

Preparing for Christmas



At this time of year a lot of activities are directed towards preparing for Christmas celebrations. Several of the articles in this issue look forward to all that we are going to do to get ready for Christmas Day. In one article the focus is on getting our cards posted, in another the children speak about events which will happen over the next few weeks ending with Christmas Eve when 'there is only one sleep to go'; at Firs Farm they are busy preparing poultry for Christmas dinners and the Street Pastors are preparing for busy nights on the streets. In all the busy-ness of preparation let's take time to reflect on the poem on p5 which reminds us who the baby in the manger is and his impact on the world.

In this issue

<i>Christmas events calendar</i>	p2
<i>Through the letter box</i>	p3
<i>What happens at Christmas?</i>	p3
<i>It was a dark and stormy night – Street Pastors</i>	p4
<i>A Friendship Club Christmas</i>	p4
<i>Christmas preparations at Firs Farm</i>	p5
<i>Christmas reflection: 'When you are a man'</i>	p5
<i>Church news</i>	p6
<i>'His influence spread far and wide' – a tribute</i>	p6
<i>A Christmas Quiz</i>	p6
<i>Pantomime for 2015: Alice in Wonderland</i>	p7
<i>Found at Bath Abbey</i>	p7
<i>'Letter from Jesus'</i>	p7
<i>Regular church events</i>	p8

Carol Service Sunday 14th December 6.30pm


*A special Carol Service which marks a remembrance
of the Christmas of 1914
including carols sung by the children's choir*

Carols at the Hammer and Pincers Come and sing favourite carols Thursday 18th December from 7.30pm



*Christingle
on Christmas Eve at
5.30pm in the church*

Christmas Calendar of events

Messy Christmas and decorating the Christmas tree	Saturday 29 th November 2 – 4 pm in the church hall with service at 3.30 pm in the church	Christmas crafts and decorating the Christmas tree for children and their parents and carers. Service to decorate the tree at 3.30, all welcome to the service
Pre-school Christmas Fair	Saturday 6 th December 10 am – 12 in the church hall	Coffee and Cake and lots of stalls to support the work of Bents Green Pre- school
Pre-school Nativity	Tuesday 9 th December 10.30 am in the church	Pre-school nativity play followed by coffee and mince-pies
WORK Ltd Christmas Service	Wednesday 10 th Decembert 10.30 am in the church	All Welcome (Please note 10.30 - not the usual Wednesday service time)
Manse Pies – the usual festival of the Manse pie!	Saturday 13 th December 10 am – 12.30 at the Manse 40, Wyvern Gardens S17 3PR	Come and squeeze in a mince pie and a cup of coffee. All Welcome
Carol Service Including carols from the children's choir	Sunday 14 th December 6.30 pm Rev Louise Grosberg A special Carol Service which marks a remembrance of the Christmas of 1914, a short period of time when there was a truce on the front line, Silent Night was sung, and a football match broke out.	Come along and receive a commemorative copy of a booklet produced by Tear Fund to remember that Christmas of 1914, to sing well known carols, and to pray for peace for today's world.
Friendship Club Christmas Celebration	Tuesday 16 th December 12.45 pm in the church hall	Christmas celebrations at the Friendship Club: Pie and peas, carols and cake!
Carols at the Hammer and Pincers	Thursday 18 th December 7.30 pm in the Hammer and Pincers, Ringinglow Road	Come and sing favourite carols
Girls Brigade Coffee Morning	Saturday 20 th December 10 am - 12 in the church hall	Including stalls and games along with coffee, mincepies and cakes in support of Christian Aid
Christingle	Wednesday 24 th December at 5.30 pm in the church Christmas Eve celebration for all Rev Louise Grosberg	
Christmas Day service	10.30 am on Christmas Day Service to be taken by Glenn Evans	

Through the Letter box

It's lovely at Christmas to start to receive through your letter box something other than bills and someone trying to sell you something. It's also a satisfying feeling to post all your cards finally in the post box, and to take the rest round to neighbours and friends, saving on postage, and post them through letter boxes yourself.

