

# The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

By the time you read this, Christmas will be over, for some of you that might be a relief, for others it may be tinged with sadness. Christmas is a time of comfort, we are all familiar with the story, the holy family, the shepherds, the innkeeper, all belong to the same race, all share the same background.

Epiphany brings strangers into the story. They are people of different customs, maybe people of different colour. Epiphany breaks into the cosiness of Christmas. It makes us face up to the realities of the world. It is the meeting point between Christ and the world. The strangers 'from Persian lands afar' have always been seen as the first gentile worshippers of Christ. They symbolise the truth that Christ is not tied to one sort of culture or one period of history, but that he is for all men and women. He is the light of the world, and, as Evelyn Underhill once said, 'that does not mean the sanctuary lamp in our favourite church'. Christ is the light who enlightens the darkness of this world.

Where there is hate he brings love, where there is revenge, forgiveness, where there is rejection, acceptance. The scriptures of the Old Testament point forward to the light. The New Testament declares it to have dawned. Both Acts of the Apostles and subsequent church history show that Christ has become Lord to people of many cultures and many races. The strangers at the Crib were the first followers of Christ and as we go into this new year, let us continue what they started. As the Kings moved from the

stable back to their lands to spread the Gospel, may we also spread Christ's word and example in our world.

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year; 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put thine hand into the hand of God. That shall be to thee better than light and safer than a known way'".

Happy New Year!  
Andrew

## **CHRISTMAS FAYRE**

A BIG thank you to everyone who helped to make the Christmas Fayre such a success. We raised just over £1,900 which was wonderful. Thank you to Henry, Anna and Roger who decorated the hall and to everyone on refreshments. Thanks also go to the stallholders and the people who donated items for the stalls and the raffle and to the many people who turned up on the day to support us. Many thanks, once again, to Ewa and Monika who gave up their morning to provide us with musical accompaniment which was much appreciated by everyone.



On behalf of the church I would like to thank Anna for organising and coordinating this event. I don't think she left the hall for two days!

## **TAKING DOWN CHRISTMAS**

Happy New Year!

January is, of course, the time to take down the decorations and put them away for next year. In many churches however, the Crib scene is left up until the beginning of February – the Feast of Candlemas. That celebrates the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

It's yet another moment of 'illumination,' and has a number of meanings.

The date 'set' for Candlemas is the 2nd February each year and it marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox. So, from that date onwards the days begin to get longer and the nights shorter.

It's the day when we celebrate Mary and Joseph taking their baby, Jesus, to the Temple. The custom was set down in Leviticus chapter 12, where the parents presented the child to the Lord, and received a blessing from the priests. It was a picture of the sacrifice of the first-born son, giving him to the Lord.

Any ideas on a third meaning? (Answer next month!)

As you take down your decorations, think about where you will store them ready for use next Christmas – and also, how carefully you will put them away.

Will the string of lights be a tangled mess of knots when you take them out of their wrappings or will you be able to hang them straight on the tree? One of the biggest concerns is where to put the figure of baby Jesus. It's usually so small in a Crib Set that it is easily lost and then the Crib Set rather loses its meaning!

### *This month*

Have a think about where you put Jesus after Christmas. Not the figure but the 'real' person. He's easily left in a virtual crib as a baby in our minds, just like the wooden or plastic figure in our attics or under the stairs. If we keep Him as that lovely sweet-smelling-cute baby we miss out on His teaching and miracles, we will fail to understand and engage with His massive love and compassion for each of us on the cross – and most importantly His resurrection.

Death is not the end.

Not for Him. Not for us. And not for our loved ones.

*The Rev'd Dr. Jo White*

## **A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION FROM MICAH**

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression...? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you: To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:7-8)*

I quite like olive oil; not the Popeye character but the cooking ingredient. Although I am not sure what I would do with even one river of oil, and I have nowhere to put a ram.

Still, this is one of my favourite Bible passages, and it is an ideal one for lawyers. It sums up in a very simple but helpful way what true religion should be. That makes it a good verse to start the year. The message is simple: God

does not want empty promises or lip service, but our real devotion, from our heart.

