



Happy Christmas from
St Thomas' Church, Upshire

Christmas Services

Sunday 20th December @ 4pm

Carols in the churchyard

(subject to fair weather! Dress warmly and bring a torch)

Thursday 24th Dec @ 11pm

Midnight Mass

Friday 25th December @ 10am

Christmas Day Service

Please note, due to COVID restrictions, numbers at all services are restricted.

Pre-booking is essential. Please contact Beth Horton to book.

beth.hrtm@googlemail.com or 07853 336880

ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

NEWSLETTER

December 2020



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 Team Vicar: Revd Jane Yeadon, 07960 604416. email janeyeadon@gmail.com
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This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for January Newsletter: 14th December

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

There will be a service of Holy Communion every Sunday at 9.15am in St Thomas' Church. Numbers at the moment are limited to 25 people, social distancing rules apply and no hymns will be sung during the service. Everyone attending church should be aware that face masks (not visors) must be worn throughout the service. Names and phone numbers will be taken for track and trace purposes.

Services are also taking place at the Abbey Church and Holy Innocents, High Beach. We are still living in circumstances which are changing daily/weekly. For up to date information please look at the Waltham Abbey Church website or telephone the Benefice Office.

Zoom! There is a traditional Holy Communion Service with hymns in your own home by Zoom at 9.00am, for log-on details contact Beth Horton on 07853 335880.

St Thomas' Church will be open for private prayer on Tuesdays between 11.30am and 12.30pm until further notice and will be subject to Covid-19 rules.

READINGS

December	6 th :	2 nd Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-11	Mark 1:1-8
	13 th :	3 rd Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	John 1:6-8, 19-28
	20 th :	4 th Sunday of Advent	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:26-38
Thur	24 th :	Midnight Mass	Isaiah 52:7-10	John 1:1-14
Fri	25 th :	Christmas Day	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-14
	27 th :	1 st Sunday of Christmas	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:15-21

PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy, and to remember special dates, anniversaries, weddings, baptisms, etc.

First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk

This month we pray for Glenis, Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Brenda & Tony, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Louise, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Tim, Rosalind, Doreen, Barry, Maureen, George, Beverly, Terry, June, Rose, Peggy, Shirley, Mick, Sarah, Sheila, Jackie, Jean, Barbara, Brenda and the Bambridge family and Brian .

The Vicar writes:

As I write this letter in November, during lockdown 2, it's very hard to imagine what Christmas 2020 is going to look like.

We all have our hopes of course – scaled back no doubt from Christmases past – but whether even these modest expectations come to pass is still a matter of great doubt.

But as I reflected on this it drew me back to the story of that first Christmas and the characters we have come to know so well.

No doubt they too had hopes and expectations of what was to be:

As a young, engaged couple Mary and Joseph would have had expectations for their life together, building a family as children blessed the marriage. Though a child came it was not in the way any of them would have expected and it changed their family life irrevocably from that day forward.

The shepherds probably would have been expecting a quiet night up on the hills minding their flocks just as they did most nights and yet this night they were visited by the angelic hosts and ended up on a life changing journey down to Bethlehem to meet a new-born baby.

The Magi were expecting and waiting for a sign that would point them to a king – but they would not have been expecting to find that king as a small child born in poverty in a stable, in a small overcrowded town in an occupied country that was located in an unimportant corner of the Roman Empire.

Nothing about that first Christmas was expected... and yet it was nevertheless a Christmas that changed the world.

So this Christmas, however it may turn out to be, I invite you to enter once again into the unexpected story of the birth of our saviour – not just to watch and hear the story but to become participants, to enter into the story in new and unexpected ways. For if we do so we can expect to be transformed by it, as all those gathered in the stable, those many years ago, were.

Because of the events of that first Christmas we know that we can always have hope of things being better. This baby makes things different. This baby will stay with us and not leave us to our own devices. As the baby grows, so will we. Emmanuel – God with us... the expected companion in all the unexpected things the world throws at us

This Christmas will not be perfect, it may not even meet our expectations... just as we are not perfect and may not have met our or the world's expectations. Nevertheless God love us, indeed he loves us so much he came to dwell with us, walk with us, support us in amongst whatever challenges that life may throw at us... and that may just be the most unexpected thing of all.

Happy Christmas everyone, may God bless you and your home this Christmas time.

Blessings, Jane

This year of 2020 has been a difficult time for us all in many ways.

We must thank our church tidiers, grass mowers and strimmers, trimmers and pruners plus the Community Pay Back team for keeping our churchyard in such good order throughout the year.

ANAGRAM

Unscramble this 10 letter anagram: ALIENVOTER. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

CHURCH FLOWERS

DECEMBER - the time of celebration is here at last and to give us all the boost we need we will aim to fill the church with festive arrangements to welcome everyone back.

