



Diocese of Chester [Parish of Stockport and Brinnington]

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December
2019

Parish of Stockport and Brinnington
St Mary - St Thomas - St Luke





What can I give him?

One of the loveliest of hymns of the Christmas season is, to my mind, 'In the Bleak Mid-winter' Whilst some criticise its theology, it remains a much-loved carol and it's one that will be sung by visitors to churches the length and breadth of the country over the coming weeks.

Church attendance increases hugely over the Christmas season and, of all the gifts we might ask for as people of faith, that surely is one of the best - people unfamiliar with church arriving for Carol Services and Christingles, gives us huge opportunity to welcome them warmly into our churches and our parish and to celebrate with them this most special of seasons. But as we do so, it's good to remember that for many people and despite the joy of Christmas, mid-winter can be a very bleak time; for those who face issues of loneliness, who are ill, who are homeless, anxious or who are bereaved, this season can be tough and some extra care, kindness, sensitivity and support from those around them can really help.

In Matthew 25, Jesus says 'Truly, I tell you, whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me' and I'm reminded of that when we come to the final verse of 'In the bleak mid-winter' where it asks 'What can I give him, poor as I am?' How might each of us give to Christ this Christmas through the care of others, through extending a sincere and loving welcome, through sharing some of the many blessings we've received and thus, in turn, becoming a source of blessing to others? And we'll be thinking and praying

Friday, 13th December

Cafe Worship	10.45
AGE UK Stockport Carol Service	13.30
with Warren Wood Primary School & Sunrise (Bramhall) Singing Group	

Sunday, 15th December

Morning Prayer	10.00
[Remembering a Loved One at Christmas]	

Tuesday, 17th December

Holy Communion	11.30
Lunch-time Service	12.15
Vernon Park Carol Service	14.30
Banks Lane Junior School	19.00

Friday, 20th December

Shopmobily Stockport with Offerton Methodist Church Choir	13.00
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Sunday, 22nd December

Holy Communion	10.00
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Tuesday, 24th December

CHRISTMAS EVE:

Christingle & Crib Service	16.00
Midnight Holy Communion & Carols	23.30

Wednesday, 25 December

CHRISTMAS DAY

A Christmas Family Service	10.00
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St Mary's will be closed 26thDecember 2019 – 6th January 2020
except Sunday Worship on the 29th December at 10.00am

St Mary's Christmas Programme 2019

[subject to amendment]

Saturday, 30th November

St Mary's Christmas Fayre 10.00

Sunday, 1st December

Holy Communion with Advent Carols 10.00

Tuesday, 3rd December

Holy Communion 11.30

Lunchtime Advent Carol Service 12.15

Friday, 6th December

Cafe Worship 10.45

Stockport Youth Orchestra Christmas Concert 20.00

Saturday, 7th December

Peal Attempt – with the bell ringers from Derby Cathedral 14.00

Sunday, 8th December

Advent Morning Prayer [Gift Service] Stockport Homes 10.00

Ex-Services Association Carol Service 14.00

Monday, 9th December

Beechwood Cancer Care Christmas Carol & Dedication Service 19.00

Tuesday, 10th December

Holy Communion 11.30

Lunchtime Service 12.15

Wellspring Carol Service 13.30

Wednesday, 11th December

The Mayor's Carol Service 12.30

that through for our parish over the coming year too as we look at how we might serve our community and the 'least of our brothers and sisters' better...if you would like to volunteer some time or donate resources to help us in that please do contact me and I'd be delighted to speak to you.

I wish you a peaceful Christmas and a hope-filled 2020 ahead.

With love and prayers for every blessing on you and all those you love and pray for.

Lynne

Revd Lynne Cullens

Rector of the Parish of Stockport & Brinnington



Christmas Gift Collection for Prisoners
sharing the love of God



St Mary's has been asked by the Diocese to donate six Christmas gifts for prisoners at HMP Style and HMO Thorn Cross.



