



CHRISTMAS EDITION

Today we welcome back Bishop Martin to lead our worship on the Fourth Sunday of Advent and in this Christmas edition of the newsletter we include seasonal messages from Fathers John, Tim and Toby.

Christmas Services. Services over the Christmas period are as follows:

Christmas Eve (24th) First Mass of Christmas at 7pm

Christmas Morning (25th) Mass at 10am

Sunday 27th December - Mass at 10am

Father John will be leading all of these services

The church is open for private prayer and reflection on Wednesdays from 10am-1.30pm, this is for individual persons, single households or support bubbles, to enter the church to pray on their own and not as part of a group. If you come into the church and find others there, please maintain social distancing. Also please read the notices and comply with instructions about hand sanitising etc.

A Christmas reflection from The Very Reverend Dr John Hall KCVO



Christmas this year will be very different for many of us from our normal family get-togethers. But we need to be cautious and to keep safe. So, many of us will be less connected with each other than usual, more confined to our own homes.

But that is no bad thing. It may allow us a time to reflect, a chance to have a more thoughtful Christmas than the usual.

Christmas is a wonderful celebration, that, in truth, means a great deal to so many people who are not practising Christians, but who have a proper sense of the meaning and purpose of Christmas. Our normal celebration is so set about with evocations of a 19th century past: Charles Dickens and 'A Christmas Carol'; emotion and family feeling and love all around.

But the heart of the matter is God's amazing generosity and love for us human beings: who sent his Son to live as a human being, and to teach and heal, and then to suffer and die on a cross. No story in the world can ever be greater and more powerful than this wonderful story; because our Lord Jesus Christ did not simply die on the cross, he rose again from the dead and he lives and reigns for ever. He is our king, our example, our guide. We are all subject to him; his mercy and grace can fill our lives. We can and should reflect his love in all that we do.

Join us at 7 pm on Christmas Eve and if you will at 10 am on Christmas Day. Let us all have a truly happy Christmas; and may God bless you with his love.

Carol Singing in St George's Car Park - Do not forget that our choir and Derek's brass ensemble will be playing carols in the church car-park this afternoon commencing at 3.00pm. Social distancing to be maintained and bubbles of 6 allowed, you are invited to attend this pre-Christmas get together

A Christmas message from Father Tim



St. John's Vicarage, West Worthing

My Dear Friends at St. George's.

This letter comes to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Let's hope and pray 2021 is a better one for everyone!



I am settling very well into parish life in my two new parishes in Worthing and getting to know my new parishioners who have made me very welcome. The sea front is about a 10-minute walk from the vicarage, so I have been enjoying nice bracing walks along the seafront.

I am training a young Curate here in Worthing called Fr. Josh. He is delightful, young, and brings lots of energy to the parishes in the same way Fr. Toby did at St. George's. Talking of Fr. Toby, I hear from him from time to time and he is well and enjoying life in Swindon. However, we were saying to each other just recently, how much we were both missing St. George's. It really was a wonderful 6 years for me and 4 years for Fr. Toby. St. George's Whyke really made a very big impression on us both.

I am now getting ready for my first Christmas in my new parishes and trying to share myself out fairly and evenly between both churches which is not always easy. Carol services are off sadly (how I miss singing!) but we will be able to have Midnight Mass which will be a great joy. We are also having a "deconstructed" Christingle celebration which will be interesting.

I am so fortunate to have a team of 9 retired clergy who assist me in both churches for which I am eternally grateful. I am so pleased to know that you are being so well cared for during the interregnum and I am sure the New Year will be interesting and exciting for you all at St. Georges.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas. Stay safe and every blessing to you all.

Love, joy and peace

Fr. Tim

An Appeal: After a year which has been 'so hard', with many residents unable to see their families properly for more than nine months, Marriott House and Lodge Nursing Home said a Christmas card from the community would 'show them that people are thinking of them'.

Sarah Harding, head of activities said: "A card will bring such a smile to everyone that receives one. Up until now all visits have been socially distanced in the garden, through a window or on the phone. We have been doing many Skype calls, etc, to help maintain relationships. The staff have worked so hard to help everyone through this very difficult time."

Among those, who would particularly appreciate a card at Marriott House and Lodge are; Pauline; Joan; Kevin; Muriel; Barbara; Brenda; Annie; Florence; Audrey; Margaret; Ian; Christine; Gordon; Connie; Molly; Betty; Dolores; Connie; Kathleen and Margaret.

Cards can be posted to Tollhouse Close, Chichester, PO19 1SG.

Father Toby and Roy have both been unwell with the virus over the last fortnight. Fr Toby reports that they have both made a good recovery but have been left a bit enfeebled! He sends this Christmas message to us at St George's.



Roy and I would like to wish everyone at St. George's a joyful and blessed Christmas.

