

December Letter

Dear Friends,

Some of you will already know that Richard and I are just back from Erfurt in Germany, where we were part of an official link visit. Bradford Diocese and Erfurt Kirchenkreis (similar to a Deanery) have been linked for over 10 years now; the purpose of such links is to build relationships between different Christian communities. We can learn from each other, share ideas, and build up friendships and cooperation to join further in the mission message of the Gospel.

Being in Germany in the run up to Advent, and then Christmas, reminded me of the different ways in which our respective countries mark these seasons of the Christian year. We know a little more in this country than we previously did of the emphasis in German households of Advent wreaths, rings, calendars and Lichtbogen – those wooden arches with candles across the top, and little village scenes below. And then of course, there's the Lebkuchen and the Gluhwein – which I hope needs no translation! German markets have come to visit Britain, including Bradford, and we can buy these goods directly from their stall holders.

But it is nothing to the scale of these markets in Germany itself. Erfurt is in the eastern part of Germany, so from the end of World War II to the end of 1989, lived under the repressions and strict economic restraints of the Communist regime. Now, the small city of Erfurt, with a population of only 200,000, has shops on every corner selling a huge range of Advent Calendars – and though the same mix of toys, chocolate and other treats is the selling point for some, it is very good to see so many – for all ages – telling the Christmas story of the Nativity. The huge market in the square in front of the two Cathedrals sold much more, with flowers, greenery, wood craft and special food in with the usual market stalls we would expect to see here.

These were the external signs of change, but in church terms, we saw a mix of work being actively supported and offered to the community.

And this was a community with the same difficulties as ours – unemployment, poverty, people with jobs that did not pay a living wage, and people with illnesses or disabilities which affected their ability to support themselves. We saw a City Mission which reminded us of the work at St. Christopher's, Holme Wood, with its second hand clothes shop, and drop-in cafe. We saw a new facility – only five weeks open - which took day care patients recovering from mental illnesses, and helped them to learn again how to structure their lives, and how to make decisions. Most substantial of all, we saw a facility that did a similar type of work to Remploy; it taught people with varying disabilities a trade to pursue, which could be worked on the same site. It made parts for industry, ran a laundry for local hospitals and care homes, and it packed items for commercial sale. It also had a car valeting unit, where anyone could bring their car for a thorough clean, inside and out!

And of course, there was also worship, magnificent singing, and opportunities for retreats. Sited near Buchenwald concentration camp, and with its huge memorial to those killed there dominating the countryside, it was also notable that Jewish culture and history is again becoming a part – albeit small – of life in this area. The Alte Synagogue has become a museum, very splendidly maintained, and – less artistically – a number of memorial torches in stainless steel with an orange globe top, have been placed at sites in the city where numbers of Jewish families were murdered under the Nazi regime.

So our visit taught us a lot – and we hope that what we were able to share with our hosts in return helps to build on both sides our common partnership in spreading the Word of Christ in our time.

If, like us, you have some German reminders among your Advent and Christmas celebrations, give thanks for our peaceful relationship now, and please remember the people of Erfurt in your prayers.

With all good wishes for the season,

Jean Bailey

DECEMBER PARISH DIARY

SUNDAY 2ND

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion (*Rev. Dennis Shaw*)
Tuesday 4th 11.00 a.m. Service at Crossley House Care Home
7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 5th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 6th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 9TH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion *The Rt. Rev. Nick Baines*)
Tuesday 11th 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 12th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
11.30 a.m. Ings Way Lunch Day
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 13th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts
7.30 p.m. PCC meeting in vestry

SUNDAY 16TH

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 9.30 a.m. Nativity Service (*Rev. Gloria Hardisty*)
1.00 p.m. Quiet Afternoon
Monday 17th 6.30 p.m. Carol singing at Allerton Congs
Tuesday 18th 7.30 p.m. Adult Tap Dancing
Wednesday 19th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 20th 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer
6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 23RD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion (*Rev. Gloria Hardisty*)
Monday 24th 11.00 p.m. Candlelit Communion with Carols

Tuesday 25th 10.00 a.m. Family Communion (*Revd. Richard & Mrs. Jean Bailey*)

SUNDAY 30TH FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

9.30 a.m. Service of Lessons and Carols

Christmas Events

Christmas is nearly here again, and we hope as many people as can will come to our events and services. We start the ball rolling with a **Communion service at Crossley House Care Home** on Tuesday 4th December from 11.00 a.m. when we join the residents to bring a little Christmas cheer, and a mince pie or two and the odd carol will probably make their appearance at the free **Ing's Way Lunch Day** on Wednesday 12th from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. for all to enjoy.

