

The January Letter

Dear Friends

A Happy New year to you all – and I hope you had a good Christmas, however you like to mark Christmastime in your family. For some, it is above all a loud and jolly festival, with a lot of gathering together of family members, and a lot of eating and drinking together, let alone exchanging presents. For others a “good” Christmas is passed in peace and contemplation, attending worship, singing carols, possibly catching up through cards and email with old friends they may not have seen much of for many years, but who are still part of the wider friendship circle.

Our family is scattered across the UK, so Christmas is usually marked with a busy telephone, and, some years, we are able to have some of them staying with us. But above all for us, Christmas happens around shared worship with friends and visitors in church, as the Christmas season is marked in celebration, and we move on soon to Epiphany, marking the time when the three Kings came to see the infant Jesus, and the wider world began to know of God’s presence here on this earth.

With New Year to observe too, we are at the cusp of moving on from a year of memories, good and bad, and into a new one of hopes and expectations. 2016 has had some very solemn anniversaries – the 141 days of the Battle of the Somme, for example, and has seen some startling outcomes on the world’s political stages – Brexit and Donald Trump’s election as US president, to name but two. On a personal level, we will all have had our sad times and hopefully our happy times too this year. We may or may not be people who make New Year resolutions, but it is always good at this time of the year to review what has happened, and to look forward in faith to the future. Can I recommend the method of daily review practised in some parts of the Christian community, as a good example for reviewing the year? Find somewhere to sit quietly in silence; thank God for the good things you have observed or experienced; offer to God in prayer and humility the things that went wrong, or what was not good, and finally, pray to do better, with God’s help, in the year to come.

Experience tells us this is a very constructive way to review our days and years, and sets a good pattern to follow for the year to come.

Our church is working in faith to establish a new pattern of worship to serve the needs of those who have many years of faithful worship under their belts, and also to meet the needs of young people, and those new to the faith. Prayer to support this work would be a good way to begin a prayerful New Year.

With all good wishes,

Jean Bailey

JANUARY PARISH DIARY

SUNDAY 1ST NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST

**10.00 a.m. Family Communion PLEASE NOTE
THE CHANGE OF TIME AND SERVICE!**

Tuesday 3rd 10.45 a.m. Holy Communion at Crossley House
 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
Thursday 5th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
 6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
 7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 8TH EPIPHANY

 10.00 a.m. Holy Communion
 3.00 p.m. Churches Together Service in church.
Tuesday 10th 12.00 p.m. Knit and Natter
 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 11th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
 11.30 a.m. Ing's Way Lunch Day
 6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 12th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer

6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts

7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 15TH 2ND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

10.00 a.m. Parade Service & Holy Communion

11.30 a.m. Going for Growth Meeting

Tuesday 17th 12.00 noon Knit and Natter

7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing

7.30 p.m. PCC in vestry

Wednesday 18th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. James's

6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts

Thursday 19th 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer

12 noon WPCU Service at Bethel Baptist Church

6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts

7.30 p.m. Scouts

Friday 20th 10.00 a.m. MU away day in hall

SUNDAY 22nd THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. Messy Church

Tuesday 24th 12 noon Knit and Natter

7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing

Wednesday 25th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

12 noon WPCU service & lunch

6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts

Thursday 26th 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer

12 noon WPCU service & Lunch at Allerton

Congregational Church

6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts

7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 29th PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion

Tuesday 31st 12 noon Knit and Natter

7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18th-25th January 2017

This year's Week of Prayer is based on the theme "*Crossing Barriers*". The material was prepared for worldwide use by the churches in Germany based around the verses in 2 Corinthians 5:14-20.

There are fifty million Christians in Germany who, traditionally, have mostly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church or one of the Protestant State Churches. Recent developments, particularly the reception of refugees and asylum seekers, have begun to change this balance and other Christian traditions are finding expression. Whilst that which unites the churches is stronger than that which divides, there are still areas of difference in which the churches remain self-absorbed or construct new walls.

