



The Ship

St Jude's Church, Englefield Green Newsletter

Anglicans and Methodists working together

Number 18

December 2011

From the Registers

Holy Baptism:

(30th October) Luke Sprackling; (6th November) Edward Moore.

Wedding:

(11th November) Jonathan Kensey and Kathryn Gocke.

Calendars 2012

The 2012 calendar for Englefield Green is now on sale for £6. It contains twelve historic photographs of Englefield Green, together with views of the same spots today.

Calendars can be bought at St Jude's Church after any service or on Saturday afternoons between 2pm and 4pm, or from Cafe Rendezvous in the Village Centre, which is open from 9am (10am in school holidays) to 4pm on weekdays and 10am to 1pm on Saturdays. Alternatively we can send copies by mail: please send £1.50 extra for post and packing within the UK or £3.00 extra for overseas.

For more information please email
calendar@stjudeschurch.info

Concerts in St Jude's

The last concert in 2011 will be Voices Anon directed by Guy Bunce on 10th December at 4.00pm. Admission is free. We have all enjoyed these concerts during 2011 and now look forward to those arranged for 2012. The details are shown on the card attached to this newsletter.

Voices Anon

conducted by
Guy Bunce

**Saturday 10th December
4.00pm**

**Admission free
(donations invited)**

Celebrating Christmas in a broken world

We are just entering the season of Advent as I write and this message will take us into the festival of Christmas when we try to get away from the pressures of daily life for some rest and celebration.

And for many this is true. Lights, decorations, parties, carols, gifts, feasts, special worship services . . . all of this and more adds up to joyful celebration.

Yet for others Christmas isn't only a time to be merry. It's also a time of mixed feelings, a season of sadness as well as joy. If, for example, you've recently lost a loved one, you know how the holidays accentuate your longing. Oh, how much you'd love to share Christmas with one who won't be there this year, or any year! Christmas, with all of its happiness, can leave a deep, unfilled pit in your stomach.

At this time of year, the voices of all those I met through bereavement over the last twelve months echo back and the images of violence, particularly in Libya, replay — a recollection made all the more vivid as the dominoes begin to fall in Syria. I fear many of those people we see on our screens will not survive the next twelve months. "And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing." This we sing at Christmas, in the midst of a world where nature sometimes sings, and sometimes demolishes. "Peace on earth, and mercy mild," or so the song goes. But peace often seems very far away in a world fractured by violence, disease, and hunger.

So how can we celebrate Christmas in a broken world?

What we mustn't do is pretend. Christmas is not a time to pretend as if everything's right with the world. This is tempting, but ultimately self-defeating and contrary to the Christian gospel.

So what should we do? Well, for one thing, I'd suggest that we allow Christmas to increase our longing. So many of us live in a stupor, accepting the brokenness of our world as a given, rather than as something in need of divine mending. The Christmas theme of peace on earth should increase our longing for peace on earth. It should augment our dissatisfaction with violence and injustice. It should amplify our hope for the future, even as it motivates us to be peacemakers wherever we can.

Another aspect of celebrating Christmas in a broken world is marvelling at the wonderful reality of birth of Christ. John puts this succinctly in the prologue to his gospel: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The Word of God, who was with God, and, indeed, who was God (John 1:1), became human in the baby Jesus. Rather than standing back from our broken world, rather than fixing it from a distance, God chose to enter this world as a vulnerable baby. As this baby grew, He would know pain, and grief, and confusion, and loss, and everything else common to human beings. Ultimately He would know the final pain wrought by our sin, as He "became a sin offering" for our sake on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).

For the one who hurts at Christmas, or at any other time, for that matter, part of the good news is that God has drawn near, and still draws near. Our God is not "watching us from a distance," as the popular song once proclaimed. Rather, God has entered into our reality in Jesus Christ. And this God also is with us (Immanuel!) in our pain and suffering.

As important as this is, it isn't the end of the story. There is also the promise of peace on earth, of the broken world made whole. The time will come when heaven and nature will indeed sing the song they were intended to sing by their Creator. What God did through the Incarnation is the beginning of true peace on earth, even though it's not yet fully here. The brokenness of our world, and, indeed, of our own lives, drives us to the only One who brings wholeness. And this is the One whose humble birth we celebrate at Christmas.