Specific instructions have been given as to how these are to be made up – 100g box of Maltesers, Soap, Socks and a Christmas card. *The carriers provided have therefore been prepared (3 x women and 3 x men) in advance of the exhibition finale and thanksgiving service at St Georges.* If

anyone wishes to contribute towards the costs incurred or to make a donation to the prisons – a collection point is available at St Mary's. It was indeed a pleasure to first host the exhibition when it left Chester Cathedral and nice to know that it all ends back here in Stockport.

The Diocese of Chester
Invite host parishes to the finale of
Journey into Light

An exhibition of artwork created by prisoners

St Georges Church, Stockport, SK2 6NU. 17th December 2019

Everyone welcome - anyone interested in attending will need to register for a **FREE TICKET** - go to the front page of the diocesan web-site and click the Journey into Light banner. 6pm guests will have the opportunity to mingle, view the exhibition, and enjoy music, carols, canapes and alcohol-free mulled wine.

Thanksgiving service begins at 7.30pm

Mouse Makes

Where was Mary's baby born?
Why were Joseph and Mary there?
Read Luke 2 :1-6

Where did Mary lay her baby and why?
Read Luke 2:7

Why were the shepherds afraid?
Read Luke 2:8

What did the angel tell Joseph to name Mary's baby and why?
Read Matthew 1:21

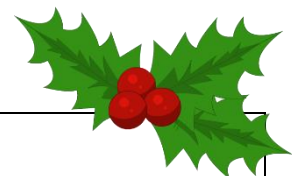
What good news did the angel tell?
Read Luke 2:10-11

Who appeared praising God and what did they say?
Read Luke 2:13-14

What did Mary dress her baby in?
Read Luke 2:6

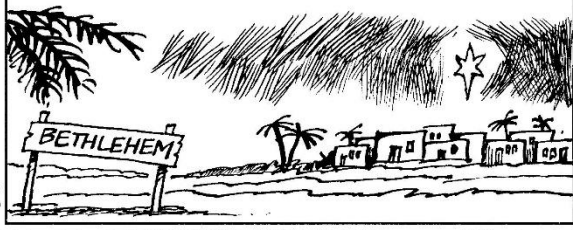
What did the shepherds do after they had seen the baby?
Read Luke 2:16

Colour a star each day until Christmas




A Very Special Baby

JESUS WAS BORN ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, NEAR JERUSALEM.




AN ANGEL HAD TOLD MARY SHE WOULD HAVE A VERY SPECIAL BABY.

...YOU MUST CALL YOUR BABY JESUS




ROMAN CENSUS
GO TO YOUR HOME TOWN TO BE COUNTED

MARY AND JOSEPH MADE THE LONG JOURNEY FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM. THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED THERE FOR THE CENSUS.

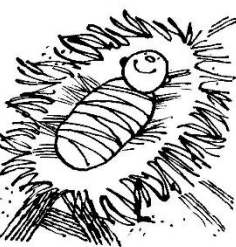


BUT THE TOWN WAS FULL...
THE ONLY SHELTER THEY COULD FIND WAS A STABLE...

SORRY... I'VE NO ROOM!




...WHICH IS WHERE JESUS WAS BORN.




SHEPHERDS IN FIELDS NEARBY RACED TO SEE THE BABY.

AN ANGEL HAD TOLD THEM WHERE JESUS HAD BEEN BORN.




WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST. THEY TOO WANTED TO SEE JESUS. THEY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY A STAR.

THEY BROUGHT GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.



BUT MARY, JOSEPH AND BABY JESUS SOON HAD TO ESCAPE TO EGYPT...

...AS KING HEROD WANTED JESUS DEAD!!



St Thomas' Church, Stockport.

Advent Sunday - 1st December,
9.00am Sung Eucharist
4.00pm Sung Evensong

Monday - 23rd December,
7.30pm Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24th December,
11.30pm - Midnight Mass

Rev Lynne Cullens

St Luke's Brinnington

Sunday - 22nd December,
3.00pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve – 24th December,
2pm Crib & Christingle Service

Christmas Day – 25th December,
10.00am Holy Communion and Carols



Christmas Gift Drive

PLEASE help to brighten the festive season for children in need by donating to our Christmas Gift Drive in partnership with Stockport Homes.



