

St Mary's Northchurch Newsletter



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December 2015

Church enquiries to:
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Celebrating Christmas

One of the highlights of Christmas is the reading at the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. It is the first chapter of St John's Gospel that is introduced as the mystery of the incarnation. St John describes how the Word that was in the beginning with God was God and now "became flesh." This is a remarkable claim. Two thousand years ago it was accepted that God can't be a human being, but then we meet Jesus. He did all the things humans do, but he said and did things – forgiving sins, performing signs, speaking for God with authority – nobody but God could do. The New Testament does not offer an explanation of Jesus' humanity and divinity, but they testify to the mystery that God was "in Christ," and in Jesus humanity and divinity meet.

The month of December is the time to prepare and get ready for Christmas. There are a number of special services/events taking place and everyone is very welcome to come along. On **Saturday December 5th** between 10.00am –Noon there will be an **Advent Quiet Morning: Watching and Waiting in Prayer**. On **December 13th** the Sunday Club Groups will be leading a **Nativity Service at 10.00am**. This is very informal and good fun so very suitable for younger children. On the evening of the 13th by way of contrast is a **Taize Service**. This provides through the music, readings and silence a time for reflection and prayer. The following week on **December 20th** Connie the Youth and Families Worker will be preaching at the 10.00am and then in the evening there will be a **Candlelit Carol Service** at 6.00pm. On **Christmas Eve** the **Crib Service** will be at 5.00pm and **Midnight Mass**

at 11.30pm. On **Christmas Day** there will be a Communion Service at 8.00am and a Eucharist at 10.00am. If you are coming on Christmas Day please do ask the children to bring a Christmas gift. We are also looking forward to welcoming St Mary's, Westfield and Bridgewater Schools for their Carol and Christmas celebrations.

If you would like to know more about any of the above then please do get in contact and please do come along as we celebrate the mystery that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. In a world where difference and the focus on the outsider seems to becoming more prevalent, the themes of peace and reconciliation continue to be as relevant and searching as they ever have been in the past.

Rev Jonathan Gordon

New Alpha Course at St Mary's



Do you fancy exploring in more detail the basic of the Christian faith? If so, why not come along to our next Alpha course starting in the New Year? The 10 week course allows for a

friendly, non-pressured setting which focuses on exploring more about the Christian faith. We don't know exactly when we are going to run it yet, but if you are in any way interested, let Jonathan Gordon know, or email info@stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk, and we can keep you updated and give you more information.

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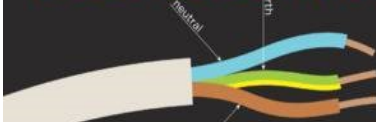


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This Month in

By the end of 1915, Great Britain had been at war with Germany and her allies for seventeen months. So far, the families in Northchurch with husbands or sons serving in the armed forces had escaped relatively lightly. Drummer Walter Dell and Private Charles Talbot had died in 1914 and Private William Mustill of Cow Roast was now a Prisoner of War in Germany. Only three men with Northchurch connections had been killed during 1915 – Captain Arthur Noel Loxley RN in January and two brothers, Privates Frederick and Walter Geary, both killed during the summer fighting on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey. In November, a Memorial Service for the Geary brothers had taken place in St Mary’s church.

The volunteers from Northchurch that had enlisted during the early months of the war were still in training in Great Britain or had only just joined their new regiments in France. Many had yet to experience the full horrors of the war. Meanwhile, Northchurch men from the pre-war Regular and Territorial Armies had been in France since the beginning. These included Captain Nigel Hadden, Royal Field Artillery, the son of Major General Sir Charles Hadden, the Chairman of Northchurch Parish Council, Private Philip Feist, Middlesex Regiment, Private Edwin Morgan of the Bedfordshire Regiment and his brother Lionel, serving with the Hertfordshire Regiment.

During 1915, the Western Front had become a stalemate with the front line remaining effectively unchanged during the whole year with a series of trenches now stretching from the French coast to the Swiss border. Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had planned to open a second front in Turkey in support of Great Britain’s ally, Russia, but this had disastrously backfired after the landings at

December 1915

Gallipoli. In December 1915, troops started to be evacuated from Gallipoli under conditions of great secrecy; the Royal Marines, under the command of Captain Vere Loxley RM, were to be the last to leave in January 1916.



THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1918

The Germans had also tried to break the stalemate on the Western Front during April 1915 by introducing a new terror weapon, gas, during the fighting at Ypres. The British in turn responded the following September during the Battle of Loos by releasing chlorine gas for the first time. All the Northchurch men who had taken part in these battles escaped relatively unscathed.

Christmas 1915 would see no reoccurrence of the so-called “Christmas Truce” of the previous year, which Edwin Morgan had witnessed firsthand. Instead of the exchange of gifts and fraternisation that took place in some areas of the front line, Christmas 1915 saw the exchange of artillery shells and rifle fire.