So much has happened this past year, that it feels longer than ten months ago that we moved from Chichester. The pandemic has certainly provided a strange backdrop to the start of my ministry here in Swindon. I spent the first weeks as parish priest here celebrating Mass online from a little make-shift altar in the vicarage and trying to care pastorally for people I hadn't yet met face-to-face.

Despite that strange start, we feel very happy and settled here. The parish covers the central part of the town of Swindon, with three very different, diverse congregations and an area with a lot of social need. Every day I give thanks for everything I learned from all of you at St George's. And I hope, when some normality returns, to be able to welcome you to Swindon to see where we are now.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Happy Christmas! Love from Fr Toby

The church choir are returning today, members will arrive at 9.30am for a 15-minute rehearsal entering via the South Porch where Track & Trace details will be recorded and a temperature check taken. They will remain apart from the main congregation and during the service they will remain socially distanced from each other leaving again via the South Porch.

Please note: It is important that members of the congregation do not enter via the South Porch but continue to attend through the double red doors.

Seating Arrangements in Church It is heartening to find more parishioners returning to Sunday Mass, including young families. We have been looking at ways of increasing the seating arrangements whilst still conforming with Government & CofE guidelines.

You will find that today there are more blocks of seats on either side aisle and at the back of the church to accommodate families. If attending alone, we ask that, wherever possible, you leave these seats unless directed by a Steward, we ask also that seats are not moved around to accommodate 'must sit together' situations. We appreciate your co-operation in this matter.

Amazon Smile - Just a little reminder that if you buy from Amazon the church could benefit from your purchasing. Just search for Amazon Smile and when invited enter the church's charity number: 1133301 or enter the following website <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1133301-0> It should work in exactly the same way as the normal Amazon website. Amazon will pay the church a 0.5% of the net price of the purchased goods, excluding VAT, postage & packaging. Although only a small percentage if everyone uses it (and it doesn't cost you anything) we could generate additional income for St George's. Why not share the details with your family and friends.

A sincere thank you to Sue Bainbridge, Tom Batting, their helpers and the contributors for the Christmas mini markets and raffle.

This Sunday's minimarket will be selling Floral Christmas Table decorations each with a candle. They will cost in the region of £7 depending on availability of flowers. We are only able to make a limited number so it will be first come first served. Thank you to all who contributed to the raffle which has to date raised £140.00. It will be drawn at the end of the service on 20th December.

Christmas flowers for the Church, which will be less than our usual display this year, will be arranged by the flower team on Wednesday 23rd December at 10.00. All are welcome.

Ken's Reflections at Christmas.

Christmas will be different this year, unlike any that you or I have known before, and I have known eighty-eight of them. I am always excited as the day approaches, remembering Christmasses past.

In wartime when my dad would make toys for us, I remember a wooden fort with castellated towers, parapets and a drawbridge, inhabited with lead soldiers, Red Indians on horseback, farmyard animals and a Dinky Spitfire, I have just realized the incongruity of them all in a medieval fort.

As I got older it was books, I still have some of them 'The 'History of the World', all condensed into one volume, was a great favourite.

Later, as newly-weds, living away and deciding whose family to visit for Christmas Dinner without offending the other's and ending up eating two dinners!

Then when we had children of our own, hiding the parcels from prying eyes until the day, before being woken at 3.00am with 'Has he been yet?' reply: 'No! and he won't come unless you go back to bed!'

And as they got older, in their late teens, hiding the booze when they brought their friends around late in the evening.

Now as a Grandfather I have to send out a message in late October: 'No socks', for I have enough of them to kit the whole British Army - scarves, ties and gloves too!

Nevertheless, Christmas time still remains magic, and this year I will particularly miss the Carols and Readings service at St George's, with my annual epic recitation of John Betjeman's 'Christmas', the last three verses of which, for me, sum up the Festival of Christmas and its true meaning:

And is it true?	And is it true?	And is it true?	For if it is,	No love that in a family dwells,
This most tremendous tale of all,	No loving fingers tying strings	Around those tissue fripperies,	The sweet and silly Christmas things,	No carolling in frosty air,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,	Bath salts and inexpensive scent	And hideous tie so kindly meant,		Nor all the steeple-shaking bells
A Baby in an ox's stall?				Can with this single Truth compare
The Maker of the stars and sea,				That God was man in Palestine
Became a Child on earth for me?				And lives today in Bread and Wine.

The Editors wish all and every one of our readers a Happy and Joyous Christmas and a Serene New Year

Items for future Newsletters.

There will be no newsletter next week, it will resume on Sunday January 3rd.

We still welcome all contributions, if there any items that you would like to share with us please send them to the editors. How about your reflection on 2020?

Ken Green - kaagreen@talktalk.net - 01243 789869.

Geraldine Burrows - gmburrows@hotmail.co.uk - 01243 539620.