What does it mean for us?

***Do justly*** – Be honest and open in our dealings with others this year. Be dependable. We should say when things are going wrong and be appreciative when they go well. Be fair in our dealings, whether at home or at work or in church. Keep confidences and never pass on gossip.

***Love mercy*** – Give people the benefit of doubt, do not take advantage of others and do not always criticise or complain. Accept apologies and explanations where we can, and be generous.

***Walk humbly*** – Quietly get on with things. Do not make a big show of what we do.

Lastly, we are *required* to do these things. They are not options or choices but requirements. Like many requirements in the Bible, they are simple to understand, but not always simple to do. Happy New Year.

*David Pickup (Solicitor)*

### **Spotted on a church notice board:**

When you were born, your mother brought you here.  
When you were married, your partner brought you here.  
When you die, your family will bring you here.  
In the meantime, why not try coming on your own sometimes?

## **REMEMBERING RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS**

One hundred years ago, on 16th January 1922, Ralph Vaughan Williams' *A Pastoral Symphony* was performed for the first time, in London.

Later designated Symphony No. 3, it was said to be inspired by the composer hearing a bugler practising and is frequently thought of as a memorial for the fallen of the First World War, many of whom Vaughan Williams knew. He later said he saw music as an antidote to a war-torn world.

He had been born in 1872: his father was vicar at Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, but he died two years later. His mother, an evangelical Christian, was also the niece of Charles Darwin. This combination of events may have led to his uncertainty in questions of faith: his second wife Ursula said he "drifted into a cheerful agnosticism, but he was never a professing Christian".

Nevertheless, Vaughan Williams frequently attended church, where he found musical inspiration. His first job after graduation was as a church organist, and he wrote many compositions for the Anglican Church, including well known hymn tunes. He edited *The English Hymnal* in 1904 and wrote an opera of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But he said there was "no reason why an atheist could not write a good Mass".

*A Pastoral Symphony* received some criticism at first but was later regarded as stunningly beautiful, combining the grace of the wildly popular *The Lark Ascending* with the deep sadness of war.

*Tim Lenton*

## MAGAZINE ARTICLES

As you will have noticed in past magazines, several people in the congregation have contributed articles which have been very much appreciated. If you would like to write something for the magazine - perhaps an interesting place you've visited, a holiday you've really enjoyed, or just a general observation of everyday life - we would all love to hear about it. Please get in touch with Joanne (e-mail [transfigcanfordcliffs@gmail.com](mailto:transfigcanfordcliffs@gmail.com)) or telephone 01202 700341. All articles are very welcome and it's nice to hear from members of our church community.

## The 2022 Salisbury Cathedral Flower Festival

Planning for the 2022 flower festival at Salisbury Cathedral is well underway.

"Celebration" A Festival of Flowers takes place from Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May and will involve hundreds of arrangers.

It is designed by Michael Bowyer, Pam Lewis and Angela Turner, all Chelsea gold medallists.

Michael, director of Salisbury Cathedral Flowers and president of the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies (NAFAS), said everyone was saddened when the festival planned for 2020 could not go ahead due to the pandemic.

But, he said, next year's festival will include elements of the cancelled festival as well as themes celebrating the Queen's platinum jubilee, key workers, the power of nature, the cathedral's treasures and the Church's year.

"As well as members of Salisbury Cathedral Flowers, every flower club and every church from the Diocese of Salisbury has been invited to take part," said Michael.

He added that the festival would be environmentally friendly, as arrangers would be using compostable substitutes for floral foam, and a section of the displays would focus on bees and other pollinators.

**Tickets for the 2022 flower festival are now available from the cathedral's website**

<https://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/events/celebration-festival-flowers>

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

### **The Seagull**

A father was at the beach with his children when his four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"



twinkl.com

## **TOM'S LICENSING**

We represented the parish of Canford Cliffs and Sandbanks at Tom's licensing on 20<sup>th</sup> December. We arrived at the Rectory at about 5.00 pm to have a quick look round and say hello to Tom, Sarah and Freddie. We then walked the five minutes to the church for the service at 6.00 pm. Due to the present situation regarding COVID, the church was not as full as it would have been in times gone by. There were no representatives, for instance, from the two schools or from the Deanery.