The text from 2 Corinthians announces that God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself. The love of Christ compels us to be ambassadors of this reconciliation, which is enacted by dismantling walls. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Germany experienced how a seemingly insurmountable barrier could be brought down. The fall of this wall is a symbol of hope that, with the love of God, nothing is impossible.

Christian Aid

Each year Christian Aid provides the Go and Do action points for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice.

As in previous years the members of Churches Together in Allerton and Fairweather Green will be coming together to worship at 12 noon and share a lunch of soup and sandwiches at 12.30 p.m. during the week. All are welcome!

The dates are:

Thursday 19th:	Bethel Baptist Church, Sandy Lane
Wednesday 25th	St. Saviour's
Thursday 26th	Allerton Congregational Church

We, three kings?

Canon David Winter, Former Head of Religious Broadcasting, BBC

They're there in most Nativity plays, resplendent in regal gowns and cardboard crowns, carrying their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Actually, the Church celebrates the coming of these exotic people to the stable at Bethlehem not at Christmas but now, in January, in a season called 'Epiphany'.

The word means 'revealing', and it reminds us that the Saviour was a gift to the whole world – even Gentiles from 'the East' were welcome at His coming. The story of the Wise Men, as we usually call them (but more accurately the Magi), is a 'revealing' – the 'new king' was to be the Saviour of the world, 'good news for all people', as the angels proclaimed to the shepherds.

The name 'Magi' should alert us to their true role. They were 'wise' in the sense that they knew and studied the stars, but their primary trade was fortune-telling. 'Magi' is the root of our word 'magic', and people like them held the ancient world in thrall to their predictions. In the Greek and Roman world of the time no major decision would be made without their sanction. Think of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the superstitious fear that dominated people's lives.

Yet when these powerful representatives of the world of magic, portent and fear came to the stable, they prostrated themselves before the infant Jesus, as they gave Him their gifts. Thus, as the first Christians saw it, the old world of fear and superstition gave way to the new world of love, grace and faith. That was the 'revealing' that we celebrate in Epiphany – not some elderly men bringing gifts to a baby, but a baby bringing to the world the greatest gift of all, a Saviour.

St. Saviour's Parish News

As indicated in last month's issue, the Parish News as it now stands will probably cease with the April 2017 issue. Consequently, "annual" subscriptions will only cover these 4 issues at a cost of £1.50.

It hasn't yet been decided what will replace it, but we will keep you informed as discussions progress.

We thank all those of you who have been loyal supporters of the magazine over the years and we hope you have enjoyed hearing about the life of our church and its people.

21st January: St Agnes— child martyr of Rome, 304AD

Agnes should be the patron saint of all the young Christian girls alive today who live in areas of the world where they face kidnap, rape, forced marriage, persecution and even death – simply because they are Christian.

Agnes, born c 291, probably came from a noble Roman family. She converted to Christianity at the age of 10, and took a vow of chastity. When she was only 13, the son of a high-ranking Roman official wanted to marry her. But Agnes refused, declaring herself given totally to Christ.

This was not a safe thing to say in 304. It was the time of the Roman Empire's last great wave of violence against Christians – the so-called Persecution of Diocletian. Christians were hated. So Agnes was condemned to death. Some accounts say she was burned at the stake, while Ambrose claims her death came by sword. She may have been sentenced to serve as a virgin sacrifice to pagan deities. Beheading has also been mentioned.

In any event, Agnes became a virgin-martyr, and thus became patron saint of chastity, girls, virgins, engaged couples and rape survivors. In the decades after her death her tomb became a place of pilgrimage, as other Christians sought courage for themselves by remembering her fearless witness.

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Sunday 22nd January
11.00 a.m.

Games; Crafts; Bible Stories

Food

Fun for all the family—and it's FREE

His Name is John

Zechariah, Priest of God
Had lived a godly life
Was upright in the paths he trod
And so was his dear wife.

