

## Letter from the Vicar

By the time you read this letter you may be feeling a bit fed up with the push for Christmas that started back in August! We are at late November, only just stepping into Advent but the shops have been filling up with Christmas merchandise since the end of September. Black Friday became another terrible imported custom which lasted for a week and one company boasted that theirs would last for 10 days!! During this time people were encouraged to spend more money than they had for things they did not need.

The Christmas lights have been up so long we no longer notice them. Are your stress levels rising as you look at your shopping list and the television tempts the children with even more cheap but silly, or technical and very expensive “toys”.

The bargaining as to which parents get the privilege of having the younger generations for Christmas Day is definitely over and someone is not entirely happy.

If this sounds like your experience then stop, take a deep breath, and take another breath and think. What you have been experiencing is not really Christmas. December is a time of wonderful anticipation as we wait to celebrate the memory of how we received a great gift from God - his only son.

There is a very special verse in the Bible that sums this up:

*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone that believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.*

*(John 3: 16).*

God cared so much about the human race that he came down to live with us: to share all the joy but also all the grief and the hardships of human life, and to show us a better way.

The two very special words in that passage are ‘love’ and ‘give’, and these are what Christmas is all about. Let us show our love for one another by giving – not elaborate gifts, but something thoughtful that says how much we care. Let us show our love for one another by

giving our time, just making time to catch up with family and friends, including the people we find it difficult to like. We can also show how much we love someone by giving way – ‘let me do the shopping this year’, or ‘I’ll cook dinner for everyone’ or just stopping to ask the question ‘What’s easiest for you?’

We can also show our love for God and Jesus by coming to church and singing ‘O come let us adore him’ with real feeling. It’s also a great time to be together as a family- so why not bring your children, grand children, Gran and cousins, and ask the neighbours along too? Highlights of our calendar include, Parade Sunday and Christmas Play on 18<sup>th</sup> December; Service of Readings and Carols on the 20<sup>th</sup>; Midnight Mass on the 24<sup>th</sup> and Christmas Day Eucharist on Christmas Morning.

We look forward to welcoming you, so we can start to celebrate Christmas for real.

My love and prayers for a peaceful Christmas season,

*Dorothy*

## **DECEMBER PARISH DIARY**

Thursday 1st	9.30 a.m.	Morning prayer
	6.00 p.m.	Beaver Scouts
	7.30 p.m.	Scouts

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### **SUNDAY 4TH      SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

	9.30 a.m.	Said Holy Communion
	10.00 a.m.	Refreshments in hall
	10.30 a.m.	All Age Worship
Tuesday 6th	10.45 a.m.	Holy Communion at Crossley House
	12.00 p.m.	Knit and Natter
	7.30 p.m.	Adult tap dancing
	7.30 p.m.	Going for Growth meeting
Wednesday 7th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at St. James’s
	4.00 p.m.	Advent Talk

	6.15 p.m.	Cub Scouts
Thursday 8th	9.30 a.m.	Morning prayer
	6.00 p.m.	Beaver Scouts
	7.30 p.m.	Scouts
Saturday 10th	10.30 a.m.	Councillors' surgeries

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SUNDAY 11TH      THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Tuesday 13th	12.00 p.m.	Knit and Natter
	7.30 p.m.	Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 14th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
	11.30 a.m.	Ing's Way Lunch Day
	3.00 p.m.	Advent Talk
	6.15 p.m.	Cub Scouts
Thursday 15th	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
	6.00 p.m.	Beaver Scouts
	7.30 p.m.	Scouts
Saturday 17th	4.00 p.m.	Carol singing at Morrison's

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SUNDAY 18TH      FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

	10.00 a.m.	Parade Service & Building of Crib
	11.00 a.m.	Messy Church party
Tuesday 20th	10.30 a.m.	Carol singing at Crossley House
	3.00 p.m.	Service of Readings and Carols
	7.30 p.m.	Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 21st	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at St. James's
Saturday 24th	11.00 p.m.	Midnight Eucharist

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SUNDAY 25TH      CHRISTMAS DAY

	10.00 a.m.	Family Communion
Wednesday 28th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Thursday 29th	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer

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## Looking forward to Christmas

As always, we have a full programme of events and services for the period leading up to Christmas. Please come along to as many as you wish!

