

December Letter

Dear Friends,

They do say that the years rush by even faster as you get older, because each year is a progressively smaller part of your life experience. Whether that's the reason or not - I can't believe where this year has gone! I would guess that most of you reading this will feel too that we have hardly got beyond summer time, when the focus all around us seems to be turning towards Christmas.

Now I love Christmas - I'm not one of those who dread the approaching season, because of the work involved, or perhaps unhappy memories which are triggered afresh each year. Nor am I one of those people who rather like to mock those of us who will confess to enjoying Christmas - as though the "cool" thing to do is to be cynical and grumpy till it's all behind us again.

Some of the clichés of Christmas broadcasting don't help here - the soaps with their blockbuster episodes of massive dysfunctional families getting together and falling out over the turkey and pudding - never to speak again - until next year. But like all soaps, there is a grain of truth for some in these stories. There are sadly some unhappy families, who seem unable to live together in love and consideration for each other. Some families have suffered tragedies and loss at Christmas time, and cannot but mark these anniversaries with sad hearts. With families spread far and wide today, some are lonely, and that seems to be underlined if you are alone at Christmas, and don't want to be.

Of course, there are always things we can do to mitigate this - a number of charities, especially those serving the homeless, make a special effort at Christmas to provide some home comforts, and rely very heavily on volunteers willing to spend their Christmas Day serving others. Every year, a lot of people do just that. In our own diocese, Inn Churches will be opening churches to the homeless again for the winter months - through into March this time - and they too will look for volunteers to help.

But it is important that we approach Christmas with our minds and hearts prepared too in terms of our faith. Many of you know that we try to mark

Advent in our home, as we do in church, and try not to plunge too quickly into Christmas celebrations. Anticipation of a celebration can be a very positive experience; Advent encourages us to clear the decks, to be still in our minds and hearts, to acknowledge the great gift that came into the world with the birth of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and to be ready above all for Jesus's coming.

This year, we are holding a Quiet Afternoon in Advent, on Sunday 15th December. We will start with a Bring & Share lunch at 12.30 pm, and then spend some Quiet Time together, to help us to prepare for Christmas. I mentioned anticipation above - it's not only a positive experience in general terms, but it is especially so in church. Hence the title of this Quiet Afternoon, taken from a line of one of R.S. Thomas's poems: "The meaning is in the waiting".

Have a blessed Advent, and a happy Christmas,
Jean Bailey

DECEMBER PARISH DIARY

SUNDAY 1ST

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| | 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (<i>Revd. Richard &</i> |
| Tuesday 3rd | 11.00 a.m. Service at Crossley House Care Home |
| | 7.00 p.m. Prayer meeting in Vestry |
| | 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing |
| Wednesday 4th | 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. James's |
| | 6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts |
| | 7.00 p.m. Holy Communion in Chapel (said) |
| | 7.30 p.m. PCC meeting in Vestry |
| Thursday 5th | 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer |
| | 4.30 p.m. K:Ing's Way Club |
| | 6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts |
| | 7.30 p.m. Scouts |

SUNDAY 8TH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| | 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (<i>Revd. Ian Slater</i>) |
| Tuesday 10th | 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing |
| Wednesday 11th | 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion |
| | 11.30 a.m. Ings Way Lunch Day |

Thursday 12th 6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
 4.30 p.m. K:Ing's Way Club
 6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
 7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 15TH THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (*Revd. Ian Slater*)
 12.30 p.m. Quiet Afternoon
 Monday 16th 6.00 p.m. Carol singing at Allerton Congregational church
 Tuesday 17th 7.30 p.m. Adult Tap Dancing
 Wednesday 18th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
 6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
 Thursday 19th 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer
 4.30 p.m. K:Ing's Way Club
 6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
 7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 22ND FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10.00 a.m. Nativity Parade Service (*Revd. Ian Slater and Karen Wheelhouse*)
 3.00 p.m. Service of Readings and Carols
 Tuesday 24th 11.00 p.m. Midnight Eucharist (*Revd. Ian Slater*)
 Wednesday 25th 10.00 a.m. Family Communion (*Revd. Ian Slater*)