Mark Ewbank

Carol Singing

We will be singing carols round the village during the evening of Thursday 22nd December meeting at St Jude's Church at 7.00pm. Do come along and join us — it really is a case of the more the merrier. We will finish back at St Jude's for refreshments probably a little before 9.00pm.

Christianity Explored

People do the *Christianity Explored* course for different reasons. Some know virtually nothing about the Christian faith; some have previous contact with church or Sunday school; some go to church but want to find out more or go a bit deeper. Some do the course to keep someone else company!

The next course in Englefield Green will start on Tuesday 10th January 2012. It lasts for seven weeks, finishing on Shrove Tuesday, 21st February. Don't worry if you will have to miss a week; you can catch up with the handbook and/or a chat with someone who was there.

It will run in The Village Centre from 7.00pm starting with supper. Then 8.00pm friendly groups, DVD, more small group discussion, and it will finish at 9.30pm. There is no charge for the course though, of course, you may make a contribution to the costs if you wish.

Local churches are involved in running the course.

For more information phone:-

Roy on 01784 435602 Rita on 01784 433560
Linda on 01784 471110 at the Village Centre
between 10 - 4.

You are most welcome!

Christmas Day Lunch

Once again, the Village Centre is offering free a Christmas Day lunch for anyone on their own, (this includes couples), International students, lone parents etc; please book your free place with Linda on 01784 471110.

New Year Lunch

Our usual New Year Lunch will be at the Village Centre, on Monday 2nd January 12.30 for 12.45pm. There will be a charge of £5.00, proceeds to go to *Smile International* for the support of medical work and social care among widows in Macedonia and Kosovo. (This is the charity who distribute our Shoe Boxes).

So that we don't run out of anything, it is useful if you book in advance! Please phone either Margaret Willis 01784 434133 or Rita Berry on 01784 433560. We hope you will come! Sorry, but we cannot provide transport.

Shoe Boxes

We are very grateful to have received 27 shoeboxes, full of gifts for children! How delighted they will be to receive them! Thank you very much indeed. I will endeavour to write to everyone to say thank you, but as some boxes were left without identification (which I didn't ask for) please accept this general 'thanks'.
Rita Berry

Village Centre

The Village Centre and Rendezvous Community Café situated in Victoria Street is open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm and on Saturdays from 10.00am-2.00pm.



Serving hot and cold drinks, home made cakes and light snacks, Rendezvous is already living up to its name as being a great place to meet with friends.

A computer room is now available at The Centre. Tuition is available for all levels from toddlers to Silver Surfers on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9am-12 noon. Other times may be possible — please contact the Manager on 01784 462396.

The next Community Big Breakfast is on Saturday 10th December from 9-11am

The Village Centre will be closed from the 26th December until 2nd January.

Egham Choral
Carols at Christmas
and
Vivaldi 'Gloria'
plus familiar carols with audience participation, mulled wine and mince pies
Saturday 17th December 2011
7.30pm
St Paul's Church, Thorpe Road, Egham Hythe

Tickets: £10.00 Under 16 years: £5.00
Contact: Sarah Davies 01784 454491
Email: tickets@eghamchoral.org/at the door
(subject to availability)

December Diary

- 4 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30pm Family Communion 6.30pm Taizé service
- 6 Tuesday 2.30pm Bright Hour meets at Aldwyn Place
- 7 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion (said)
- 10 Saturday 9.00-11.00am Big Breakfast in the Village Centre 4.00pm Concert in Church — admission free
- 11 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Family Communion (sung) 6.30pm Evensong and Sermon
- 14 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion (said)
- 18 Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (said) 9.30am Family Communion (sung) *Traidcraft goods after 9.30am service* 4.00pm Carol Service
- 21 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion (said)
- 22 Thursday Carol singing around the village — meet at St Jude's Church at 7.00pm
Christmas services are shown on the attached card
- 28 Wednesday 10.00am Holy Communion (said)
- 29 Thursday 2.30pm Bright Hour meets at the Village Centre

All events take place at St Jude's Church unless otherwise marked

The Church is open every Saturday 2-4pm for tea and a chat and to discuss weddings and baptisms