You can drop off gifts at St Mary's between 10.00am – 3pm on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday as well between 9.30am – 10.00am on Sundays.

The Gift Service (when gifts are presented to Stockport Homes) will be held on Sunday, 8th December at 10am.

Stockport Homes will be handing out gifts for children and young people between the ages of 0 – 18 years of age.

Please don't wrap your gift(s) but wrapping paper (separately) would be appreciated.

Thank You

Church of England welcomes further government support for churches

Listed Churches in need of vital repairs are to benefit after the Government announced the extension of a grant scheme.

The listed places of worship grants scheme (LPWGS) is to be extended by the Treasury for a further year until March 2021.

The scheme pays grants equal to the VAT incurred on repairs such as urgent structural work and new roofs, reducing the fundraising burden on churches and congregations.

Churches and cathedrals are responsible for fundraising for their own repairs. They contribute £220m a year to the economy and collectively run around 33,000 social action projects.

The *Taylor Report* which was published in 2017 concluded that church buildings play a “vital role” in providing public services and a focal point for communities across the country.



Experience the Joy of Advent

Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.' Luke 2:10



Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The word 'Advent' is from the Latin word 'adventus' meaning 'coming'. Sometimes called 'Little Lent', it's a time to prepare our hearts for the future Second Coming, as well as the birth of Christ. We celebrate the season with advent calendars, candles and evergreen wreaths – symbolising Christ as Light of the world, bringing new and everlasting life. *Here are some simple tips to help you experience and share the joy of Advent!*

- Connect with your inner child: Think back to the time when you were a child, on the simple things that made you happy at Christmas. Focus only on the good and feel the joy of Christmas come flooding back!
- Keep it simple: This year, go for gifts and cards that share the meaning of the season, shop early and stay within your budget.
- Be people focused: Remember the story of Mary and Martha – keep meals simple and allow yourself time and space to focus on enjoying the company of your guests.
- Make Room for Jesus: Take some time at the beginning of each day to read your Bible, meditate on Scripture and pray. Focus on giving thanks to God for His gift of Christ to the world and for all He has done for us.
- Me Time: God wants us to prosper in body, soul and spirit, so try to eat healthy, don't overindulge, take time for long walks and enjoy the good and simple things in life!
- Wear a smile and share the Joy! being joyful is a choice, it's not about your circumstances. So, decide to be thankful this season. Wear a smile, act and talk positively, do small things with great love, be on the lookout for opportunities to do good to people. Give to the homeless, visit the sick, or take gifts to lonely neighbours. **If People ask you about your joy, don't be afraid to share your faith. Simply explain to them that 'Christ lives in my heart, and He can live in yours too.'**

For to Us a Child is

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6)

Approaching Christmas, we are very aware of the political and economic uncertainties that face us. The prophet Isaiah also lived in such uncertain times, as the Assyrians had just conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (734-732 BC). This fulfilled Isaiah's warnings to the people, who had turned their back on God and His ways. However, Isaiah is able to bring a word of hope, promising a Messiah who would come like a great light: *'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'* (Isaiah 9:2). These words are fulfilled in the birth of Jesus 700 years later and describe person of Jesus:

- *Wonderful Counsellor:* He will give us the wisdom we need, especially when we have difficult decisions to make at work or home, or in dealing with our finances or future direction. *Mighty God:* He will provide the help and strength to face a difficult diagnosis, family crisis or relationships breakdown, as we trust His plan and purpose for our lives.
- *Everlasting Father:* He cares for us as a father cares for His children, so that we can come to Him when we feel alone or we are really struggling, knowing that He hears and will answer our prayers.
- *Prince of Peace:* He has secured peace by His cross and resurrection, and so we can find in Him true acceptance, forgiveness and peace for our lives, relationships and future.