SUNDAY 29TH FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion (*Revd. Ian Slater*)

Hats, Gloves and Scarves

Over the past few years the church has supported the scheme for donating hats, gloves and scarves for the use of sellers of 'The Big Issue' Magazine. If anyone has any items they wish to give, (preferably in dark colours) please see Val Muff who will take them to the Big Issue Office for distribution. If the forthcoming winter is anything like as cold as the last one, they certainly will be very much appreciated.

Christmas at St. Saviour's

As always, we will be celebrating Christmas in style at St. Saviour's. Do please come and join us whenever you can!

On **Tuesday 3rd December**, we will be visiting Crossley House Care Home on Thornton Road to bring a little Christmas cheer to the residents from 11.00 a.m.—all are welcome to join us.

On **Sunday 15th December**, The Revd. Richard and Mrs. Jean Bailey will lead another **Quiet Afternoon**, starting with a bring and share lunch at 12.30 p.m. The theme is “The Meaning is in the Waiting” and the quiet time will run from 1.45 to 4.00 p.m., with three short addresses.

Churches Together in Allerton and Fairweather Green have organised a joint **carol singing** session at Allerton Congregational Church from 6.00 p.m. on **Monday 16th December**—so wrap up warmly and come along!

Our young people will bring the Christmas story to us with the **Nativity Parade Service** on **Sunday 22nd December** at 10.00 a.m - always a most enjoyable, lively and entertaining service. That same afternoon at **3.00 p.m.** we will again be telling the Christmas Story at our **Service of Readings and Carols** when we sing traditional and some lesser-known carols and hear readings from the Bible and other sources. To revive us after these exertions, there will be mulled wine, soft drinks and mince pies in the hall afterwards.

On **Christmas Eve**, we will welcome in Christmas Day at the **Midnight Eucharist at 11.00 p.m.** And on Christmas Morning, there will be an informal **Family Communion at 10.00 a.m.**

Looking ahead to **January, the Parade Service on 19th**, will be the Christingle Service at which we celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World.

Throughout December, there will be the collecting Pillar Box out at the back of church for your donations to the Martin House Children's Hospice at Wetherby and the Save the Children Fund.

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

A great big “thank you” to everyone who has wrapped or filled a shoebox, knitted items or donated goods to go in the boxes and/or provided money for transportation. The back of church has been a hive of activity over the past weeks with willing helpers filling shoeboxes with the items that have been donated. All that we couldn’t squeeze into the boxes, the surplus hats etc. will go to the depot, along with the filled boxes, to complete boxes there. So far we have about 103 boxes ready for collection on Tuesday 19th November, which is a splendid effort and will make a big difference to the lives of children in and Liberia and Albania.

The connections Samaritan’s Purse has developed in the Philippines as a result of its shoebox distributions have meant it has been in a position to offer immediate help to victims of the recent typhoon. Patrick Seger, the Disaster Alert Response Team leader said “Our hygiene kits and family food packets are being prepared for distribution in the northern part of Cebu island. This area was hard hit with 70-90% of the homes and churches either damaged or destroyed. We are working closely with our church partners there.”

The Typhoon in the Philippines

Below is an extract from an email from Roger Pullin, a member of the Society of Ordained Scientists, who lives in the Philippines:

“Natural disasters are coming thick and fast here. The Bohol/Cebu earthquake was bad, but this typhoon, with its tsunami-like storm surges and off-the-scale winds, has been truly awful. The death toll is thought to be above 10,000. There were no problems in Manila. For us it was just a normal rainy season day. My wife Tess' family hail from Catbalogan, Samar, which was not in the direct path of the typhoon but will still have experienced significant damage, deaths and injuries. As far as we know, while most communications are still down, our friends and family there are OK. Please do pray for the bereaved, for those suffering, and for all concerned with relief efforts. It is really hard to get help in with airports and ports so damaged and with no power etc.”