The men and their families in Northchurch were extremely grateful that they had escaped the effect of much of the carnage of 1915. I was not to last; 1916 would see some of the fiercest fighting and the highest British casualty rates of the whole war. It would also see the introduction, for the first time, of conscription.

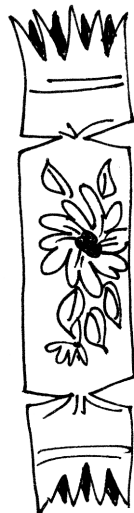
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The Church

Edgar Wille

The phrase 'The Church' is not generally used to describe a particular religious denomination. It expresses all the Christian institutions viewed as one, which share more than they disagree about concerning God and Jesus Christ.

The Church is described as the 'body' of Christ, a community with a 'mind' – a way of seeing life's meaning; a 'heart' – the feelings they have about God and how they should behave; 'feet' – the way they should 'walk' or proceed through life. Many other analogies are also found in the Bible to describe the Church of Christ.

Being a member of the Church is not just being an individual with a personal sense of God's existence. Members are not isolated units displaying personal loyalty to God and Jesus. They belong to a community which ideally works together to reflect God's ideas and requirements, in which all the members support one another in the endeavour to please God. So we read in the Bible a message to Church members with a collective tone:

'We should not stay away from our meetings (services) as some do, but rather encourage one another as we see the day of the Lord drawing near' (Hebrews 10 v.25).

Being a Christian is not a solitary matter, but a collective effort to help one another in the experiences of this life and ultimately a move into God's coming kingdom in which the members of the Church who have stayed loyal will receive 'eternal life'.

Statistics tell us that the numerical strength of the Church is waning in many places, but as I see Christians coming up to share communion in memory of Christ's victory over sin and death, I realise that these people are my brothers and sisters, and that we are a community dedicated to Jesus Christ and mutual help.

If you are not a member of such a Church, come along one Sunday morning and feel the concern that the members have for one another. It may be the very community you need to get through life to the glorious beyond.

'Prevention Really is Better than Cure'

Dasu Yakbu, Christian Aid Project Officer for Malaria

During the Advent Carol Service, on Sunday 29th November, Dasu Yakubu, the Project Officer for Malaria, spoke about the work he does for Christian Aid in , Nigeria.

Worldwide a child dies of malaria every 60 seconds. Malaria cases in Nigeria, in West Africa, account for a quarter of all malaria cases across the continent, killing an estimated 250,000 children under the age of five every year.

Pregnant women who contract malaria are particularly vulnerable: the disease can result in a higher risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth, severe anaemia and babies being born with low-birth weight – a leading cause of child mortality. In addition, pregnancy also reduces a woman's immunity to malaria, leaving her three times more likely to suffer serious consequences as a result

of malaria infection than a non-pregnant woman. A lack of knowledge and poor access to information means malaria accounts for 11% of all maternal deaths in Nigeria.

Some quotes from Dasu:

'There is a great need in these communities. Bad sanitation is a breeding space for mosquitoes and it's about knowledge, attitudes and practice on malaria prevention.'

'We want to now reduce the malaria incidence by 50% in women and children and the under-fives in these communities.'

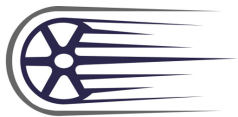
'People don't know what to do with them (nets) which can lead to misuse. Someone once wore a net as a wedding gown!'

'The government has distributed nets but we need more emphasis on the area of net monitoring, malaria education and good prevention techniques.'

'We also use our malaria programme as a tool for peace.'(on our 'interfaith' work)

This Christmas the UK Government will match every pound raised for Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal, meaning even more people could be saved from the devastating effects of malaria in Nigeria.





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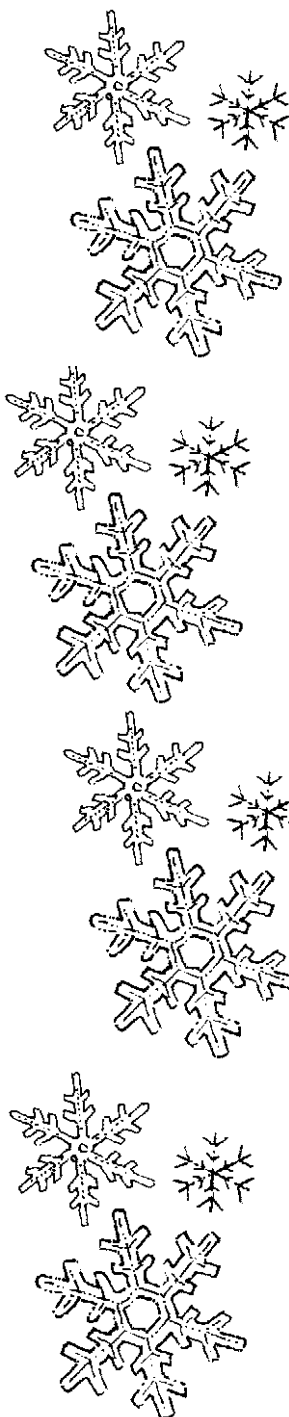
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St Mary's Primary School News: November 2015



St Mary's have had a very busy sporting month. Our Year 5s attended a Cross Country event at Ashlyns School and both our boys' and girls' teams finished in second place. This meant they were the overall winners of the competition. A huge well done goes to Lucy Cooley who recorded the fastest time for a Year 5 girl in Dacorum.

