eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Titus 2.11-14

*The coming of Jesus enables us to live upright and godly lives.*

GOSPEL: Luke 2.1-14

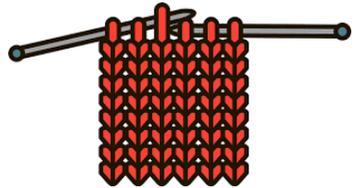
*The birth of Jesus and the arrival of the shepherds and angels.*

## **Stitches of Hope 2021**

It seems no time at all since I last wrote for the December 2020 magazine. After a year of lockdowns, partial freedoms, vaccinations and masks of all colours, we hope that all is back to normal now.

A big thankyou to everyone who has knitted and crocheted for the charity this year. There has been a big variety of colours and designs for jumpers and cardigans, both large and small, and some fantastic blankets of different sizes, both crocheted and knitted in squares. A thank you to the ladies who have knitted up the squares, not an easy task.

We have ten ladies and one man knitting which is marvellous, three of the ladies have joined us this year. Paula from the Young at Heart group at Upton has retired from running the group and I thank her for 21 years of help and hope she enjoys her retirement. Fortunately Angela from PramaLife has offered to take her place and I look forward to meeting her next year.



I wish you all a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year, and look forward to the mountains of knitting coming my way next year!! Are there any more men who would like to knit I wonder?!

*Tessa Yeoman*

## *Goodbye – and Thank You*

Dear all in the congregation of the Transfiguration and St Nicks – and indeed, all those readers who do not often make it.

This is my last article as your curate (although I do want to finish the series below which will take one more article) and as such I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all. You gave us a warm welcome three and a half years ago when Sarah and I arrived, and this warm welcome has extended wonderfully to Freddie, who has loved coming to church and loved being ‘cooed’ over!

Thank you for your patience at times, your tolerance at all times, your wisdom and feedback – it has meant an awful lot, and I will be taking a lot of good experiences with me to Burwash.

But thank you most of all for your friendship, and your prayers.

If you wish to write to us, or visit us at Burwash please do feel free – those of you who have not visited East Sussex might like to, as it is very beautiful indeed!

Our address will be:

The Rev'd and Mrs T. Pelham

The Rectory,  
Rectory Close,  
Burwash,  
East Sussex  
TN19 7BH

Please do continue to pray for us as we move, and we will continue to pray and think of you all,  
Every blessing for the future,

Tom

## **THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES CONTD.**

### **XXXI. OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST FINISHED UPON THE CROSS**

*THE Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.*

We once again deal with a slightly obscure part of medieval Roman Catholic theology, and the reformer's robust response to it. In essence, the question is about exactly what is happening when a Priest says the Eucharistic Prayer. In Anglican theology, we commemorate the work of Christ on the Cross – in the immortal words of Cranmer, which this article surely echoes, we remember Jesus Christ on the cross, *who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.* The Roman doctrine differs from this: there is a real sense that the Priest, at the prayer of consecration, actually “re-presents” Christ's work again, offering Christ again and again for the remission of sin.

### **XXXII. OF THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS**

*BISHOPS, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.*

The marriage of priests was once, as it happened, permitted across the pre-schismatic Church, and there is ample evidence that this was the case from the earliest times – for example from 1 Timothy 3; *Now a bishop must be above reproach, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher.* This was changed rather late in the Roman Catholic Church, around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, although it is fair to say that there had been some traditions of celibacy within the priesthood prior to that, although they were not universal, and indeed, it was common for the son of an early medieval priest to follow his father into the vocation. One reason it was brought in was to stop a wave of nepotism that had gripped the senior Italian church.

However, the reformers noted that this was not a biblical mandate, indeed, as above, it was actually presumed that early church leaders were married, and so along with other Roman doctrines and disciplines it was jettisoned.

### **XXXIII. OF EXCOMMUNICATE PERSONS, HOW THEY ARE TO BE AVOIDED**

*THAT person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.*

In today's more liberal times, the idea of actually excommunicating someone is rather foreign – although it can actually still happen in extreme examples. In the Medieval Church excommunication was a common political punishment, and one way that the Pope used to keep control.

There are examples of people being 'excommunicated' in the bible, for example the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of Paul to the Corinthians, where he instructs the church in a matter of a grave sin: *And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?* (1 Corinthians 5:2)

The idea was not to permanently banish someone, but that it was a last resort in the hope that whoever was put out of the church and society – for they were to be avoided in the street as well - would repent of their misdeeds, through penance – often fasting and prayer – and be restored to community and church.

#### **XXXIV. OF THE TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH**

*IT is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word.*

*Whosoever through his private judgement, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren. Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.*

This article addresses the differences from church to church in secondary matters – so called *adiaphora* or things indifferent. There are plenty of differences from church to church in things that don't really matter – one example would be liturgical colours which are different from East to West. Or between two churches in the Anglican Communion, one might use guitars and drums for worship, and the other organ and choir.

That said, just because they are not ordained by the word of God, but by tradition, doesn't mean that they can be cast aside: The article makes it clear that someone who breaks a tradition or ceremony of the church which has been agreed on by common authority (in our case the Bishops and General Synod) should be rebuked. One

example might be the wearing of robes for worship (prior to the recent legislative change) – it was, until then, required that clergy dress appropriately. Breaking this tradition would have fallen foul of article 34.

Finally the article reserves the right to each church to change those things which are ‘ordained only by man’s authority’ – traditions and ceremonies can be changed in a way that doctrine based on the word of God in scripture cannot.

## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

|                                    |          |                  |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> December   | 6.00 pm  | Carol Service    |
| Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> December | 2.30 pm  | Live Nativity    |
| Christmas Eve                      | 11.00 pm | Midnight Mass    |
| Christmas Day                      | 8.00 am  | Holy Communion   |
|                                    | 10.30 am | Parish Communion |
| Boxing Day                         | 8.00 am  | Holy Communion   |

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Baptism**

7<sup>th</sup> November Charles Thomas Hartwell

### **Funeral**

16<sup>th</sup> November Simon Richard Michael Allsopp (63)

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January  | Christmas Tree |
| Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> January  | Michael Wright |
| Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> January | Michael Wright |
| Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January | Wendy Bales    |
| Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> January | Wendy Bales    |



## **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

The deadline for the January issue of the  
Church Magazine is

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December**