Christmas is the time to celebrate a God who is faithful to all His promises, *'the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this'* (7)

How to help someone who is lonely this Christmas

Rev Paul Hardingham

'It's gonna be a lonely Christmas'. The pressure to have fun with friends and family is real over the Christmas period. In fact, over nine million people in the UK say they're always or often lonely. (Red Cross).

When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, she probably felt very alone. Her situation would be seen as scandalous, as few believed that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit! Yet, God was with her: *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call His name Immanuel" (which means, 'God with us')*. (Matthew 1:23).

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be with us. The separation we may feel from others is nothing compared to the distance that God has already gone for us.

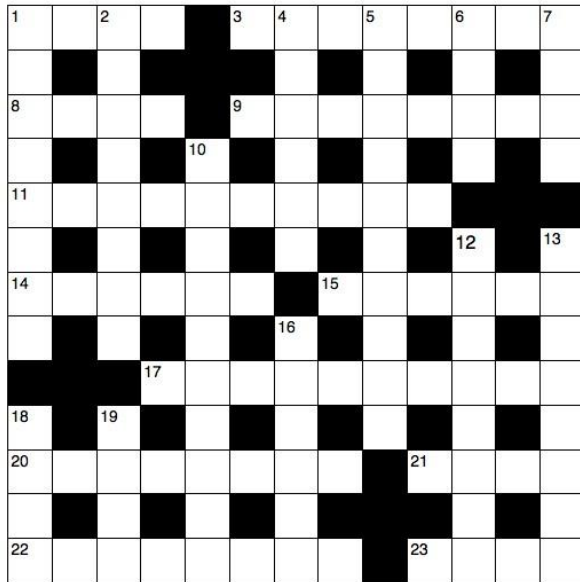
Here are 5 tips for helping those who are lonely:

- *Take time to talk* - Take time to talk to an older person this Christmas, at the supermarket, pub or on a walk. Just saying hello can make a big difference to someone who's lonely.
- *Give someone a call* - Take the time to speak to friends and family that you won't be with this Christmas. A short phone call can have a big impact.

Down

- 1 'Flee for your lives! Don't — — , and don't stop anywhere in the plain!' (Genesis 19:17) (4,4)
- 2 Principal thoroughfare (Numbers 20:19) (4,4)
- 4 'The tax collector... beat his — and said, "God have mercy on me, a sinner"' (Luke 18:13) (6)
- 5 'The zeal of the Lord Almighty will — this' (2 Kings 19:31) (10)
- 6 'The day of the Lord is — for all nations' (Obadiah 15) (4)
- 7 Specified day (Acts 21:26) (4)
- 10 Deadly epidemic (Deuteronomy 32:24) (10)
- 12 Roman Catholic church which has special ceremonial rights (8)
- 13 Tied up (2 Kings 7:10) (8)
- 16 In his speech to the Sanhedrin, Stephen described Moses as 'powerful in speech and — ' (Acts 7:22) (6)
- 18 'Although he did not remove the high places, — heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life' (1 Kings 15:14) (4)
- 19 Tribe (Deuteronomy 29:18) (4)

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CROSSWORD

Across

1 'The blind receive sight, the — walk' (Luke 7:22) (4)

3 Got (Philippians 3:12) (8)

8 Leave out (Jeremiah 26:2) (4)

9 Castigated for using dishonest scales (Hosea 12:7) (8)

11 Weighty (1 John 5:3) (10)

14 'Now the serpent was more — than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made' (Genesis 3:1) (6)

15 'Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot — God' (Romans 8:8) (6)

17 Because Israel lacked one of these, tools had to be sharpened by the Philistines (1 Samuel 13:19) (10)

20 In his vision of the two eagles and the vine, this is how Ezekiel described the latter (Ezekiel 17:8) (8)

21 Rite (anag.) (4)

22 Nine gigs (anag.) (8)

23 'The eye cannot say to the — , "I don't need you"' (1 Corinthians 12:21) (4)

➤ *Give a neighbour a card* - Ring the doorbell and give your neighbour a Christmas card. Start a conversation and make a connection.