In atrocious weather conditions, our Year 6 Boys competed in the Year 6 District Cross Country Championships at Adeyfield School where we finished 6th out of fifteen teams, which was a great effort as three of our five runners were Year 5 Boys! They acquitted themselves admirably, with Olly Painter coming 2nd and Jamie Powell 4th. Also running were David Berry 35th, Sam Baker 49th and Ben Cooley 75th.

Year 3 and 4 started competing in an inter-school skipping competition – Skip2bfit. This involves the children skipping for two minutes. The number of skips is then recorded and compared with the results of other schools. This week Year 4 completed 2434 skips at an average of 97 skips each and our Year 3 completed 1921 skips at an average of 77 skips each.

Year 2 competed in a Tri-Golf event. They had the opportunity to experience the new gym at Ashlyns School and try out many different golfing challenges. All the children had a great time and behaved impeccably.

Our Year 5/6 mixed football team have their first competitive matches in November. On the 10th November they are playing Greenway Primary School; on the 12th November they are playing Boxmoor Primary School; on the 19th November they are playing Hammond Academy and on the 26th November they are playing Bridgewater Primary School. Good luck to St Mary's.

After Harvest Service in Church the children decided to build a wall of hope in School to help the children in

Uganda and all monies raised will go to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal to help disabled children and their families in South West Uganda. The children raised an amazing £322.52!!

At our Remembrance Day Service we were honoured by a visit from the Standard Bearer with the Royal British Legion. This was a lovely addition to the service and he presented us with our own Standard to display at school. The children sang beautifully and their presentations were very moving. Thank you to Jonathan for conducting the service, to Mrs. Archbold for organising it and to our Chair of Governors, Alan Kemp, for arranging the visit.

On Thursday 12th November, we were lucky enough to have a visit from the Bishop of Hertford. After a welcome song from Reception and a tour of the school, Bishop Michael was interviewed by the Collective Worship Group and School Council, using a selection of questions from pupils within the school. The children really enjoyed the experience and Bishop Michael commented on how good (and hard) some of the questions were.

Our Prospective Parent Tour dates are:

Reception and Nursery Prospective Parent Tour

Friday 8th January at 11.00 a.m.

Nursery Prospective Parent Tours

Tuesday 2nd February at 9.30 a.m.

Thursday 3rd March at 9.30 a.m.

We are still urgently seeking someone to take on the paid position of school crossing patrol. The hours are 8.30–9.00 am and 3.05–3.40 pm term time only. The uniform and training is provided by Herts County Council. If you would like more information, please contact Mrs Young in the School Office on 01442 389040. Thank you.

Wot! No Beanz?

I chatted to the Manager of the **foodbank** last time I took gifts from St Mary's. They have their stores well organised and stacked, labelled and in date order, so they can make up boxes for people in need confidently and quickly. They have a whole alcove of baked beans! And another stack across the aisle! **More than 1,500 tins of beans in stock!!** We didn't calculate how many **gallons of soup** they have in store, but there's more than enough to meet their likely demand over the winter. You can always pick up a **tin of vegetables (including tinned tomatoes), or some sugar, or UHT milk, or long life fruit juice** and be confident that your gift will soon leave the **foodbank** in a good cause.

Valerie Clark

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Christmas Services at St Mary's



6th December *Second Sunday of Advent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist: Sunday Club & Creche
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St Bartholomew's

13th December *Third Sunday of Advent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Christmas Nativity (with crèche)
6.00pm Taize Worship



20th December *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)
(with crèche)
6.00pm Carols by Candlelight



24th December *Christmas Eve*

5.00pm Crib Service
11.30pm Midnight Mass



25th December *Christmas Day*

10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)
6.00pm Advent Carol Service



27th December *St John the Evangelist*

No 8.00am or 6.00pm service
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)

3rd January *Second Sunday of Christmas*

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00am Parish Eucharist (CW)

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Contacts for the Newsletter

Distribution to Valerie Clark, 862613

Advertising & editorial by email to the
Editor Mrs Jill Hipson

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No newsletter in January.

Next issue: February 2016.

All advertisements must be paid for before they can be
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The Monday Club

December 14th 2.00pm

Christmas Tea with Carols and Readings

For more information please contact:

Joan Downhill on 865821 or

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All church enquiries to:
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