Richard Bailey

The Meaning is in the Waiting

A Quiet Afternoon for Advent

Sunday, 15th December, St. Saviour's Church.

12:30 - Bring and Share Lunch.

1.45 - 4 p.m. Three short addresses,
each followed by a Quiet Time.

Everyone welcome.

Bible Reading Notes- The Bible Reading Fellowship

If anyone wishes to take out a subscription for the 'New Daylight' Bible Reading Notes please have a word with Val Muff. The price for the year is £15.00 and the notes are supplied in 3 booklets to cover 4 months each. Readers' comments on New Daylight include the following:- "I just wanted to say how much I appreciate the notes for helping to keep me going with reading the Bible and shedding light on demanding passages." As you will be aware, there are various Bible reading schemes available, so if you wish to see if 'New Daylight' Notes would be suitable, please do ask to see a copy.

The Children's Society

The year has flown by and it is time to empty the Children's Society Boxes. Please will box holders hand their box in for emptying as soon as possible. Also, if any one feels they can take a box to support their valuable work this would be much appreciated. A quarterly Newsletter entitled 'Voice' is published by the Charity, outlining the projects they are involved with and how donations are used, which makes for interesting and informative reading. If anyone would like to read this, please have a word with me. Also available is a Christmas card and gift brochure.

Val Muff

A Christmas Quiz

Are these statements true or false?

1. The town of Bethlehem is just over 20 miles from Jerusalem.
2. A pheasant is one of numerous birds mentioned in the song: 'The 12 days of Christmas'.
3. The first light bulbs used to decorate a Christmas tree were switched on at London's Great Exhibition in 1851.
4. After leaving Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph and Jesus went into Egypt.
5. The Christmas stamps produced by Royal Mail in 2009 depicted the Nativity on stained glass windows.
6. The second line of the carol 'Once in Royal David's city' is: 'Stood a smelly cattle-shed'.
7. 'Vrolyk Kerstfeest' means 'Happy Christmas' in the Slovakian language.
8. The carol 'Silent Night' was originally written in Russia.
9. Poinsettia plants were first discovered in Mexico by Joel Poinsett in the mid 1800s.
10. There is a village in Wales called Bethlehem.
11. The story for the film 'The Snowman' was written by Roald Dahl.
12. Christmas activities were banned in 1647 following an Act of Parliament introduced by Oliver Cromwell.

(Answers at foot of page)

1. False (it's only 5); 2. False; 3. False (lightbulbs were not commercially available until after 1879); 4. True; 5. True; 6. False (it's "lowly"); 7. False (it's Dutch); 8. False (it was written in Austria) 9. True; 10. True; 11. False (It was written by Raymond Briggs); 12. True (Christmas was an illegal festival for 13 years.)

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Thank you Notes

One Christmas, a mother decreed that she was no longer going to remind her children of their thank-you note duties. As a result their grandmother never received acknowledgments of the generous cheques she had given.

The next year things were different, however.

"The children came over in person to thank me," the grandparent told a friend triumphantly.

"How wonderful!" the friend exclaimed. "What do you think caused the change in behaviour?"

"Oh, that's easy," the grandmother replied. "This year I didn't sign the cheques."

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Mass Marriages in Bradford and Manchester !

Ian Mc Alpine.

During the early 1800s Bradford and Manchester were becoming increasingly industrialised which led to an enormous increase in the populations of both towns - neither was yet a city. This led to serious overcrowding, dreadful housing conditions and many social problems. A less obvious difficulty was a shortage of churches. Since mediaeval times Bradford and Manchester had both been served by large collegiate churches (run by colleges of priests) which later became cathedrals. The similarities between the development of Bradford and Manchester where I lived until 1998 - *Worstedopolis* and *Cottonopolis* - are remarkable. By 1800 a few other churches, both Anglican and nonconformist, had been established in both towns but most people still attended the ancient collegiate foundations, certainly preferring to marry and have their children baptised there. Nonconformists were not allowed to marry in their own churches until 1837 which made the situation even worse.