➤ *Having a party?* - Hosting a Christmas party or meal? If you know somebody who might be alone, invite them to join you!

➤ *Pray for Others* - If you hear of someone who's on their own, pray for them. Pray that God would show you how to respond!

'The most important thing I can tell you is that we are never alone when we know Christ.' Billy Graham).



Wake up! It's Christmas!

Tony Horsfall

Do you remember the excitement of Christmas Eve when you were a child? There was so much to look forward to the next day, and when you went to bed that night, probably later than usual, you were buzzing with excitement. Eventually you fell asleep and then the next morning you were woken by either a sibling or a parent, saying 'Wake up! It's Christmas!'

As we get older the excitement of Christmas probably fades somewhat and we perhaps feel overwhelmed by all that has to be done and worn out by the busyness around us. But still it is good to 'wake up to Christmas' in the sense of becoming conscious again of what the Christmas season is all about.

What are we celebrating really? The coming of the Saviour of the world, born as a little babe in the stable at Bethlehem. God's salvation plan coming to pass, and the opportunity for us to be brought into relationship with Him again. These are wondrous truths, and we need to wake up again to the meaning of Christmas.

Bethlehem was a busy place when Christ was born. The inns were full, with visitors returning for the census, there was no room for the young couple from Nazareth. In the busyness many must have missed what was happening right before their eyes that night as the babe was born. The greatest event in history but because they were not 'awake' they missed it!

Don't be asleep this Christmas time. Don't be so busy that you fail to notice the significance of what we are celebrating. Let the wonder of it capture your heart again and create in you a sense of gratitude and thankfulness for all that God has done for you. The Saviour has come, rejoice and be glad!

Ethical Christmas presents

How much damage to the earth will we manage to do this Christmas? Those hundreds of millions of presents we are going to buy come from somewhere – usually raw resources. Are the presents worth the strain on our already struggling planet?

Here are some alternative presents, that are eco-friendly, useful, and fairly traded.

Christian Aid (christianaid.org.uk/christmaspresents) invites supporters to send them a donation, and in return, they will send a 'lively' personalised card to your friend or relations, describing the gift you have chosen to give on their behalf.

Send a Cow (sendacow.org/gifts) also invites supporters to send a donation for a range of practical gifts, for use in helping people from Ethiopia to Zambia.

Traidcraft (traidcraftshop.co.uk) offers everything from bamboo tights to clocks to food and cosmetics.

WaterAid (shop.wateraid.org) provides sanitation equipment (such as taps to promote hand washing) to villages in Africa, Asia or Central America. The person you nominate will receive a card to let them know this has been done in their name.

World Vision (musthavegifts.org) offers you the choice of sending various specific items from mosquito nets to garden tools, all of which they say are specifically asked for and needed.

With WWF (wwf.org.uk) you can adopt a wild animal, from a dolphin to an orangutan. WWF will send your nominated person an adoption certificate and even cuddly toy.

The Children's Society / Leprosy Mission

Boxes for both have once again been collected in, emptied and the contents accounted for, with cheques raised to the Children's Society for £200 and the Leprosy Mission for £90. Many thanks to everyone who have these boxes in their homes and give so generously year on year.

The Children's Society is a national charity that works with the country's most vulnerable children and young people, an organisation whose roots date back to 1881 when a young Sunday School teacher and Civic Servant in London went looking for two children missing from his class and saw first hand the brutal effects of poverty on the lives of children. The Leprosy Mission, whose origins date back to 1869, is an international Christian development organisation that diagnoses, treats and offers specialist care, including reconstructive surgery, to leprosy patients, serving a population of 305 million in 30 leprosy-affected countries. Both undertake important work in their own area(s) and as Frank states: *"the job of raising monies for both charities is well worth it"*.

It is thanks to Frank that our collection box scheme(s) continue, something that we hope to carry on for many years to come, however Frank asks *"I feel that I would like someone a little younger to take over from me for it to be an ongoing thing..."* but Frank has kindly offered to help whoever takes over for the first year.