The service was conducted by the Rt. Rev'd Dr. Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester and the Ven. Dr. Edward Dowler, Archdeacon of Hastings. Tom was presented to the living by the patron of the parish, the Rev'd Julia Baldwin, who was representing Brasenose College, Oxford.

The service then proceeded with the liturgy of the word and a sermon by the Bishop on buckles! There is the Pelham Buckle on the font in Burwash church and apparently, Mary, on her assumption, dropped her buckle which was caught by Thomas the apostle.

Then followed the licensing with the usual oaths of allegiance to the Queen and oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop. Tom was then inducted by the Archdeacon with the customary tolling of the bell and placing in his stall in the church. We then had communion and the service was over in about an hour.

There were refreshments at the village hall in Burwash. We had to find our way back to the Rectory in the pitch black as there were no street lights and no Sarah to guide us!

# JANUARY



## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY

### EPIPHANY

Sun	2	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion
Wed	5	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	7	10.30 am	<b>Coffee Morning in hall</b>

### EPIPHANY 1

Sun	9	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins ( <i>Sunday Club in hall</i> )
Wed	12	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	14	10.30 am	Mums and Toddlers

### EPIPHANY 2

Sun	16	8.00 am 9.30 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Family Service Parish Communion
Wed	19	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	21	10.30 am	<b>Coffee Morning in hall</b>

### EPIPHANY 3

Sun	23	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins
Tues	25	10.00 am	Craft Group <i>in hall</i>
Wed	26	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>
Fri	26	10.30 am	Mums and Toddlers

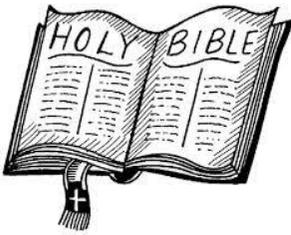
#### **EPIPHANY 4**

Sun	30	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Parish Communion
		6.00 pm	Candlemas
Wed	2	10.30 am	Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i>

*An extract from 'Uncle Eustace' regarding the problems of church accounts by the Rev'd Dr. Gary Bowness*

Our accounts have more by way of charm than they do of accuracy, generally consisting of one sheet of handwritten paper. There are only ever three copies for circulation, as that is the limit of Colonel Denster's carbon paper. It seems to be an unalterable tradition that they never balance, until we find the following year that the missing £20 was found months later under the teapot on the mantelpiece. One footnote to this was the occasion when the Colonel suspected an unaccountable £5 had been eaten by his Labrador. Our greatest expenses by far are categorised as 'miscellaneous', which is a catch-all for everything that our treasurer is unable to recall where it really went.

The thousands paid on church maintenance and diocesan fees are nodded through without comment – but if the money spent on Easter lilies or packets of tea for the Summer Fete increases by anything more than 50 pence, there will be much agonised debate and speculation about whether this is an indication of money laundering.



## **SUNDAY READINGS** **IN JANUARY**

### **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January - Epiphany**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 60.1-6

*The new Jerusalem is the nucleus of a family made up of all nations who will come together and draw from Jerusalem her light and sustenance.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Ephesians 3.1-12

*Paul emphasises the accessibility of God's promise to the gentile community through his own special calling as apostle.*

GOSPEL: Matthew 2.1-12

*The Magi deliver their gifts to the baby Jesus and return home by another route as they had been warned in a dream not to return to King Herod.*

### **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January - Epiphany 1**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 43.1-7

*God promises to rescue his people, many of whom are in exile. God will bring his people home.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 3.15-17, 21-22

*John the Baptist tells the people of the one who is to come who will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire and will judge the people.*

### **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> January - Epiphany 2**

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 62.1-5

*The new Jerusalem will be glorious in the eyes of the world and to God when he comes to establish his kingdom.*

NEW TESTAMENT: 1 Corinthians 12.1-11

*Paul speaks of God's will to distribute, through his Spirit, the various gifts that will enable his living body, the Church, to flourish and serve him.*