But they were both advanced in years
And children had not come;
Till one day he came home in tears
For God had struck him dumb.

But tears they were of joy, not grief,
The angel Gabriel
Had silenced him through unbelief
At what he'd had to tell.

His faithful wife, Elizabeth
Deprived of mother's joy
Would feel the Holy Spirit's breath
And have a baby boy!

A son who would bring great delight
Cause many to rejoice;
And great he'd be in God's pure sight
And speak with holy voice.

Because he'd said, "How can this be?"
The priest's voice, it was gone
Until his new-born son he'd see;
And say, "His name is John."

By Nigel Beeton

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Electoral Roll

As soon as we are past Christmas, our thoughts usually turn to the Annual Parochial Church meeting which, this year, will be in the hall on Sunday 19th March, some time after the service (and after coffee!) This is the time when we elect various officers, hear about what has been happening in church during the past year, look ahead to plans for the coming year and have a chance to air any areas of concern. Please put the date in your diary and give a thought to anything you would like to discuss.

Prior to the meeting, we revise the church's Electoral Roll - the list of those eligible to attend the meetings and vote in the elections. If you are not on the roll and would like to be, please have a word with Ian McAlpine, our Electoral Roll Officer.

Diocesan E-News

The Diocesan Communications Director, Chris Tate, would like to invite you to receive the latest Church of England news for West Yorkshire and the Dales with a free fortnightly E-mail.

E-news is a bright digest of local news, events and diary dates drawn from the Diocese of Leeds website and compiled in a handy, condensed form. Upcoming bulletins will contain all the highlights in your area and are a year-round source of information at this exciting time for the diocese.

There are no strings attached, it is all you will ever receive - no pop-up adverts for septic tanks, guaranteed, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

Simply go to the website below to see past and present examples and sign up by entering an E-mail address:

<http://www.leeds.anglican.org/enews-archive>

Epiphany Service

Churches Together in Allerton and Fairweather Green will be holding an Epiphany service at St. Saviour's on Sunday 8th January at 3.00 p.m. All are welcome to come along and join in.

THE WAY I SEE IT : Everything New?

By Canon David Winter, a former Head of Religion, BBC.

I have now reached the point in life when the mere sight of the adjective 'new' attached to anything causes mild panic. My favourite tomato soup comes in a new-fangled can, and I know I won't be able to open it. My internet provider insists on burdening me with an 'update' - a 'new' approach to computing. I'm thrown into blind panic, until I see that I can click on 'decline' which I always do. 2016 had more than enough that was 'new' – Brexit, a new Prime Minister, and a new President-elect of the USA. Is there a pause button somewhere?

So how do I approach the New Year? Well, it's a nuisance to have to change my computer letter-head, and I know in mid-February I shall absent-mindedly revert to typing '2016' everywhere, but on the whole it's a bit of a non-event. So what? Some numbers have changed. Nothing significant is different. What the people baptising themselves in the Trafalgar Square fountains are celebrating eludes me. Peace in the Middle East? An end to poverty, homelessness and loneliness? The coming of an age of justice, love and compassion? It might take a bit more than a change in a single digit on the calendar to bring those about.

What I suppose New Year does spark, in a low-key kind of way, is hope. Really, that should be celebrated at Advent, when the great theme is the 'Christian Hope' of a new kingdom of justice and love. Or at Easter, when the Spring's new colours are matched by our songs of resurrection and new life. In ordinary English usage, 'hope' can imply doubt – 'I hope so'. But in the language of faith, hope is something clear and promised. Human hopes can be dashed. Hope in an unchanging God is another matter altogether.

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Sharing Hope in Crisis

Samaritan's Purse is hosting a seminar on Saturday 25th February at St James Church, St Sepulchre Gate West, Doncaster, DN1 3AW from 9.30 to 17.00. It is for anyone interested in learning how to respond to people going through a crisis of any kind. The seminar is free, though donations would be welcome and lunch is provided at a small cost. More information is available from www.samaritans-purse.org.uk

New Year Customs around the World

The transition from one year to the next is recognised throughout the world as a time of celebration, renewal and hope. Customs have developed over the years, many of them unique to a particular country.