However, posting letters or cards through letter boxes is not always easy! Not so long ago I went to post something through someone's letter box and I could not find the letter box anywhere. I walked all around the house, examined both doors, went and looked again and could not find it and there was no obvious gap in the wall or the door to post it through. I decided the only thing I could do was post it through the mail. It turned out that the letter box was at the front gate!

God so wanted throughout the years to give us good news. God always longed for a relationship with his people, that was not one sided. In the Old Testament we can read how God constantly rescues his people, He knows who we are, and therefore how we need to live, he wrote the blue print after all.



But people constantly thought they could live without a relationship with God, and they turned their attention to other things that got in the way. This went on for many years, they just seemed to easily forget that God was wanting them to receive good news of his love, but it was as if they were hiding their letter boxes under all sorts of rubbish, so they struggled to truly receive.

Until the time came that God decided to cut a hole in the wall. It wasn't just a letter, it was a child, and we are told about his arrival in advance: "they will call him Immanuel meaning 'God with us'". Jesus, our good news came to live amongst us.

Wherever your letter box is situated, God has more than just a Christmas card to send to you this Christmas, so allow some of your walls of defence to come down, and allow the love of God into your lives through the gift of Jesus, 'God with us' in 2014 and 2015!

Have a very happy Christmas and New Year. Louise

What happens at Christmas?

There is so much to do at Bents Green Church as Advent begins and Christmas approaches and it is all really fun and exciting.

Messy church is always great but we especially like it at Christmas because the huge tree goes up in church. At Messy we can all make decorations and we get to decorate the tree afterwards. Louise does a little service with a fun quiz or something, and we sing and do actions and then there are buns for everyone.

We go to Lighthouse after school on Wednesday too and we are already doing fun Christmas crafts and have got the sparkles out. We have made stained glass nativity decorations and baubles already!

We also look forward to the lighting of the Advent candle each week in church as Christmas gets closer and closer, and singing carols in the service before we go out to our kid's clubs. We also love getting involved in the Christmas singing group of young people which Christele and Glenn organise each year. At the moment we are busy practising the Christmas songs that we will perform in church at the Carol Service and at the Christingle on Christmas Eve. Both are really exciting as we get to use the microphones to perform to everyone. But the Christingle is really good because you can dress up and help perform the Nativity and everyone gets a Christingle orange with a candle and sweets stuck in it with cocktail sticks. And everyone is always feeling so excited by then because it is Christmas Eve and so only one sleep to go! **By Isabel, Olivia and Tilly**



With some of our Christmas crafts

'It was a dark and stormy night.....'

Every other Friday night in the weeks leading up to Christmas I will be with a team of Street Pastors in the City centre. We meet at 10.30pm in the Peace Gardens, equip ourselves, pray and set off. I usually carry a rucksack containing what we need. The main items are bottles of water, flip-flops for girls who can't walk in their shoes anymore, space blankets, a first aid kit and lots of lollipops, which are popular with most people.



Each team also carries a clicker to record the glass bottles we pick up, a dictaphone to record the main conversations we have (eg bought cheeseburger for homeless man, prayed with girl worried about her mum), and a two-way radio which links us to club doormen and the central controller, who can call the police or paramedics.

A team is four people, usually two men and two women. We walk in pairs, a pair on each side of the street. The key is to walk slowly. We talk to club doormen, who are always pleased to see us, and seek conversations with whoever wants to talk. It is surprising what conversations occur - when people have had a drink or two they are often more ready to talk about the deep things in life. People often want to know who we are (Christians from local churches), what we get paid (nothing), why we do it (because God loves us and we want to share his love by helping people keep safe, or words on those lines). We get lots of thanks and sometimes a hug. We stop for a drink about 12.30 (Subway give us 20% discount), and usually finish between 3 and 4 am.