GOSPEL: John 2.1-11

*Jesus' first miracle in the presence of his mother and the disciples is a demonstration of God at work in the ministry of Jesus.*

### **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> January - Epiphany 3**

OLD TESTAMENT: Nehemiah 8.1-10

*Ezra, the priest, reads the Book of Law to the Israelites who wept as they listened. Nehemiah tells them the day is sacred and joyous and not to grieve.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke 4.14-21

*In a sudden, unexpected and dramatic demonstration of God's power, Saul, the persecutor of Christians, is transformed into Paul, apostle to the Gentiles.*

### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January - Epiphany 4**

OLD TESTAMENT: Ezekiel 43.27-44.4

*The temple is dedicated and the glory of God returns to it.*

NEW TESTAMENT: 1 Corinthians 13

*This reading needs no introduction as it is the great tribute to love.*

GOSPEL: Luke 2.22-40

*An argument arises between the disciples over who was the greatest.*

## **LIVE NATIVITY!**

We were blessed with wonderful weather for the Live Nativity at the playground. Whilst setting up, Joseph informed us that he did not have his outfit which resulted in a ring round of people who might have it, or have a spare one. Eventually it was located with the goat herder! The donkeys arrived promptly and we got two for the price of one! It is always a tense time waiting to see if the animals are going to arrive, especially when you have advertised the fact on posters! On arrival, the horsebox found it difficult to get through the gates of the pre-planned parking place. There was the added problem of two errant bunnies who were supposed to be in their hutches, but were roaming loose in the garden and refused to be caught.

The goats arrived by car, but weren't driving, courtesy of a friend of Nina's, but were not too enamoured by the thought of a starring role, digging their hooves in and refusing to move. They had to be carried into their pen, but soon felt at home until the end when they were bundled into the boot of the hatchback, rather unceremoniously for the stars they had become!

The angel had left her outfit at home, but eventually that was retrieved ready for the production. We had a good crowd of young and old, but before I had even begun someone cried out that they had lost their child and could we find him. We did, thankfully, and he was not to be the last missing child.

The Canford Hotel provided mulled wine and mincepies and we raised over £500 for the Children's Society. It was a wonderful event and thanks go to those who set up and cleared away at the end. Thanks also to all our performers and, of course, Ewa and her double bass playing friend, Paul, who provided the music.

## **THE REALITY OF FAITH IN GOD**

As we enter this New Year of 2022 even the most devoted Christians can't ignore the uncertainties we face. The whole world was caught up in the persistent spread of Coronavirus. It is shaking national economies and causing untold stress and harm. Many people fear that their lives and families will never be the same again.

Almost daily the news has been gloomy and economic experts say the situation is the worst in living memory. How do we, as Christians, react to all this? What do we trust in? Has God something to say to us in these days?

An answer may be found in a well-loved passage from the Bible – Psalm 23: 'The Lord is my shepherd ...He restores my soul ...he leads me ...I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

But in the middle of this lovely psalm there are three reminders that Christians are NOT exempt from the realities of life. The psalmist speaks of 'the paths of righteousness', 'the valley of the shadow' and 'the presence of my enemies.'

The mention of 'the paths of righteousness' is a reminder that we are called to love the Lord and live our lives in *righteousness*. The wonderful promises in this psalm come with a condition; they are given to those who determine by God's grace to live righteously. And that must be our first resolution for 2022.

The 'valley of the shadow' may refer to death, but generally the reference here is wider. It means all those occasions

when fear and sorrow and heartbreak and loss come to even the best Christians.

Then there are our 'enemies.' Originally that probably meant those wanting to kill the psalmist. For us it may be the seduction of old temptations, the fears that paralyse us and the memories of sins that still haunt us.

The psalmist is a realist! As Christians we live our lives in the real world! We are not floating on cloud nine; we are rooted in a fallen world and surrounded by temptations and sins and infirmities. Any day, pain, an incurable disease, even death itself, may come to us or to those we love. How do we face these realities?