27th November	10.00 a.m.	Blessing of the Posada
	11.00 a.m.	Messy Church
30th November	4.00-5.00 p.m.	Advent Talk (1)
4th December	9.30 a.m.	Said Communion
	10.30 a.m.	All Age Worship
6th December	3.00 p.m.	Mother's Union Advent Service
7th December	4.00-5.00 p.m.	Advent Talk (2)
11th December	10.00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
14th December	3.00-4.00 p.m.	Advent Talk (3)
17th December	4.00 p.m.	Carol Singing - Morrison's
18th December	10.00 a.m.	Parade Service & Building of the Crib
	11.00 a.m.	Messy Church party
20th December	10.30-11.30a.m.	Carol Singing at Crossley House
	3.00 p.m.	Service of Readings and Carols Hall Display by Cancer Support
24th December	11.00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Midnight Mass
25th December	10.00 a.m.	Christmas Day Eucharist

## Posada

The figures of Mary, Joseph (and the donkey) will again be travelling round the parish during Advent. Dorothy will bless them during the service on Advent Sunday (27th November) and send them on their way. They will spend a night or two in the homes of anyone who would like to receive them, before being passed on to the next name on the list. There will be a list at the back of church for you to sign if you would like to act as host for a night or two. In the past, people have commented how calming and spiritual it is to have the "guests" in their house. It focuses the mind on the real meaning of Christmas and provides a little oasis from all the hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations. A book travels with them so you are able to write down your thoughts if you so wish.

## **The 1 Corinthians 13 of Christmas**

If I decorate my house with beautiful twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I bake dozens of mince pies and roast the perfect turkey, but have no love for my guests, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, and give all that I have to charity, but do not have compassion for those in need, I am just another social service.

If I wrap, decorate and attend a myriad of parties, but don't focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child.

Love doesn't envy another's perfectly co-ordinated Christmas decor.

Love puts the present shopping on hold to run the elderly neighbour to the doctor.

Love is kind though harassed and tired.

Love bears all things, even irritating relatives. It believes all things, including a teenager's potential for development. It hopes all things and endures all things, even a spouse who is constantly depressed about job prospects.

Love never fails other people.

Food gets eaten, computer games will crash and even cashmere jumpers wear out, but the gift of love will endure forever.

## **“The Smallest Bible in the World”**

*Ian Mc Alpine.*

A few years ago I bought a copy the “Good News” Bible from one of our Summer Fairs. Of course the “Good News Bible” is well-known to all of us but this one was rather unusual.

It contained just the four Gospels, Acts and Romans and measured just 35mm x 30mm ! Barely more than an inch square! It had a tiny brass binding with a cross stamped on the front and came in a little paper and plastic bag describing it as “The Smallest Bible In The World”. No date or publisher was given. The tiny pages were photographically reduced copies from the GNB which first appeared in 1976. The well-known and distinctive illustrations by the Swiss artist Annie Vallotton (1915 - 2013) used in most editions of the GNB were all there but were so small that it was difficult to see what they were meant to be. However, the real difficulties began when I tried to read the minuscule printing which was less than a millimetre high. It was quite impossible until I examined the little book at home with the aid of a very powerful magnifying glass. Even then it was very difficult. I made another attempt with a Victorian brass microscope in the evening but found I could only read one or two words at a time.

Although the tiny volume has almost no practical use whatsoever it does have a certain curiosity value and deserves to be better known today. Since 1976 much smaller Bibles have been produced in the form of microdots (photographic reductions about 1mm across of original paper documents) and by other means but the little Good News Bible which I bought from St Saviour’s Summer Fair is still probably the smallest paper edition ever made.

*A part of kindness consists in loving people more than they deserve.- J Joubert .*

*The word ‘alms’ has no singular, as if to teach us that a solitary act of charity scarcely deserves the name. - Anon*

## **The Children's Society – Annual House Box Emptying**

House boxes are due to be returned to church for emptying this month and it would be helpful if these could be brought to church and given to the wardens as soon as possible. The monies will then be counted and sent to The Children's Society and a poster will be displayed showing the amount we have raised for their valuable work. If, for any reason, any boxes are returned late, the money donated will be added to the total for the following year. Thank you to everyone for your continued support, and if anyone would like to consider having a house box please have a word with the wardens.

Thank you.

*Val Muff*

## **Shoebboxes**

A heartfelt "Thank you" to everyone who has contributed in any way towards this year's shoebox appeal. We had a lovely (but tiring) day on Tuesday 8th November when the hall was a hive of activity and piled with goodies ready to go in boxes. We are so grateful to all who filled a box, donated or made items, gave money towards the cost of transportation, made tea to sustain us or helped in other ways. We had nearly 200 boxes in church on Sunday 13th to be blessed by Dorothy before they set off on their journey to Liberia and parts of Eastern Europe. Sadly, as Margaret Baker will not be with us next year, we will **NOT** be collecting your used Christmas cards. There are usually collection points in the supermarkets after Christmas for recycling.