Indeed, Manchester Collegiate Church was well-known for its mass marriages and baptisms in the early 19th century, which were vividly described in "A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts in the Summer of 1835", by Sir George Head, an early guidebook published in 1835. "I attended the Old Church in Manchester one Monday morning, in order to witness the solemnization of several marriages I had reason to suppose were then and there to take place. I had heard on the preceding Sunday the banns proclaimed as follows: 'For the first time of asking, sixty-five; for the second time, seventy-two; for the third time, sixty. Total one hundred and ninety-seven.'" (!)

The actual weddings were even more extraordinary. Head continues: "When all was ready and the church-doors opened, the clergyman and clerk betook themselves to the vestry; and the people who were about to be married, and their friends, seated themselves in the body of the church, opposite the communion table ... Not less than fifty people were assembled. ... Presently a sudden buzz broke out - 'The clergyman's coming' and all was perfectly silent. About twelve couples were to be married - the rest were called upon to arrange themselves altogether round the altar. And then addressing them all together - 'Now, all of you,

give your hats to some person to hold'. Although the marriage service appeared ... to be generally addressed to the whole party the clergyman was scrupulously exact in obtaining the accurate responses from each individual. However, a chaplain is said to have united the wrong parties, and when the circumstance was represented to him replied - "Pair as you go out; you're all married; pair as you go out!" And each man failed not to find his mate."

In 1816 a journalist named Henry Crabbe Robinson described the conduct of baptisms at the old church in a similar way:-

"Strolling into the Old Church at Manchester, I heard a strange noise, which I should elsewhere have mistaken for the bleating of lambs. Going to the spot, a distant aisle, I found a row of women standing in files, each with a babe in her arms. The minister went down the line, sprinkling each infant as he went. I suppose the efficiency of the sprinkling - I mean the fact that the water did touch - was evidenced by a distant squeal from each. Words were muttered by the priest in his course, but one prayer served for all. This I thought to be a christening by wholesale; and I could not repress the irreverent thought that, being in the metropolis of manufactures, the aid of steam or machinery might be called in [!]" More like a cattle market than a church!

Head's and Crabbe's extraordinary accounts are borne out by the church registers which show that sometimes dozens of ceremonies took place in the Church in a single day. Although I have been unable to find anecdotal accounts of similar situations for Bradford the high numbers of baptisms and marriages recorded on many days suggest that the same sort of thing happened here 200 years ago.

And in Manchester Collegiate Church the arrangements became even more confusing on Whit Sunday, 1812 when my great-great-grandfather, John Ravenscroft was baptised on the very same day his parents got married!

Sums up Christmas ...

Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: Peace on Earth; Goodwill to men; and batteries not included.

Christmas Day 1914

"My Dearest Mother, Just returned to billets [quarters] after the most extraordinary Christmas in the trenches you could possibly imagine. Words fail me completely in trying to describe it, but here it goes!" So began an amazing letter dated Monday, December 28, 1914, by British soldier Captain Sir Edward Hulse in the midst of World War I. The letter received wide circulation both in England and in the U.S. Sadly, the captain was killed in action two and a half months later in France.

It was Wednesday, December 23, when the captain and his troops were ordered to the front line against German troops. The exchange of fire between the warring armies was intense. However, early Friday morning, on December 25, the shooting by the Germans began to subside. By 8:00 a.m., they were not firing at all. At 8:30 Captain Hulse was startled by an unexpected sight. Unarmed, four Germans left their protected positions and began walking towards the British side. Unsure of their intentions and not wanting them to get too close, the captain and one of his men headed out to meet them. Weapons from both sides were pointed at them.