In **Great Britain** –particularly Scotland – there is of course First Footing, where it is believed the first person over the threshold after midnight on New Year's Eve should be a dark stranger (preferably male) bearing gifts of food (bread) drink (wine) and heat (coal) to bring luck throughout the year.

Denmark: In the months leading up to the New Year, Danes save up their chipped and damaged crockery and on New Year's Eve, throw them at the doors of their neighbours and friends. The amount of broken china you find on your doorstep the next morning indicates how popular you are!

China: The New Year (not at the same time as in the most other countries) in China has huge significance. One of the traditions is to paint front doors red, to symbolise happiness and good fortune and to hide all knives for the day so no one can be cut, thus breaking the family good luck for the year.

Spain: The Spanish use New Year as a means of using up surplus grapes. The aim is to eat a grape on each of the strokes of the chimes at 12 midnight. Although a fairly modern tradition, it is now widely practised.

Brazil: The Brazilians believe lentils signify wealth and prosperity, so on New Year's Eve soup and rice dishes made from lentils are prepared and eaten. The revellers wear white to ward off evil spirits and gather on the beaches where they make offerings to the goddess of the sea. They launch tiny boats laden with flowers and other gifts.

Russia: New Year took on greater significance for Russians when religious festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, were forbidden under Communist rule. One tradition which has grown up is to write your New Year resolution on a piece of paper, set it alight, tip the ash into your champagne glass and drink the whole by 12.01 a.m.

A Scottish Bible and A Detective Story.

Ian Mc Alpine.

One day in May 2016 I visited a local antiques centre with my friends Chris and Susan Wilson who often come to our church events. I was delighted to find a large, battered 19th century Bible for sale and went to investigate. It was published in Glasgow in 1843 and was quite an early example of a John Brown Self-Interpreting Bible. Very briefly, John Brown (1722 - 1787) was a Scottish clergyman who originally worked as a herdsman. Amazingly he taught himself Latin, Greek and Hebrew and by 1768 had accepted the Chair of Divinity at Glasgow University! His Self-Interpreting Bible with its lengthy commentary appeared in 1778. However most surviving copies date from after about 1860, are absolutely enormous and are copiously illustrated, the later ones in lurid colours.

Clearly the old Bible had had a very hard life and had seen better days. It included a concordance by George Kerr Hannay (presumably another Scot) and a metrical version of the Psalms. The marbled front cover was held on to the Bible by just one binding cord. However, that cover contained an interesting secret.

Inside the cover was a bookplate with a coat-of-arms and a name. Unfortunately the old bookplate was so faded, stained and dirty that it was extremely difficult to read. However, its presence showed that one of the book's early owners from perhaps the 1840s or 1850s had some social status. Needless to say the battered Bible soon found a new owner!

Back at home I examined the bookplate more carefully using a desk lamp and a very powerful magnifying glass. The bookplate was in absolutely terrible condition and it took me several minutes to decipher it. The name below the coat-of-arms, printed in elaborate "Gothic" letters read "*Henry Bannerman Junr*". Could there possibly be a connection with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman" (1836 - 1908), the Scottish Liberal politician who was Prime Minister from 1905 to 1908? Further investigation revealed the almost illegible Latin motto "*Pro*

patria" meaning "For my country".

It was still almost impossible to make out anything on the coat-of-arms. However, I now had a family name and a motto so I turned to my Burke's Peerage Baronetage and Knightage (1970 edition) which is a standard reference work on coats-of-arms, mottoes and the families who used them. I soon found the Bannerman motto - *Pro Patria* - and the family coat-of-arms - a flag with the St Andrew's Cross of Scotland in the top left corner! Eventually I was able to make out the flag on the bookplate to complete my identification.