Street Pastors began 10 years ago in Brixton, and now every town of any size has teams out on busy nights. There is good national and local organisation, and a good programme of training. There is always a need for more pastors, for instance, for a new team on Ecclesall Road. Have a word with me if you are interested. You need to be a member of a church and at least 18 - there is no upper age limit! **John Wilkins**

A Friendship Club Christmas

At Friendship Club, unlike Scrooge, we like to think that Christmas is a time of celebration and we look forward to listening to The Sheaf Singers entertain us with their carols, as well as our own carols (and cake!) and a Victorian Christmas.

Merry Christmas! ... What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, and not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented against you? If I would work my will ... every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

CHARLES DICKENS, A Christmas Carol

We are aware that, for many people, Christmas is a time of hardship, and we support the charity HARC (Homeless and Rootless at Christmas) which is based at Sheffield Cathedral and provides food and warmth, over the Christmas period, for many people in Sheffield who are less fortunate than ourselves.

We are fortunate at Bents Green in lots of ways, one of which is our Tuesday afternoons when we all meet together for fun, entertainment and chat. We have enjoyed several excellent entertainers and speakers, including a very moving presentation for Remembrance Day, and we look forward to more in 2015.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to welcoming you in 2015. **Pat Hutchinson**



'Christmas doesn't come from a store, maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more....' Doctor Seuss

Christmas preparations at Firs Farm

Continuing the series about Bents Green shops and organisations

Driving into the farmyard at Firs Farm felt like entering another world. I set off from the Bents Green suburbs and only a couple of minutes later I was driving into the farmyard of a busy, active, working farm and surrounded by sheds, barns, farm machinery and livestock. On each side of the track cattle were feeding, pushing their heads through the bars from the shed where they are kept on winter days. I drove to the far end of the farm, parked near the house, rang the bell at the farm shop and Angela Battye came out to meet me.



Angela and her husband, Jim, have lived at the farm for 28 years. They both grew up on farms in the north of Sheffield and when Firs Farm became available they were able to move here. Their three children have grown up in Bents Green, attending Bents Green Playgroup and local schools. All three have jobs linked to agriculture and the youngest, John, works with them at Firs Farm.

The farm is a mixed farm with beef cattle, sheep, Christmas turkeys and geese and crops such as cereals and potatoes. As advertised on the sign at the gate, there is a farm shop selling 'potatoes with taste' and eggs and taking orders for Christmas poultry. They also offer bespoke fabrication, making items such as farm gates, troughs and other equipment.

The 160 free-range geese are the most visible from the road. They are happy outside and like a predictable routine. They came to the farm in May as day old goslings and, from a few weeks old, they live in the field during the day and come in to one of the sheds at night. Radio 2 plays all night in the shed and seems to have a calming effect on them! The 250 turkeys are reared in large straw filled barns on the farm. Turkeys are not as hardy as geese and would

not thrive so well outside in the winter (the farm is around 1000ft above sea level). All the work of preparing the birds for the Christmas table is done at the farm and family and friends are called in to help with the plucking. Jim's grandma began rearing geese over 80 years ago so the family have plenty of experience. December is a busy month!

Lambing time begins around the end of March and again all the family are needed to help out. The sheep (about 450 of them) need attention nearly 24 hours a day for almost 3 weeks. They also have around 90 cattle, living inside in the winter eating home grown cereals, silage and hay and in summer outside in the fields around the farm. The fattened cattle and lambs are sold in Bakewell market.

Angela spends a lot of time on paperwork for the farm. As well as VAT and accounting there are a lot of records relating to the livestock which legally have to be kept. The sheep and cattle are subject to traceability rules and all movements on and off the farm and any medicines used must be recorded, as well as all cattle births and deaths. Field records must be kept to show where the animals have grazed and all the work done on the fields. It's a busy life.



Contact details: Angela Battye, Firs Farm, Ringinglow Road S11 7TD, Tel 0114 2301169, email: ambattye@btinternet.com

When you are a man



Little boy,
What will you become when you are a man?
I am already what I will be
Before all things beyond and far
In all to come, as yet unseen
I am beginning, end and all between.