As the men huddled together, Captain Hulse questioned their purpose. "What orders do you have from your officers?" "None," the Germans replied. They came out from their trenches out of goodwill. They wanted to wish their British counterparts a merry Christmas. They said that unless ordered otherwise they were going to withhold their fire. After thirty minutes, the English party escorted the Germans back to their line of barbed wire. They parted after a friendly exchange of British cigarettes and German cigars. Then Captain Hulse went immediately to headquarters to report the incident.

Returning at 10 a.m., he couldn't believe what his eyes saw in the open space between the two armies: "I saw, to my amazement, not only a crowd of about 150 British and Germans ... [in front of] my lines, but six or seven such crowds, all the way down ... extending toward the 8th Division on our right." The only things left in the trenches were the weapons.

Stunned, Hulse observed that the soldiers "were fraternizing in the most genuine possible manner. Every sort of souvenir was exchanged ... photos of families shown, etc." The captain exclaimed, "It was absolutely

astounding, and if I had seen it on film I should have sworn that it was faked!" A British soldier captured the prevailing sentiment. "It's only right that we should show that we could desist from hostilities on a day which is so important in both countries."

The captain went on to describe the day itself. "From foul rain and wet, the weather had cleared up the night before to a sharp frost, and it was a perfect day, everything white, and the silence seemed extraordinary, after the usual din. From all sides birds seemed to arrive, and we hardly ever see a bird generally. Later in the day I fed about 50 sparrows outside my dug-out, which shows how complete the silence was."

During this lull in hostilities, an agreement for the care of the dead was reached. Soldiers who had been killed near the opposing side were carried out to the halfway line where they were honoured and buried. Personal effects of the dead were exchanged. The sounds of war were stilled, and shalomic peace emerged for a day among soldiers who were otherwise locked in a struggle for life and death.

- - This Closing Paragraph has been Added -

We live in a hostile, violent world. Yet the message of Christmas is still one of peace. What this means is that there is no heart which cannot be softened, no marriage which cannot be restored, no division which cannot be bridged through a spirit of unity centred around Bethlehem's babe. May the peace that He brings be yours and your family's this season for a very Merry Christmas indeed.

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K:Ing's Way Club

The K:Ing's Way Club will be taking a break over Christmas, with the last session on 19th December. They will be back, raring to go, on Thursday 9th January at 4.30 p.m.—so come along and join them if you are of Primary school age!

46TH BRADFORD NORTH SCOUT GROUP

JAMBOREE

The World Scout Jamboree is a gathering of tens of thousands of Scouts and Guides from almost every country in the world who, for ten days live together, experience each others' cultures, take part in exciting activities and have an amazing adventure.

The first World Scout Jamboree took place in London in 1920 and has continued since, always uniting Scouts and Guides with messages of peace and global understanding.

We are delighted that our Explorer Scout, Tamara Vaughan, has been selected to be part of the West Yorkshire County Scout Contingent Team for the next World Jamboree. Between 28 July and 8 August 2015, 3,500 Scouts and Guides from across the UK will be joining others from around the world in Kirara-hama, Japan for the 23rd World Scout Jamboree.

The theme of the jamboree will be 'Wa' meaning harmony, unity, friendship and peace allowing a 'spirit of unity' to share others' cultures and faiths, take part in adventurous activities and grow as global citizens to tackle world issues.

The event is timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the United States atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, between which the Jamboree site is situated. Memorial events are planned.

During the next eighteen months we will be working hard to help Tamara raise part of the £2900 needed to fund her place on this once in a lifetime experience. Watch out for frequent updates on Tamara's training experiences and fund raising events.

Twenty-four members of our Group attended the Bradford Remembrance Day Service in the city centre on 10th November. It was a sunny, crisp morning as we all marched up from City Hall to the Cenotaph for the service. There were hymns, readings, the laying of wreaths and prayers before we all returned for the salute taken by the Lord Mayor.