Although Burke's Peerage gave an outline of the Bannermans' distinguished and impressive Scottish history dating back to the 13th century it did not mention a 19th century Henry. The internet mentioned several possible Henries unfortunately, but I could not be sure about which one owned the Bible. There was, however, a sort of consolation prize! Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal Prime Minister was originally called Campbell and adopted his mother's maiden name, Bannerman, in 1868. And Janet Bannerman (1799 - 1873) was indeed related to the Bannermans whose coat-of-arms and motto were shown on the stained bookplate.

And so the battered Bible had once belonged to the family of a British Prime Minister! Quite how it ended up in an antiques centre in Mytholmroyd is anyone's guess! Amazing the stories these old Bibles can tell if we only take the trouble to investigate.

New Year problems

"Sometimes I get the feeling the whole world is against me, but deep down I know that's not true - some smaller countries are neutral."

Muesli

My friend drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in.

Grannie?

The little boy came home from his first day at Sunday School and informed his mother that his Sunday school teacher was Jesus' grandmother. Astonished, the mother demanded: 'What on earth makes you think that?' "Easy, said the little boy. 'She never stops talking about Jesus."

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The man who created Greenwich Mean Time

The British mathematician and astronomer Sir George Biddell Airy died 125 years ago this month. Not a household name, he nevertheless had a long-term effect on everyone's lives by establishing Greenwich as the location of the prime meridian, through calculations made using an immensely accurate telescope he invented called the Airy Transit Circle. Greenwich Mean Time became legal time in Britain in 1880, and was adopted in principle as the basis of universal time in 1884.

Sir George was not so much a brilliant scientist as a meticulous engineer and a self-taught expert in many areas, including theology. His wife Ricarda, whom he met on a walking holiday and proposed to after two days, was the daughter of the Rev Richard Smith, private chaplain to the Duke of Devonshire. After being initially rejected by Mr Smith, because of his limited means and prospects, he persisted in his suit for six years until he was successful.

Sir George was elected president of the Royal Astronomical Society four times, for a total of seven years between 1835 and 1864. No other person has been president more than four times. He was famous (or notorious) for the care and foresight with which he planned his life. He made a careful note of everything that occurred in his life or interested him, and never threw anything away. These records still exist.

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Changes for religious broadcasting at the BBC

The former Labour minister James Purnell, the BBC's head of radio and education, is to take on responsibility for its religious affairs programming. BBC Director General, Tony Hall, said the decision meant the BBC was taking "one of the big issues of our times" seriously.

The BBC seems set to diversify its religious programming, with increased multi-faith coverage, to better reflect the "role of religion in modern Britain". Religious leaders will be invited to discuss how the broadcaster can improve on its existing output. A senior executive will also be appointed to design new programme concepts alongside what is currently delivered, such as Songs of Praise and Thought for the Day.

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JANUARY ROLL OF REMEMBRANCE

1st	Grace Barnett	(1972)
2nd	Sarah Jane Tonge	(1953)
3rd	Tony Hayes	(1997)
4th	Frances Dare	(1969)
	Clarence Cooper	(1969)
5th	Elsie Davis	(1984)
	Charles Edward Cooper	(1945)
	Alice Robinson	(2001)
6th	John Hodgson	(1957)
	Rebecca Wigglesworth	(1968)
7th	Donald Arthur Jackson	(1986)
11th	Walter George Hartley	(1961)
14th	Arthur Jones	(1951)
18th	William Sadler Stannard	(1978)
19th	Harry Butterfield	(1968)
20th	Gladys Gwendoline Richards	(1980)
21st	Alice Ferguson	(1981)
	Winifred Dare	(1985)
22nd	Bernard Norton	(1992)
23rd	Ritty Hill	(1966)
	Jack Blackburn	(1996)
26th	John William Barratt	(1939)
	Albert Hammond	(1970)
27th	Harold Potts	(1982)
29th	John Ayres	(1971)
	Hilda Dennett	(1978)
	William & Emily Spence	(1998)
30th	William Dennett	(1978)
31st	Doris Gibson	(2001)

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