Little boy,
To whom will you go when you are a man?
I will reach to the blind and the lame
My heart will break for those in bonds
Freedom will come to those who fear
Good news be proclaimed to the poor who hear.

Little boy,
How will you die when you are a man?
I will die on a cross of wood
My arms stretched out in a darkening sky
My gift of life in the stench of death
For you my friend, for you.

Little boy,
How will you rise when you are a man?
I will arise in the gentle dawn
To the song of the birds and the cry of joy
The path to heaven is open wide
By way of my cross and self denied.

Little boy,
How will you live when you are a man?
I will live in the hearts of those
Who crown me Christ and Lord of all
My Spirit will burn like flame of fire
My breath of life my power inspire
When I am a man

Church News

Toilet Twinning

For our Harvest appeal this year we asked for money to provide safe and healthy toilet facilities in parts of the world where these are not always available. We are delighted to have raised £696.51p, enough for nearly 12 toilets. We are very grateful to everyone whose generosity has made this possible.

When we get details of where the toilets are going to be, we will let you know, so watch this space. **Anne Evans**

Mission-shaped Ministry Course

The MSM course begins on January 24th and will meet monthly over ten months. I found it an inspiring course with many excellent local and national speakers and good discussions with fellow participants. It helped me to think about how churches can adapt to our changing society while still being based on Biblical principles. I highly recommend it! There was no compulsory homework but lots of recommendations of good books to read. There is a fee for the course but help may be available. See Louise or myself if you want to know more or look at www.missionshapedministry.org. **Tricia North**

A Thanksgiving Service for the life of Mrs Margaret McKay will be held at Bents Green Church on Friday 28th November.

'His influence spread far and wide': a tribute to Colin Nowell

Colin Nowell was born in Wilmslow in 1928. He attended Manchester Grammar School and did National Service in the RAF. Perhaps to the surprise of those who knew him later, he was a very skilled amateur conjuror, a member of the Magic Circle and a sailing tutor. In his 20s Colin heard the call to ministry and trained at Handsworth Theological College. He met Janet at Lee Abbey in Devon and they married in 1961.

Colin served in six circuits, at Bridgnorth, Sowerby Bridge, Warsop, Bolsover, Blackburn and Sheffield Ecclesall. In his first appointment Colin worked to bring two churches together in what is thought to be the first LEP in British Methodism.

From these early years Colin was committed to the renewal of the church. This led to two linked passions which marked out his ministry. The first was involvement in charismatic renewal and in particular in the healing ministry. Colin played an active role in the Wholeness through Christ movement. The second was in lay witness. In 1976, together with Dr Roger Haining from Seattle, Colin brought the lay witness movement from the USA to Britain and set up the organisation which, during nearly 40 years, has enabled a thousand lay witness missions to take place in local Methodist churches.

In 1989 after much heart searching, Colin left the Methodist ministry to work with Janet on prayer counselling and healing. They found a great unmet need. [At this point he and Janet became members of Bents Green Methodist Church]

In manner Colin was quiet, gentle, modest, with a lovely smile and sense of humour and always an encourager. He made the love and power of God real to many people. His influence spread far and wide. His family and his many friends will miss him greatly. *Abridged from the obituary in the Methodist Recorder written by John Wilkins*



A Christmas Quiz

Most people think they know all there is to know about the Christmas story. Here's a chance to test your knowledge. How well can you do?

devised by Derek North

1.	How many wise men visited Jesus after his birth? (See Matthew chapter 2 verses 1-12.)	(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) we don't know?
2.	Matthew could trace Jesus' ancestry back to Abraham. How far back did Luke manage? (See Luke chapter 3 verse 38.)	(a) Abraham (b) Noah (c) Adam
3.	Who was mentioned in Matthew's list of Jesus' relatives but not in Luke's? (See Matthew 1:16 and Luke 3:23.)	(a) Joseph (b) Mary?
4.	According to Luke, what was Mary's relationship to Joseph at the time they went to Bethlehem for the birth? (See Luke 2:5.)	Was Mary (a) married to Joseph (b) only pledged to get married to Joseph?
5.	After Jesus' birth where did his parents first take him, according to Luke (See Luke 2:22-39.)	(a) Egypt (b) Nazareth (c) Jerusalem?