Our children and youth leaders will be giving their version of the **Nativity** story at the service at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday 16th December and later that day—from 1.00 to 4.00 p.m.— Revd. Richard and Mrs. Jean Bailey will lead a **Quiet Afternoon** which will both bring a little bit of peace to a hectic time of year and help us to focus our minds on this new phase in our worship as we welcome our caretaker vicar and look to the future. Our friends from Churches Together in Allerton and Fairweather Green invite us to sing **carols** at the Congregational Church in Allerton Road at 6.30 p.m. on Monday 17th. On **Christmas Eve**, there will be a candlelit service of Holy Communion with carols and the blessing of Baby Jesus in the crib at 11.00 p.m. and a **Family Communion** at 10.00 a.m. on Christmas morning.

Breaking a little with tradition, we will be holding our **Service of Lessons and Carols** after Christmas, on Sunday 30th December at 9.30 a.m. Do please come and join us whenever you can!

December 28th: Holy Innocents

The death of a very young child is perhaps the hardest grief of all to bear. So the 28th December is a very poignant day in the church calendar. It is when the worldwide Church joins with bereaved parents to grieve the loss of babies and young children. For Holy Innocents day

recalls the massacre of the young male children of Bethlehem by Herod the Great.

Herod had been told by the magi, or wise men, that a great king had been born in Bethlehem, and he felt shaken. How could a child in unimportant little Bethlehem be so powerful that the stars in the night sky honoured his birth?! Herod took the magi so seriously that he decided to try and kill this new young rival. He decreed that every male baby of two years and under should be killed. (Matthew 2:1-18). Bethlehem was not a large place, and Bible commentators estimate that between six and 25 youngsters were slaughtered by Roman soldiers. Their mothers were inconsolable at the death of their babies, as indeed mothers have always been.

The death of these innocent baby boys of Bethlehem became a feast-day in the western Church by the 4th century. This was because the Church considered them to be martyrs because they not only died for Christ, but instead of Christ.

Down the centuries, the tragic loss of the Holy Innocents has touched the imagination and hearts of poets, preachers and artists. Though heart-broken parents still grieve today, the Church can offer them one firm assurance: that young children who die to this world will undoubtedly “this day be with Me in Paradise.” The One who eagerly said ‘Suffer the little children to come unto Me’ will be the last person to turn them away.

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Diamond Jubilee: Elizabeth - pt 11 - Long to Reign Over Us

(Canon David Winter, Former Head of Religious Broadcasting, BBC)

So we move towards the end of this Jubilee Year - and what a year it has been! It's almost as though several spoonfuls of sugar have been given us to help the nasty medicine of economic recession go down. We have had the sugar of the Jubilee itself, with its processions and street parties and concerts, always with the same short, elderly but serene figure at the centre of the celebrations. There was no time to take the

flags down before the Olympic Games arrived, with their astonishing opening ceremony. More than anything else, I enjoyed the comment of a major American newspaper that it was impossible to think of another Head of State in the world who would have agreed to take part in a comedy spoof to launch the Games - and this one is an octogenarian!

The Games themselves were marvellous, of course - not just the results (though they were gratifying) but the whole atmosphere surrounding them. As Boris Johnson remarked, people even spoke to strangers on the Tube. Visitors wondered whatever had happened to the reserved British. We honoured our heroes, who won gold, silver and bronze, but we also cheered those who competed but didn't win, in the very best traditions of Olympic sport.

And then came the Paralympics, and another set of heroes, perhaps led by the smiling face of the tiny swimmer Ellie Simmonds, ploughing down the final lap like a human torpedo to take yet another gold medal.

Even then it wasn't over. Andy Murray won his first Grand Slam tennis title and Europe won the Ryder Cup in an amazing turnaround. You didn't have to be a sports fan to feel that this was a year of multiple spoonfuls of that sugar!

Over it all was the reassuring presence of the Queen herself in her Jubilee year. Twice the Duke of Edinburgh had to be whisked into hospital for short periods - thankfully, to re-emerge his usual determined self. But the Queen just kept on. Over and over again she (and we) heard the words 'long to reign over us' - and it will only take four more years for her to be the longest serving British monarch in history.

Finally, we had the reassuring emergence of our future royals, William and Catherine. More and more they appeared in public, sometimes beside the Queen, more often on their own, at one and the same time splendidly contemporary and yet properly 'royal'. If we can just sort out the euro, the banks and our external unbalance of payments, the future looks rosy!