Dedications this month : 7th Dec - Lyn Wackett.

Memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers can be arranged for any week – contact Marion Locke 07789 643147 or email marionne.locke@btinternet.com to discuss.

All are welcome to help - should anyone wish to practice or create a design of their own do make contact to arrange access within current Covid guidelines.

MAKE YOUR OWN FESTIVE DOOR HANGING

As it appears we will be unable to meet to make our own festive arrangements as we did last year, here is a suggestion to make something for your home:

Find some long curving branches of ivy or other foliage type and bend to a half moon shape to the size you desire – these can then be wired together at the centre and part way round as securely as you can – several pieces can gradually be wired on together to bulk up and form your shape. To this you can then wire on pine cones, baubles, bells, ribbon, led lights – whatever you find to give that festive cheery look. Finally you need to add a piece of wire to loop and form a hook at the back centre. This would also work by using a metal coat-hanger (the type you get with your dry cleaning) and this could be stretched to form a circle shape with the foliage wired round – this means you then have a hook with which to hang it. Get creative and have a go.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version is now in excess of 30 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to receive the electronic version please send your email address to marionne.locke@btinternet.com. We are looking to do our bit to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies. Your contribution will help. THANK YOU.

CAR PARKING For the 9.15am Service you can park in the Village Hall car park but only ON THE GRAVEL as this will allow the hirers of the hall to park on the tarmac and unload from their cars, etc. We respectfully ask that any visitors to the church and churchyard who park outside the church leave enough space for people to walk safely along the pavement as there have been occasions when walkers have had to walk into the road. Thank you.

50/50 CLUB

Congratulations to our October winners, who were:

1 st :	£35	No. 30	Sue McKinley of Upshire
2 nd :	£25	No. 18	Joyce Polzin of Waltham Abbey
3 rd :	£15	No. 29	Mike McKinley of Upshire

Good luck and thank you to everyone who enters, all profits go towards church projects.

STAMPS!

Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins – many charities can use them to raise funds. At the moment we are supporting the Herts and Essex Air Ambulance. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn and Dave at 94 Upshire Road and left in the porch. Note: please remember to leave about ½” of envelope around the stamp. Thank you.

FLY TIPPING

If you see anyone fly tipping in the forest, please take a note of the registration number of the vehicle, the make of the vehicle and any other information which might help track the perpetrators and then pass this information to the Corporation of London. If you find any fly tipped rubbish please report it to the Corporation on the number below. The sooner such instances are reported, the better chance there is of finding out who is responsible.

The number to ring is **0208 532 1010** which is a **24** hour number and messages will be passed onto the duty team.

FREE FOOD FOR YOU

No assessment or referral needed. Just drop in. We will have all the basic groceries and essentials for you and your family.

Open every Monday and Friday between 11.30am and 1.30pm at **13 SUN STREET**.

If you require urgent support please contact us: 01992 842642, email info.3food4u@gmail.com
Please note: you will be required to adhere to all the latest social distancing rules. Volunteers and donations would be greatly appreciated.

Working in partnership with Waltham Abbey Town Council, Rotary Clubs of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill & Chigwell, Voluntary Action, The Lions Club and Gandhi Oriental Foods.

MOTORISTS BEWARE!

With so many more visitors coming to Epping Forest this year, the deer have moved from their forest glades and meadows out into the surrounding fields but in getting there they have to cross roads and that is where the danger to motorists starts. This month is the last of the deer rutting season so we must be very careful when driving on any of the local roads this winter. Please drive slowly below the local speed limit to save deers lives and higher insurance bills.

ANAGRAM

The answer to the anagram is REVELATION.

SHOEBOXES

WOW! Thank you so much to everyone who donated filled shoeboxes and items for the Blythswood Care Shoebox Appeal. I had hoped to reach 100 this year (as I do every year!) but really expecting less than normal as we've not had events at church and not met up with so many people. BUT – you did us proud, with a total of **120** boxes. This is the most we've ever achieved.

It was lovely that so many of our Teas regulars came from far and wide to donate filled boxes, items to go in them or sent cheques as donations. Well done, everyone, but a special thank you to Lauren and her mum Heather from Magdalen Laver who gave 30 boxes full to the brim. That's dedication!

Thank you all again, and remember to start saving your shoeboxes now! Lots of us had difficulty getting hold of boxes this year and Lauren even went online to get some! Boxes (and any items to go into the boxes) can be left at 94 Upshire Road, EN9 3SS.

Wishing you all a happy Christmas. Lyn and Dave.

CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

Thank you to the people who ordered Christmas Puddings. We made a few extra and have available 3 at £3.50 (1lb), 1 at £4.70 (1½lb) and 1 at £6.50 (2lb). First come, first served! Phone Lyn on 01992 711573 if you are interested.

