



Christmas Carol Service

Sunday 20th December 6.30 pm

Including songs from the children's choir

Coffee morning

Saturday 5th December

10 am until 12 noon.

Refreshments, stalls, games, quiz supporting Christian Aid

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Christingle Service

Christmas Eve 5.30 pm

Christmas Day family service

10.30 am

Christmas events at Bents Green Church

Sat 28 th Nov	Messy Church 2 - 4 pm Christmas crafts and decorating the Christmas tree - for children aged 3 -12 and their families
Sun 29 th Nov	Church Breakfast 9.30 am (before the morning service)
Sat 5 th Dec	Girls Brigade Coffee morning 10 -12 noon (for Christian Aid)
Sun 6 th Dec	Christmas Cafe celebrations with traditional carols 6.30 pm
Tue 8 th Dec	Pre-school Nativity in the church 11am. All welcome
Wed 9 th Dec	W.O.R.K. Ltd Christmas Service 10.30 am. All welcome
Sat 12 th Dec	Carols at Sainburys, Archer Road 10.30 - 11.30 am (Come and join the singers in aid of W.O.R.K. Ltd)
Sun 13 th Dec	Christmas Cafe celebrations with contemporary carols 6.30 pm
Sat 19 th Dec	Church open for coffee, tea and refreshments 10 – 12 noon
Sun 20 th Dec	Carol Service 6.30 pm
Wed 23 rd Dec	Carols in the Hammer & Pincers 7pm for 7.30 pm
Thu 24 th Dec	Christingle Service 5.30 pm
Christmas Day	Christmas Day morning service 10.30 am

He is the reason for the season

Christmas is approaching. It is the time when some of us are looking forward to be with our loved ones, sharing and caring for each other. However, for some people this is a time that brings back memories of sadness or even feelings of loneliness or loss. Inevitably each of us sees Christmas differently.

For some of us the preparations for this festive season can become a burden rather than bring a sense of excitement.

Pressures to get all the jobs done can be tiring mentally and physically. They take away the true meaning of Christmas itself. It is up to each of us to decide what is best so that we can celebrate this precious time with happiness and enjoyment.

As a Christian I believe the true meaning of Christmas is about the wonderful love of God for all of us. He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ to the world to save humanity from punishment for sin and to give a true life to all those who believe. His love can help to fill any emptiness in the heart, any feeling of loneliness, and give us hope and joy.

In the preparations for Christmas and over the holiday period itself, let us not forget about the unfailing love of God given to us through Jesus Christ because He is the reason for the season. **Nini Brady**





Making room for Christmas

Every Christmas we have to move the furniture around a bit, to fit in a Christmas tree. It's all a bit of a squeeze, it's obviously an odd shape and requires to be near electricity so we can plug the lights in but somehow we manage it. Then after Christmas everything goes back into its right order again, with the exception of pine leaves that seem to linger until about February!

I wonder as we enter advent if we make room for Jesus in our Christmas schedules? And if we do, how much room we make? I think we often underestimate the size of the one who comes as Christ and moves into our neighbourhoods. We make room for a baby in swaddling clothes, and then we think we can put everything back 'in order' after Christmas.

We forget that as we welcome the Christ, we welcome, not just a tiny baby, but a man on a mission, the Christ who turns the world upside down and is in essence seen as a rebel by the world who he comes into.

John the Baptist goes ahead of Jesus and calls not just for a corner of our lives, but for a way to be prepared, for every valley to be filled in and every mountain and hill made low, preparing a way for the Christ who will come. The question for us all, not just for the innkeepers, is will you make room?

Will you let him speak louder than the John Lewis adverts? Will you let the quiet whisper of the rebel speak into your Christmas traditions and must haves? Will you enable him to help you unwrap forgiveness?

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Don't be surprised when you come to make everything neat and tidy after Christmas that the one who comes has turned over tables, and nothing will quite go back in the order it once was. But then it may be not just the furniture that has changed places, it may be that as you have encountered the one who comes, it is actually you who has changed.

This Christmas, make room, but remember just who it is we are waiting for.

May you have a happy and peaceful Christmas,

Louise



Church News

Congratulations to Daphne Teare and John Wilkins who have recently become engaged! Good news!

Sunday morning prayer: All are welcome to join with others each Sunday at 10 am in the church lounge. If you have a particular request for prayer you can email it to reyarp42@sky.com. Or post a note in the prayer request box in the corridor by the church hall.

Church garden make-over: The garden in front of the church is being landscaped by the team at Bents Green Nurseries. This week two of the team were working there and kindly posed for a photo! The garden will have benches in the paved area which we hope many will enjoy.



Food for thought

Have you seen the programme on television presented by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall called "Hugh's War on Waste"? In it he explores several areas of wasteful behaviour. What shocked me most is the waste of food.

A few facts and figures! I hadn't realised that one third of the food produced by our farmers is wasted, often ploughed back into the ground. Why? The supermarkets demand perfectly shaped, even-sized fruit and vegetables. We shoppers have been taught that a knobbly carrot will not be as tasty as a straight one! Packaging is a culprit too as there is often too much in a packet for one person.

Another factor is the 'use by' date. Supermarkets claim (and sometimes it is true) that they pass on unsold edible food to charities. However, much is dumped and left to rot on landfill sites. The charity "Fareshare" (www.fareshare.org.uk) claims that enough food for 800 million meals is wasted by the food and drink industry in a year. Other issues which are part of the story are the animals reared and slaughtered, the time, toil and money lost by our farmers and producers.