2015 Pantomime: Alice in Wonderland

“Spotlight” is very pleased to invite you to attend our 2015 Pantomime, a treat for all the family. It takes place on Friday 20th February at 7.30pm, Saturday 21st February at 7.30pm, and Sunday 22nd February at 4.30pm. If you apply for tickets before the end of January you are almost certain to be guaranteed a place.

Just as Alice increases in size when she eats the mushroom, so does our cast, but without eating mushrooms. Indeed, with 90 children and young people taking part this year, there is not mushroom on the stage at all. But on the stage there will be all your favourite characters: the White Rabbit, the Queen of Hearts, the Caterpillar, the Mock Turtle, the Dormouse, the March Hare, the Hatter, and of course Alice herself. You will see her increase in size and shrink before your very eyes. There will also be songs, dances, flamingos playing croquet, and wonderful jokes, some of them even new.

Tickets are free, although voluntary donations are welcome. Contact Glenn Evans: email dglennevans@hotmail.co.uk or phone 235 1057 or text 07814 905883.



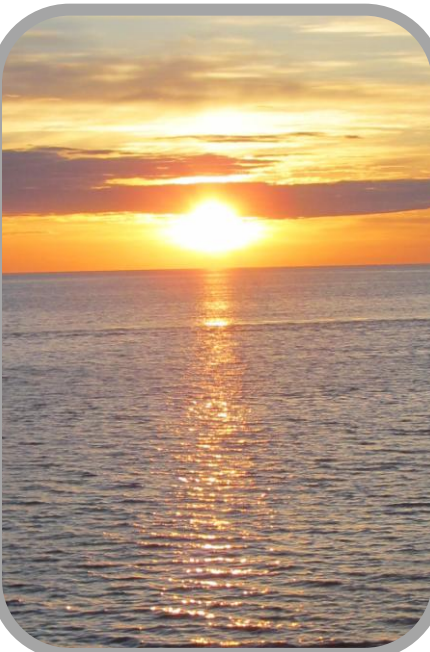
From a leaflet found at Bath Abbey



Jesus was born in an obscure Middle Eastern town called Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. During his first 30 years he shared the daily life and work of an ordinary home. For the next three years he went about teaching people about God and healing sick people by the shores of Lake Galilee. He called 12 ordinary men to be his helpers.

He had no money. He wrote no books. He commanded no army. He wielded no political power. During his life he never travelled more than 200 miles in any direction. He was executed by being nailed to a cross at the age of 33.

Today nearly 2 billion people throughout the world worship Jesus as divine – the Son of God. Their experience has convinced them that in the wonders of nature we see God as our loving Father; in the person of Jesus we discover God as Son; and in our daily lives we encounter this same God as Spirit. Jesus is our way to finding God: we learn about Jesus by reading the Bible, particularly the New Testament and we meet him directly in our spiritual experience.



Letter from Jesus (excerpts from letter read at a recent Wednesday morning service)

Yesterday I saw you walking and laughing with your friends; I hoped that soon you'd want me to walk along with you too.

So I painted you a sunset to close your day and whispered a cool breeze to refresh you.

I waited – you never called – I just kept on loving you.

As you fell asleep last night I spilled moonlight onto your face

– trickling down your cheeks as so many tears have. I wanted to comfort you.

The next day I exploded a brilliant sunrise into glorious morning for you

But you woke up late and rushed off to work – you didn't notice.

My sky became cloudy and my tears were the rain.

I try to say it in the quiet of the green meadow and in the blue sky.