If you are interested in taking on this role, or assisting in any way, please let us know. Any questions, and we are sure Frank will be happy to talk you through what is required.

Trusting God in all

Lester Amann

For many, Christmas is a time of happiness and holiday. An opportunity for parties, concerts, pantomimes and watching children perform nativity plays. We exchange colourful cards, and presents, and prepare special meals for family and friends. We sing carols. We adorn our homes and churches with all kinds of decorations.

All our celebrations are a far cry from that first Christmas. In our festivities it is easy to forget that when Jesus came life was hard. The Romans were an occupying force in Israel. There was poverty. The Jews were a captive and oppressed people. They had numerous worries and fears and awaited their Messiah to give them freedom.

Mary was looking forward to marrying Joseph and living with him in Nazareth. Suddenly she meets an angel; told she will be pregnant with God's Son and then her fiancé wants to divorce her! Her world is changed. Joseph too is distressed. In the turmoil, God speaks to Joseph in a dream and while this explains the miraculous pregnancy, he can't stop the hurtful gossip or the doubters.

Even if he wanted to face his critics, Joseph can't stay in Nazareth. He is compelled to take Mary with him to Bethlehem to complete a census. The long journey, possibly all on foot, must have been horrendous. Then in Bethlehem there is unsuitable accommodation for a birth.

It was likely that when the shepherds came and shared their experience of an angel messenger and the singing heavenly host, that their difficult circumstances began to make sense. Then, perhaps, sometime later when the Eastern men came with gifts that they were reassured and encouraged that God was with them in their difficulties. Also,

when God told Joseph in a dream to go with Mary and the infant to Egypt to escape Herod's cruelty, they knew that in a foreign land they could trust God with their lives.

Our Christmas comes amidst life's traumas and troubles. We may have on-going difficulties. In our struggles we need to know that God can be working out His purposes. Mary and Joseph came to know that in their hardships they were in God's will. Like them, we too must trust God in life-changing events.

"I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

The Royal British Legion

We will be forwarding to the Royal British Legion the sum of £60 [donation received for the purchase of the Remembrance wreath at St Mary's and proceeds from the "coffee and cake" morning].

Our poppy collection box will be accounted for separately.

Thanks to Frank for making the necessary arrangements this year and to Mrs E Murray representing the RBL.

THE WAY I SEE IT: Protecting the Innocent

David Winter

The day most of us call 'Boxing Day', was when tradesmen used to collect their annual tips from customers. It is named in the Church Calendar as St Stephen's Day, in memory of the first martyr, stoned to death by an angry crowd because of his faith. That is a shocking footnote to the celebration of Christmas, but worse is to follow. Three days later the Church asks us to remember the 'Holy Innocents'. These were the young children of Bethlehem killed by Herod's soldiers in a vain attempt to annihilate the potential new-born king. The Magi – the so-called 'Wise Men' – had told him the child had been born in that town. In fact, the child Jesus was by then safely across the border in Egypt, his parents having been warned to do so in a dream. But that did not save the innocent toddlers of Bethlehem, who were brutally put to the sword. They were subsequently named the 'holy innocents' because that is what they were: holy and wholly innocent, victims of a man's determination to cling to power, whatever the cost. Innocent children still suffer, of course: in refugee camps, in enslaved families, in unhappy homes and at the hands of abusers. Because they are weak and helpless, and utterly innocent, the rest of us have a duty to protect them. When Jesus wanted to portray pure innocence, He took a small child in His arms. He then uttered a warning, probably the harshest words to leave His lips. Anyone who offends against such little ones would not escape severe punishment. The fate of the 'holy innocents' is a sharp reminder, just after the Christmas celebrations, that Jesus was born into the world as it is: light and darkness, compassion and cruelty, love and hatred. He didn't come to endorse that world, but to change it. Darkness cannot defeat light. In the end the angel's song will be fulfilled: 'Peace on earth' in the kingdom of God.

The best present ever!