## **Christmas Pillar Box**

The Pillar box will be out in church from Advent Sunday. Any donations you would like to make will be shared between the Candlelighters (a children's cancer charity) and Help for Heroes. Rather than buying individual cards for people at church, you may wish to buy one for the whole congregation and put the money saved into the pillar box. This is, of course, a matter of personal choice.

## **The night before**

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, except Papa's mouse.  
The computer was humming, the icons were hopping,  
As Papa did last minute Internet shopping.

The stockings were hung by the modem with care  
In hope that St. Nicholas would bring new software.  
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of computer games danced in their heads.

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## **Save it**

Save the earth. It's the only planet with chocolate.

## **No room**

The Sunday School teacher was telling the story of the Nativity, and had just finished the part about there being 'no room at the inn'. A small voice piped up: 'I blame Joseph. He should have booked.'

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## **Lexophilia**

- Irony: The opposite of wrinkly
- Haunted French pancakes give me the crêpes.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool
- I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.
- They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a typo.
- I know a man who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.
- Why were Indians here first? They had reservations.
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- Don't worry about old age. It doesn't last.
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.



## **The Way I See It: the Most Beautiful Story**

*Canon David Winter, former Head of Religious Broadcasting, BBC.*

Earlier this year a well-known atheist was being interviewed on Radio 4. In the course of an enlightening chat he was asked how he spent Christmas, and he said that he went to Midnight Mass at church. ‘But you’re an atheist’, his interviewer protested. ‘Yes’, he replied, ‘but what they celebrate at Christmas is the most beautiful story ever told’.

That ‘beautiful story’ tells of a Creator who sent His Son to share the life of His creation, to be born as a helpless baby, to grow up as a man of extraordinary wisdom, gentleness and love, who was executed by the authorities for contradicting the traditions of the time. His followers – who today number about two billion people all over the world – believe that He rose from the dead, and that by His death and resurrection He has made possible forgiveness and eternal life for men and women everywhere.

That is certainly quite a story, perhaps the greatest story ever told, and yes, beautiful. And that is the story that will be rehearsed again this Christmas, in children’s Nativities, in hymns and carols, in Bible readings and sermons all over the country. People who stay away from church all year turn up to hear it, and who can blame them? This is a story of hope, of love and of heaven touching earth.

During 2016 we have all become familiar with probably the best-known statue in the world, Christ the Redeemer, towering over the Olympic city of Rio, His arms outstretched in blessing. Christmas celebrates the birth of that great Redeemer – a tiny baby laid in a feeding trough. His birth changed history, His life transformed our understanding of what it means to be human, His death was at one and the same time a tragedy and a triumph. Yes, ‘the most beautiful story ever told’. Enjoy it again this Christmas.

The District Beaver Scout sleepover in October was a huge success with everyone having a fabulous time at Blackhills Scout Camp.

Our Explorers helped to run the Hallowe'en Party held at Girlington Con Club on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. Over eighty people enjoyed a variety of games including children's bingo, skittles and decorating biscuits. By far the most enjoyable activity was the 'mummy' game - amazing what you can do with some toilet rolls! A supper of hot dogs or pie and peas plus cakes and biscuits was followed by the raffle draw, pumpkin judging and adult bingo.

Our Cubs came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the District 5-a-Side competition held in November at Richard Dunns. We had won the previous five competitions so it was time (I guess) to let someone else win.

Luca Digby aged ten has been awarded his Chief Scout's Silver Award - this is the highest award a Cub Scout can gain.

On Pack nights our Cub Scouts have been learning about fire & home safety. A visit to Fairweather Green Fire Station will complete work towards these two badges. We have now moved on to working towards the Science Activity Badge. To date the children have wired plugs and done some chemistry and physics experiments

Over two hundred attended the Remembrance and Thanksgiving Celebration held on 11<sup>th</sup> November which seemed to be enjoyed by all who came along. Dorothy blessed and dedicated our new flag stands in memory of Val. We hope that you like them:

*Bev Howard*      **GROUP SCOUT LEADER**– 46<sup>th</sup> Bradford North Scout Group

## An Orkney Tale

Some years ago we spent a lovely holiday on Orkney. Having crossed by ferry from Scrabster, we arrived about 8pm in Stromness. We drove off the ferry and began to find our holiday cottage. This involved turning left off the quayside down a very narrow paved road. In spite of my many reservations, my co-pilot (Jean) insisted that we were on the right road, and we proceeded at about 15 mph (the cats in Stromness are the safest in the whole country) until we found our cottage. It had a lovely view straight down Scapa Flow.

On the way through Stromness we passed a very modern row of maisonettes. A blue plaque at the end of the row told us that George Mackay Brown had lived there. When he died in 1996, he left behind an extensive collection of prose, poetry and reflections.