Psalm 23 has the answer. If we, by God's grace, will walk in 'the paths of righteousness,' then all the promises are ours! The Lord will be our Shepherd. He will lead us by the still waters; He will restore our souls, prepare a table for us in the wilderness, protect and guide us with His rod and staff and, at the end, bring us into the house of the Lord forever. Let's make Psalm 23 our charter of faith for 2022!

*Dr Herbert McGonigle is a former Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology, Church History and Wesley Studies in Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, England.*

## **THERE'S MORE WITH US THAN WITH THEM!!**

We begin the New Year with a Bible event from 2 Kings and an anecdote from Birmingham.

For a number of years, the king of Syria had tried to capture the prophet Elisha. (The story is found in 2 Kings 6:11-19). Elisha always knew what the Syrians were planning, and revealed their plans before they could be carried out. Finally, the Syrian armies surrounded Elisha in Dothan.

When Gehazi, Elisha's servant, woke up and saw the encircling Syrian armies, he was terrified. But Elisha prayed, 'Lord, open his eyes.' When Gehazi looked again, he could hardly believe what he saw. All round them were horses and chariots of fire. The armies of heaven were protecting them! And Elisha encouraged him. "Don't fear, there's more with us than with them!" Immediately the Syrians were struck with blindness and Elisha and Gehazi escaped.

Often, we need to ask the Lord to *open our eyes*. When our strength has failed and faith is weak, we're apt to think that God has forgotten us. But He hasn't! He is near and only our dimness of vision prevents us from seeing His great presence and power and provision. Fear not! Trust God! Believe His Word! There's more with us than with our enemy!

In the early 1950s a well-known department store in Birmingham, England, wanted to extend its premises. Close at hand was an ideal site but it belonged to the Quakers whose Meeting House had been there for well over 200 years. The department store wrote to the Quakers, offering

to buy the site. They said, "We will give you a very good price for the land. In fact, we'll send you a blank cheque. Please fill in whatever sum of money you think appropriate, and we will honour it." Four weeks passed and there was no reply, then five weeks, then six weeks.

Finally, a letter arrived from the Quakers. It thanked the department store for their generous offer but declined to accept it. "Our Meeting House has been here for almost 250 years," they explained, "much longer than your store. We have no wish to sell our property. However, if you would agree to sell your site to us, we are very interested in buying it. We will give you a very good price for it. Just state your selling price and we will honour it."

The letter was signed 'Cadburys.' The department store thought they were dealing with a small congregation of Quakers. Instead, they were dealing with the Cadburys' empire. Cadburys could have bought the department store twenty times over!

When our enemy the devil attacks us, by ourselves we are weak and feeble. But when Christ dwells in us by His Spirit, we are mighty! The devil is no longer attacking us; he is attacking the Captain of our salvation – and the devil cannot win! There's more with us than with him! As we go through 2022, be *encouraged*. With Christ we are more than conquerors!

*The Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle is a former Senior Lecturer in Historical Theology and Church History at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, England.*

## **'THE PASSION OF CHRIST'**

The dramatic course of events, which took place about 2000 years ago during the Jewish feast of 'Passover', and which is so faithfully recorded in the writings of 'The New Testament', begins with Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, followed by his betrayal, capture and mock trial which then led to his gruesome crucifixion and concluded with his glorious and prophesied resurrection, first witnessed by Mary Magdalene in the early morning of that third day.

A vivid and deeply 'moving' retelling of the Easter story will take place at the Christchurch Priory at 7.30pm on Saturday Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 2022 when the premiere of a new and exciting musical drama, (created by local christian composer Roger Hewetson) will be given by the prestigious 'City of Bristol Choir' with full orchestra and professional soloists under their conductor David Ogden. This will be an evening to remember, so do 'book' early (and invite a friend or relative, if you can).

All tickets are available ( in the New Year ), directly 'on-line' - [www.christchurchpriory.org/events](http://www.christchurchpriory.org/events) or tel 07951 311651. Prices £15 (side aisles with screens, £20, £25 (Nave)).

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Baptisms**

5<sup>th</sup> December

Albert Dering Fulton

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January      No flowers (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 February issue of the  
Church Magazine is

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January**