GROWERS CORNER

Having had the first frost of winter your non-frost hardy plants should all be indoors by now in a greenhouse or conservatory. If not, protected by horticultural fleece and straw.

Roses can be lightly pruned now to prevent 'wind rock' with the final pruning in February. New roses, shrubs, canes and trees are best planted from now up to the end of next February while they are dormant for best results.

Once all the leaves have fallen from the trees rake them up and place on your compost heap with a weight on top of them so that they do not blow away after all your hard work. Make sure you have not left any leaves on the lawn as come spring you may find a few bare patches where the leaves have rotted down.

Some people like a very tidy garden and cut everything back to the ground but have a thought for wildlife and the plants themselves; their foliage protects the plant from frost and the seed heads supply food for the wildlife through the cold spells of winter. As my old Gran used to say, 'her garden was at its best in winter under a few inches of snow as you could not see any difference between hers and any other garden.'

To aid wildlife during winter a pile of logs and twigs in a corner – not to be removed until late spring – will help some; a bought or home-made bug hotel will also be appreciated and a bird table that can be viewed from a downstairs window will give hours of enjoyment during the winter months for both the birds and yourselves. Make sure your bird table has fresh water daily and that no food gets on the ground as it could lead to a rodent problem. Bird feeders can be obtained in various sizes so large birds do not take all the food and small birds can feed in peace.

Have you checked on your broad beans and sweet peas in your cold frame? Some spot watering may be required and also in the greenhouse – best time 9 – 11am then you can have a hot drink once you have put the hose pipe or watering can away.

Now is the time to find your best bowls or basket to present your prepared bulbs for Christmas. Remove these bulbs from their dark storeroom, their growth will be yellow/white in colour but in a few days will turn green. Place the bulbs into their containers – odd numbers look best – covering the bulb roots and part of the bulb with compost to stabilise them, and keep the compost moist. Do not over water, ensure that the bulbs get plenty of daylight and they will be in flower for Christmas.

With foliage from the garden you may consider making a front door wreath and/or a table centrepiece for Christmas. Good luck but be careful of candles as a fire hazard. Alternatively use battery operated night lights to give a similar effect.

Happy Christmas everyone! Steve

Have I been in lockdown too long?

I have just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster and they agree it is not looking good! I did not mention anything to the washing machine as it always puts a spin on things – and certainly not the fridge as it has been acting very cold lately. In the end the iron straightened me out and said no situation is too pressing. The Hoover was very unsympathetic... and told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and said everything would soon blow over. The toilet looked a bit flushed and the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and the curtains said (yes, you've guessed it) I should pull myself together!

Christmas isn't about the love of presents, it's about the presence of love.

Polly Hudson

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, HIGH BEACH

CAROLS by Your CANDLELIGHT

CAROLS with TALES of the COUNTRYSIDE

A 'virtual' Informal Carols Wednesday 16th December at 7pm

We supply the Carols, you supply the Candles
Sing along in the comfort of your home!

FREE with an option to donate to our chosen charities

The event will be streamed on YouTube at the following link
<https://youtu.be/W3ACExdrPG4> or search for 'Carols by Your Candlelight'

Tales and anecdotes by Jane Begley, Sheila Green and Stephen Fellowes
Brought to you by The Church of the Holy Innocents, High Beach, Loughton IG10 4BF

The Twelve Carols of Christmas

As part of 'Carols by Your Candlelight', Choral8 and friends have recorded twelve popular Christmas carols.

Now we need you to help us arrange them in order so that we can establish the favourite

The twelve carols are:
As with Gladness Men of Old
Away in a Manger
Ding Dong Merrily on High
God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen
Good King Wenceslas
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
It Came upon the Midnight Clear
O Come all ye Faithful
O Little Town of Bethlehem
Once in Royal David's City
Silent Night

While Shepherds Watched their Flock by Night

Please go to our online voting for at <https://forms.gle/ukHeHaDL7CgYkkJa8> and make your selection.

Your vote is anonymous and you won't have to leave any details. If you don't have internet access, then text your choice to 07510 195877 or call and leave your choice on the voicemail.

Christmas Frustration????

I said to God, upon my knees, 'O Lord, I am so cross!
That gift I sent to Aunt Denise within the post is lost!
That tree I bought for forty pounds (well, just a penny less)
Its needles lie upon the ground – it looks a total mess!'
"I know," said God, "I understand, I sent my Son, you know,
He came to Earth, just as I'd planned, two thousand years ago.
Was born within a stable bare – the cattle heard Him cry;
He spoke of love, men didn't care, they led Him out to die."
"No gift was given with such love, no higher price was paid.
He left His throne of light above, for sin His life to trade.
But even after all these years, this gift you men eschew,
So Christmas is a time of tears, for Me, as well as you."

By Nigel Beeton