Orkney is a fascinating place, and we spent our holiday exploring the islands - Maes How, Skara Brae, Broch of Gurness, the Tomb of the Eagles, besides Kirkwall and Stromness. Orkney is a place that really gets hold of you, and doesn't let go!

The writings of George Mackay Brown have the same effect. There is a curious mingling of history with the contemporary in his stories and yet there is also a sense of melancholy about many of them. He takes the lives of farmers and fishermen and blends joy with sadness, as well showing how hard the life was, and how history so often repeats itself. He was also a strong Catholic, and the rhythms of the Mass can often be heard. His novel, *Magnus*, is very curious. He retells the story of Magnus, Earl of Orkney in the early 12th century, who was murdered on the isle of Egilsay. This story is told in the Orkneyinga Saga, where it seems that the kings of Norway appointed two or more Earls of Orkney at any one time, leaving them to fight it out.

The Orkneyinga Saga describes Earl Magnus as "a man of extraordinary distinction, tall, with a fine intelligent look about him." At this time Earl Magnus and Earl Hakon exercised joint rule in Orkney. At first they co-operated, but malicious tongues contrived to sow dissention. Earl Hakon became jealous of Earl Magnus's popularity.

During Lent a meeting was arranged to take place so that the two Earls

could come to an agreement. The meeting was to take place after Easter on Egilsay. Each Earl was to bring two ships with a certain number of men. Magnus adhered to this arrangement; Hakon did not. When Magnus saw Hakon arrive with eight ships, he knew that treachery was in the wind. He spent the night in the small church on the island, and heard Mass.

Hakon was determined that there should be only one Earl in Orkney, and that he would be the one. He ordered his standard bearer to kill Magnus; the standard bearer refused. Finally it was decided that Lifolf, Hakon's cook, should do the deed. Magnus told Lifolf, "Stand in front of me and strike me hard on the head, it's not fitting for a chieftain to be beheaded like a thief. Take heart. Poor fellow, I've prayed that God will give you his mercy." The Orkneyinga Saga records laconically, "So his soul passed into heaven." Magnus was regarded as a saint, as was his nephew Rognvald (Ronald) Kali Kolsson, who became Earl later in the century.

I did hear that, during renovations in St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, two skulls were found embedded in the columns of the chancel arch. One had a very deep gash. They were assumed to be the skulls of Earls Magnus and Rognvald, who were both regarded as saints. (I have to say that we attended Trinity Sunday service in St Magnus Cathedral. It was the dullest service we have ever attended!)

George Mackay Brown retells this story in his novel *Magnus*, but with a very strange ending. Suddenly, when we would expect the martyrdom of Magnus to be described, the scene changes to Nazi Germany. The scene becomes a concentration camp, where the chief of administration, butcher by trade and a cook, Herr Lifolf by name, is told to prepare for the execution of a traitor. He is told that the traitor will stand on a stool, and that he will put the noose around his neck, and then take away the stool. The traitor is never named, but it is generally accepted that he had Dietrich Bonhoeffer in mind.

Wherever you look in George Mackay Brown's work, whether it is the novels, the short stories or the poems, there is always that little edge, causing the reader to stop and think, and perhaps to be disturbed.

*R. W. Bailey*

## **Notes from the PCC**

The PCC met on Thursday 17th November for the final meeting of the year.

The Archdeacon, the Ven. Andy Jolley, came to see Dorothy and the wardens in November as part of the standard procedure for ensuring all churches are doing things properly. We seem to be on track with most things, but there were a few suggestions where we could perhaps improve or do things a little differently. We will look at these over the coming months and put things into practice as appropriate.

We continue to press on with our new-style services and have been encouraged by the response so far. Please do come and give them a try. Efforts to obtain a faculty for the new screen and projector continue and we hope to have these in place soon. They will make a big difference to the way we can conduct services. We are also pressing ahead with plans for extra sockets, new lighting and additional or replacement heaters. Once all these are finished, we must then turn our attention to the work that is still outstanding from the last Quinquennial inspection. It never seems to end.

We have been delighted that the Assistant Head at Crossley Hall Primary School, Nathan Davies, has been in contact with us and we looked forward to welcoming several groups of children across to church at the end of November. We think these contacts with school are of extreme importance and are delighted it looks like they will resume after a long absence.

Thank you to all who helped in any way with the recent Christmas Fair. We heard from the wardens that we raised the fantastic sum of £849.30. This in itself is a great result, but the fact that we were able to welcome so many friends and neighbours into our church was the real blessing.

There were long discussions about the future of the magazine once I step down from the role of editor in March. No decision has yet been taken and it will continue in its present form for the moment. We will let you know what is finally decided.

*Hilary Davis, PCC Secretary.*

## 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)

**ST. SAVIOUR'S PARISH CHURCH  
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