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Dear members of St Saviour's,

I am sure that by now most of you will be aware that as from 2nd December I will be working at St. Saviour's on Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each week. I will be here to help out during your time of interregnum but this in no way will extend the process or influence the appointment of your new vicar. This is on going and as soon as you make an appointment I will leave.

Although I start on Sunday 2nd December, as your services are already planned up until Christmas, I will for the first month sit with you in the congregation which will give me an ideal opportunity to get to know you and also get a feel of the structure of your services.

Many of you may be wondering who I am and why am I coming to your church. Well, up until 31st October I was vicar of St. John's, Great Horton, just a couple of parishes away. Although I have been vicar there for only two years, I have worked in a full time capacity at the church for 17 years and worshipped there for 46 years. Before I worked in full time Christian ministry my wife, Joan, and myself ran a ladies and gents hairdressing business.

In my position at St. Saviour's, in addition to leading and preaching etc. on a Sunday, I see my role with you primarily as a pastoral one, so if I can help in any way in what ever situation please contact me. My details will be in future Parish News.

We worship a wonderful God and I am looking forward with excitement to what He has in store for both of us over the next few months. I pray that over those months we will allow Jesus to have His way among us and that everything we do will be to further His kingdom and glorify His name.

Yours in Christ
Ian Slater

POSADA

Traditional Posada began in Mexico where young people, dressed as Mary and Joseph, travelled from house to house seeking shelter for the night and telling people about the imminent arrival of Jesus.

After a few years' break, we are reviving this tradition in our church during Advent.

Our Posada uses the nativity figures of Mary and Joseph, (and the donkey!) to travel around our community to find a place to stay with each of us. They will come to spend a night or two with you before moving on to somewhere else. It might be that you invite friends round on the night Mary and Joseph visit your home, perhaps to sing carols and talk about the meaning of Christmas. Some Posada prayers and a book for your comments will accompany them on their visits.

If you would like to be a part of this, there is a rota of times in church, or ring me to make arrangements.

Kaaren Raistrick.

STOCKING FILLERS - In aid of Church Funds

If you are looking for "stocking fillers" for Christmas, perhaps our lovely pens, imprinted with our church name, might be the answer. They are available from Val/James Muff and are £1.35 each in any colour as long as it's black! The pens are really wonderful to write with, so as well as treating a loved one, buy one for yourself to assist in your card writing!

Quiet Afternoon

16th December, Quiet Prayer Afternoon from 1pm to 4pm, starting with lunch. This afternoon will be a shared time of prayer for our new minister and ministry together. Everybody welcome.

Rare Post Box in Thornton.

The earliest post boxes in the British Isles were set up in Guernsey in 1852 on the suggestion of the novelist Anthony Trollope (1815 - 1882) who was a Post Office surveyor. Most of the ones produced since then have carried the royal cipher, originally VR for Victoria Regina (Latin for Queen Victoria), and now E II R for Queen Elizabeth II. A bewildering variety of designs which has fascinated me since childhood has been produced over the last 160 years. Many of the Victorian boxes are surprisingly common and still giving good service after well over a century.

However, those bearing the cipher of Victoria's son Edward VII (1901 - 1910) are quite hard to find. There is a well-preserved one in York and I was delighted to find a very rare Edwardian one in Thornton last September. Quite how I managed to notice its unusual design while driving past it at nearly 30 mph is hard to explain! It was a tiny wall-mounted box on Well Heads which is roughly parallel to Thornton Road. Briefly, the little box carries the letters E VII R (for Edward VII) at the top which dates it to 1901 - 1904. Later boxes made between 1904 and 1910 have a much larger royal cipher on the door of the box. Apparently hardly any of the Thornton type still exist - a rare survivor from over 100 years ago! So when you post your Christmas cards this year do have a look at the post box and try to work out how old it is from the royal cipher - it could well be a reminder of Victorian England.

Reference: Martin Robinson, *Old letter boxes*, Shire Publications, 1987.
Ian Mc Alpine.

Christmas entertaining

Inviting a number of houseguests to come for Christmas is a lot like living in California ... If you find a fault, don't dwell on it!

US elections

Edward Hale, while chaplain of the U.S. Senate, was once asked if he prayed for the senators. He quickly replied, "No. After getting to know the senators, I pray for the people."

Visiting Father Christmas

A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily, and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The little girl stared at him, open mouthed with horror. Then she gasped: "Didn't you get my email?!!!"