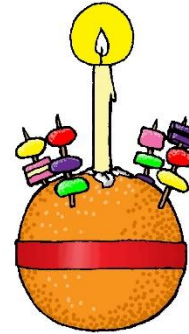
Tony Horsfall

When I was a boy of about 11, I received my best Christmas present ever – a pair of new football boots. I was so excited, and had been waiting for them for many weeks beforehand. They were the very latest style, black with a white flash down each side, and rubber studs. I can still picture them in my mind, and still feel the excitement that Christmas morning as I wore them for the first time. I didn't want to take them off again!

As time has passed by, I am less concerned about presents like that but more aware of the greatest gift of all which is at the heart of our Christmas celebrations – the gift of God's own Son to be our Saviour. Every year I seek to remind myself of what an amazing thing it is to have received the gift of salvation through His coming into the world. It truly is the gift that money could not buy, the gift that will never become outdated or outgrown, the gift that continues to satisfy our hearts.

The apostle Paul, when thinking of the coming of Christ into the world, exclaims, 'Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!' (1Corinthians 9:15) Nothing compares to it, and no human words can do it justice. He also reminds us of what a sacrifice it was for Him, and how much we have benefitted by His coming: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.' (2Corinthians 8:9)

This Christmas make sure you unwrap the wonderful gift God has prepared for you in Christ and receive that salvation joyfully into your heart. You will not be disappointed.



The story of the Christingle

The word 'Christingle' actually means 'Christ Light', and celebrates the light of Jesus coming into the world. Stories of how the Christingle began look back to the Moravian Church, which is found in the Czech Republic. The Moravians have held Christingle services for more than 200 years, and according to them, this is how the first Christingle might have been made:

Many years ago the children in a village were asked to bring a Christmas gift to put beside the crib in the church. One family was very poor, and had no money for gifts, but the three children were still determined to take something. The only nice thing they had was an orange, so they decided to give the Christ-child that.

But then they discovered the top was going green, so the eldest cut it out, and put a candle in the hole. To add some colour, one of the girls took a red ribbon from her hair and tied it around the middle of the orange. It was hard to make the ribbon stay still, so they fastened it in place with toothpicks. The toothpicks looked a bit bare, so the youngest child added some raisins to them.

The children took their decorated orange lantern to the church for the Christmas Mass. The other children sneered at their meagre gift, but the priest seized upon it with joy. He held it up as an example of the true understanding of the meaning of Christmas, for the following reasons: the orange is round, like the world; the candle gives us light in the dark, like the love of God; the red ribbon goes round the 'world', as a symbol of Christ's blood, given for everyone; the four sticks point in all directions, and symbolise that God is over all: North, South, East and West; and the fruit and nuts remind us of God's blessings.

Teams4U Shoebox Appeal 2019

Thank you to everyone who has gifted a shoebox this year or alternatively make or donated items to make up a box.

We will find out exactly how many boxes were taken from St Mary's to the warehouse in Wrexham in due course, but it has certainly been a wonderful effort.

With a little help from our friends..... Our appreciation to the Rotary Club of Stockport of their financial support towards transportation of boxes, as well as individual members making up shoebox gifts to support the appeal. In partnership with Rotary, we also thank our friends from the needlework group at Hazel Grove for their contribution of 50 completed boxes, as well as providing loads of other knitted items. We look forward to working together next year.

Last year "Teams4U" sent 51,315 shoeboxes from the UK to some of the most vulnerable children and groups in Eastern Europe. We wait to see what the total will be for 2019.



Parish Christingle Services



Christingle collection boxes in aid of The Children's Society available in advance. If you can - please fill up a box and return it to us in time for our Christingle services on Christmas Eve

The Children's Society first introduced the Christingle Service to The Church of England in 1968, and it has since become a popular event in the church calendar.

This candlelit celebration is an ideal way to share the key messages of the Christian faith, while helping to raise vital funds to help vulnerable children across the country.

Visit: www.childrensociety.org.uk

Christmas Eve: 24th December Crib & Christingle Services

St Luke's 2pm & St Mary's 4pm