We are looking forward to the festive season. 20 Beavers and Cubs will attend Winter Wonderland at Bradley Woods Campsite, Brighouse on the 30th November. There will be crafts and games, cooking and a visit to Santa with a Christingle service to end the afternoon's entertainment.

Following the church parade service on December 22nd we shall be having our Group Christmas party at Laser Zone on Thornton Road.

Bev Howard, Group Scout Leader

A Quiet Life

I had a quiet life
until the angel interrupted me:
everything going along smoothly
in the normal way.
Suddenly I was full of grace
(Had I been full of grace before?)
and God was with me,
and my quiet life was over.

It was like going through a sudden door
in a wall that had not been there:
a door into a different kind of life,
beyond imagination.
I was disturbed, of course, and afraid:
something impossible
was going to happen.

Something that didn't happen
in a quiet life:
something noisy.
I could see that I was going to have to think about it:
to ponder it in my heart –
but I had already said yes by then.

If an angel calls
into your quiet life
you have to say yes
... Don't you?

By Tim Lenton

26th December: On the Feast of Stephen -

David Winter- former Head of Religious Broadcasting, BBC

We all know that it was on the feast of Stephen that 'good king Wenceslas looked out'. After all, it's in a Christmas carol - but why? There's nothing about Christmas in it: a splendid young page who rustled up some flesh, wine and logs, an old man out in the snow ('deep and crisp and even') and a kindly monarch. But Christmas? The clue is in 'the feast of Stephen', which falls on 26th December, or 'Boxing Day', as we know it. This Stephen was the first Christian martyr. (You can read his story in the book of Acts). He was a member of the church in Jerusalem in its very early days, and was involved with six others in administering the allocation of food to those in need. The apostles, the leaders of the church, feeling it wasn't appropriate for them to abandon preaching and 'serve tables', selected these seven to do the job for them. Stephen, however, quickly revealed hidden gifts as an eloquent spokesman for the Christian cause.

The Temple authorities, who had already had trouble with the apostles, were soon alerted to this new and hitherto unknown evangelist. They decided to make an example of him, thus firing a warning shot, as it were, across the bows of the apostles themselves. So they arrested Stephen and accused him of speaking against the two central elements of their religion - the 'holy place' (the Temple) and 'the customs Moses handed down to us' (the Law). It's always dangerous to criticise a monument or a custom!

Given the right to defend himself, Stephen instead launched into an eloquent and at times biting account of Jewish history, culminating in the accusation that they had committed the worst possible sin by killing the Messiah. Inflamed by his words, his hearers abandoned any pretence of legal impartiality, rushing towards him and dragging him out of the city to a place where they began to stone him to death. Stephen, the rank and file Christian, died under a hail of rocks for claiming that Mary's Son was the promised Messiah.

That, I suspect, is the reason why the first martyr is honoured on the day after we celebrate the birth of the Saviour. It's a bit like the myrrh in the gifts of the Wise Men - a reminder that the bitter shadow of a cross is never far away from this story.

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December Roll of Remembrance

3rd	Florence Baker	(1983)
4th	Ellen Ainsworth	(1937)
6th	Ellen Perkins	(1949)
7th	Sara Story	(1978)
	Emily Holmes	(1984)
	Edith Wilkinson	(1988)
9th	Doris Quin	(1993)
	George Boynton Smith	(1993)
12th	Gordon Waterworth	(1988)
14th	Alice Maud Barrett	(1961)
	Dorothy Cooper	(1974)
17th	Stuart Raistrick	(2010)
20th	Annie Jones	(1975)
21st	Jack Renton Newsome	(1941)
	Arthur Jackson	(1960)
	George Arthur Whiteley	(1974)
24th	Bernard Wigglesworth	(1972)
	Charlotte Harrison	(1981)
25th	Arthur Hind	(1982)
26th	Arthur Holmes	(1984)
27th	Frank Tonge	(1953)
29th	Leslie Redshaw	(2000)
30th	Irene Peck	(1993)

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