Presents

December is the month when the children begin to discuss what to get Dad for Christmas. Some insist on a shirt; others a pair of socks. But the argument always ends in a tie.

Grandpa's Christmas Story

Grandpa decided that shopping for Christmas presents had become too difficult. All his grandchildren had everything they needed, so he decided to send them each a cheque .

On each card he wrote:

*'Happy Christmas, Grandpa'
P.S. 'Buy your own present!'*

Now, while Grandpa enjoyed the family festivities, he thought that his grandchildren were just slightly distant. It preyed on his mind into the New Year. Then one day he was sorting out his study and under a pile of magazines, he found a little pile of cheques for his grandchildren. He had completely forgotten to put them in with the Christmas cards!

46TH BRADFORD NORTH SCOUT GROUP

Saturday 10th November was the date of the Cubs 5-a-Side football competition. This was held at Speedball on Duncombe Way. Six teams from Bradford North took part. The 46th team were marvellous scoring over thirty goals with just one against them to win the competition and qualify for the City Cub finals where we came 3rd. Well done and congratulations to Owen Peacock, Harris Ambler, Jack Myers-Allen, Caitlin Hodgson and Rohan Ogier.

37 of our youngsters and ten leaders attended the Remembrance Parade and Service in Bradford City Centre on the 11th November.

The Cubs have been very proactive in making up Christmas Boxes for distribution abroad.

The Explorers, Scouts and our older Cubs will hold their Winter Camp at Sconce campsite, Baildon, from the 30th November until 2nd December. Numerous challenges and activities are planned that will hopefully lead to the award of several badges.

We are to visit the Synagogue on Bowland Street on December 5th to learn a little about the Jewish faith and their place of worship. Our programme for the month will focus on the My Faith and World Faith activity badges and also the Faith Partnership badge.

We will be singing Christmas songs and carols at Asda Living on the 15th & 16th December in our quest to raise some funds.

Bev Howard GROUP SCOUT LEADER

Sending love in 100 million shoe boxes

This month hundreds of thousands of needy children across Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa will be eagerly opening shoe boxes of gifts sent by generous people in the UK, the US, Europe and Australia. So far we've had 30 filled boxes from St. Saviour's; a vast stock of empty & ready wrapped boxes; bags of knitted hats, mittens, wrist warmers, puppets, bags & purses; extra toys, games, etc. & hygiene items; and several generous donations towards transport costs. The boxes are going to either Romania or Belarus, each destination is about 5 days' driving distance. Thank you to everyone.

Somewhere in the middle of all that there will be an historic shoe box: the 100 millionth shoe box that has been sent since 1990. No one will know quite which one it is, but it is a great milestone to celebrate.

Many local churches from Bosnia to Liberia, Montenegro to Swaziland are also offering the youngsters a short follow-up course called 'The Greatest Journey'. It simply explains who Jesus is, and what Christianity is all about. The literature and the course resources are shared at the invitation of local church leaders, after consultation with other civic leaders. Since 2010, 700,000 children worldwide have accepted an invitation to join the course. Please remember these children in your prayers – they face huge challenges in their young lives.

Operation Christmas Child was started in 1990, in Wrexham, by Dave Cooke, after he saw pictures of appalling conditions in Romanian orphanages on TV. That year he led a small convoy of vehicles from Wrexham to Romania, to help the children. In 1995 OCC merged with Samaritan's Purse.

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Christmas Mixture

There are shepherds,
And wise men,
A tree with baubles,
Joseph, Mary and a donkey,
Pudding and mince pies,
A star shining in the heaven,
Children excited and sometimes cross,
Tired of waiting for
The reindeer and Santa.
But here is the cradle.
The wonderful child is born,
As he is again and again
In our hearts at every second.

- Jean Thomas 2001

I recently found this poem among my papers, and it brought back memories. Jean Thomas was a member of the congregation at All Saints', Stand; a small elderly lady, a former teacher at the local grammar school (when there was one!). We struck up a friendship; I don't remember how, but I think it was a shared susceptibility to asthma. From time to time Jean would send me a poem she had written, until I had quite a collection. Then, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, she died. I conducted her funeral, and felt bereft. Eventually I collected her poems together and printed them in a booklet. I gave one copy to her sister, and kept another for myself. At the moment it is somewhere among my papers. (The original is locked up inside a defunct computer.) So it was a real pleasure to find this poem, and to remember a good and quietly unassuming lady who became a good friend. Remember her at Christmas.

R. W. Bailey

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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