The wind whispers my love throughout the treetops and spills it into the vibrant colours of all the flowers.

I shout it to you in the thunder of the great waterfalls and compose love songs for birds to sing for you.

I warm you with the clothing of my sunshine and perfume the air with nature's sweet scent

My love for you is deeper than any ocean and greater than any need in your heart.

Author unknown

Services at Bents Green Methodist Church

All are welcome at these services

Sunday mornings at 10.30 am

During morning services there is a crèche for little ones, Sparks Club for younger children and Sunday Club for older children

Sunday evenings at 6.30 pm

An informal service often including tea, coffee and time to chat about subjects relating to the Christian faith.

Wednesdays at 10 am: Midweek service

You will find the Christmas services and many other Christmas events listed on p.2 of this newsletter.

Activities for Children and Young People

New members are welcome at these activities at the church.
Contact the named person for more details.

For younger children

Crèche	0-3	Sun 10.30am	Ruth	2686507
Mums & Toddlers	0-4	Wed 10.00am	Irene	2660612
See & Know	0-4	Fri 1.30pm	Ruth	2686507

For children and young people

Girls' Brigade	5-18	Thurs eve	Marian	2361316
Football	11-18	Fri 5-7pm	Glenn	2351057
Holiday Club	5-11	Summer	Cherry	07853278612
Lighthouse	5-11	Wed 3.45	Cherry	07853278612
Messy Services	3-12	Festivals	Sue	2307556
Sparks	4-11	Sun 10.30	John	2307556
Sunday Club	12-18	Sun 10.30	Sue	2307556
Torch	Teens	Tues 6.30	Cherry	07853278612
Lampstand	12-18	Fri 8-10	Cherry	07853278612
Badminton	All ages	Tues eve	Don	2662218
Drama group	All ages	Various	Glenn	2351057
Pantomime	All ages	Annually	Glenn	2351057
Musical	All ages	Annually	Christèle	07912207661

Friendship Club Programme:

Tuesdays at 2 pm in the Church Hall (enter by side door opposite the shops). A warm welcome awaits any who would like to come along – especially men and women over 50

Tues 2 nd Dec	SHEAF SINGERS
Tues 9 th Dec	A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS [JENNY BLAND]
Tues 16 th Dec	CAROLS & CAKE (Pie and peas from 12.45!)
Tues 6 th Jan	J G GRAVES
Tues 13 th Jan	SUZANNE BINGHAM TALKS
Tues 20 th Jan	MAGISTRATES
Tues 27 th Jan	SHEFFIELD CEMETERY

For more information contact: Pat Hutchinson: 0114 2497280
and Jackie Smith: 0114 3483069

Minister: Rev Louise Grosberg
Tel. 0114 2363157

Email:

Louise.Grosberg@btinternet.com

Church website:

www.bentsgreenmethodist.org.uk

Church office answerphone:
0114 236 1912

For Room Bookings contact:
Peter Larder

Tel. 0114 2686507

Hilltop Editor:

Tricia North

Email: tn-bg@live.co.uk

If you would like to receive Hilltop by email (and in colour) please email the editor.

Please send material for the next issue to the editor by Sun 18th January 2015

Coffee Mornings in the Church:

On the first Saturday of every month from 10.30 am – 12

Knit & Natter:

Wednesday 12 – 3 pm every week
Bring your knitting or come and knit with patterns and wool provided. In the Church.
Contact Sue: 0114 2682334

Harbour Coffee:

On Wednesdays in term-time from 3.30 – 5.45 pm in the Music Room

Tea, Toast & Time 4 Thinking:

Thursdays @ 10.30 am fortnightly. Upstairs in the Church Lounge. A time to reflect on what following Jesus is all about. A place for all those seeking answers. Carers of young children especially welcome.

Contact Sue: Tel 0114 2307556

House groups

Many people in the church belong to a house group and meet regularly to pray together, read the bible and talk about the Christian faith. If you are interested in joining a house group contact Sue: Tel 0114 2307556