As a child growing up during the Second World War there were many things talked about as 'pre-war', 'war-time' and something mysterious called 'when the war is over'. That last included a list of delicious goodies that had been available 'pre-war' but would only return 'when the war was over'. My friend Michael would gaze longingly at a display of mouth-watering biscuits in our local shop. Sadly, they were dummies. The reality belonged firmly to 'pre war'.

The austerity continued long after the war. My first Bourbon biscuit came my way just before the coronation of 1953. Although I was not aware of it as a child, there was a great deal of emphasis on slogans such as Waste Not Want Not. Food shortages and rationing were the everyday reality for us all.

It all feels a long way from those two little children gazing at dummy biscuits so long ago. When we pray, 'give us today our daily bread' perhaps we should add, 'and help us not to waste it!' If we want to go further, there is a website connected to the programme, <https://wastenotuk.com> where we can sign up to the national campaign to help stop the supermarkets' wastefulness. If enough consumers let the supermarkets know that we care, something might change.

Janet Nowell



Grace Food Bank, Sheffield

Pat and Bob Hutchinson explain how the link with the Grace Food Bank began...

Why are we involved in this charity? Well, a couple of years ago a lovely young woman came to Friendship Club and spent a few minutes telling us about her work with the Grace Food Bank. As a result of this short talk I felt I wanted to do something and so, since then, I have been collecting, from time to time, from friends, neighbours and Friendship Club.

The first collection we took to the collection point at The Michael Church, Low Edges. We were very impressed with the organisation. Everything was well arranged on shelves and there were lots of bags of tins, packets etc... all ready to be delivered to families who cannot get to them.

At Christmas at Bents Green we have more than enough in our cupboards and pantries and I know that if I take a couple of items out of my well stocked cupboard I won't even notice. This is not the case for the folk who need to use Food Banks, and so I am appealing to our church community to donate tins, packets, mince pies, Christmas puddings, Christmas biscuits, Christmas chocolates. We have a dedicated box for donations at the front of church.

I am also going to ask Friendship Club to bring similar items to our Christmas party on 15th December. Bob will take all the contributions immediately after this....Wednesday 16th December....ready for Christmas.

What is the Grace Food Bank? The Grace Food Bank is a community group covering Sheffield 8: Lowedges, Norton, Batemoor, Jordanthorpe and the surrounding areas, providing food parcels to families / individuals who find themselves in short term financial crisis.

What is a Food Bank? A food bank is a charity which collects donated food and then working with social services and other health care organisations, distributes the food to those in need. They need volunteers to help with admin, food collections, care teams and much more...



Reminiscences...

School milk, ink wells, nib pens, milk delivered every day, the rag and bone man, formal school uniforms, Liberty bodices, mangles over the washing machines, homemade chips, black and white TV, darning socks, blue sugar bags, bacon slicers, marbles, hopscotch, skipping in the school yard, wakes week holidays in Bridlington, donkeys on the beach, ration books, spam, hot aches, snow drifts, only black cars, cod liver oil and malt, orange juice in small glass bottles....the list is endless.



All these things of the 1940s and 50s we can reminisce about with our friends. We look back with fond memories of our childhood and adolescence.

How our lives have changed....colour TV with countless channels, technology, foreign holidays, fast cars, motorways, Central heating.

However, the things we remember best are the friendships we made in our younger days. Today's friendships are no different from the ones we made in our youth.

We meet up with some of our friends at Friendship Club on Tuesday afternoons. This term we have enjoyed various events and talks, including

the talk on Sheffield Castle, Wentworth Woodhouse, wonderful pictures of Autumn, and an amazing choir, "Friends in Harmony" who delighted us with their wonderful performance.

I was very thrilled with the generous offering of tins and packages donated at our Harvest celebration for the Grace Food Bank; they are very grateful for our donations. We now look forward to other entertaining Tuesday afternoons and to our Christmas celebrations.

Do come and join us. We always welcome new members.

Pat Hutchinson

"In most of our family histories there is hardship, tragedy, danger and migration"

Rev. David Markay, a minister in the Sheffield Circuit, writes about his family's experience of being refugees

One hundred years ago this autumn, a young husband and father, Boghos Markarian, was among the thousands of Armenian Christians who were rounded up by Turkish troops in his home city of Adana. He and his brother Nazareth were separated from their families and forced into Syria. Over the next three years, they would move between towns whose names we hear in the news today: Aleppo, Zahle, Damascus, Rayak.

Along the road the brothers saw the bodies of Armenian women from their home city; Boghos wrote, "I was deeply moved and unable to continue my way". Later, the two brothers were crammed into trains: "Much like chickens, we were transported in train cages". At one crossroads, they met up with other refugees, all "sleepless, tired...wanting to go to the toilet...hungry, thirsty...trembling from their fear... I was scared, too...I had been a rich and respected businessman...now, an Armenian deprived of all my worldly wealth."

Nearly a year later, the men were reunited with loved ones, including Boghos' young son (my grandfather). The family – elderly parents and young children included - spent the next two years moving around Syria. Their journey would take them back to Adana, across the sea to Cyprus, on to France (where my father was born), and eventually to New Jersey. Somewhere in most of our family histories there is hardship, tragedy, danger and migration. And deep in our Christian heritage, well before the holy family had to flee their own homeland, God reminded the people:

"So, you too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:19).





Pantomime 2016

If you are young you will have certainly heard of **Frozen**, and will probably have seen Disney's latest family blockbuster film. If you are older you will most likely have heard of **The Snow Queen** by Hans Christian Andersen - you may well have read it or seen the Hollywood film. The bad news is that neither of these is our 2016 Pantomime.

The good news is that our Pantomime starts with The Snow Queen and adds all sorts of elements, including a traditional Dame, some strange visiting dancers, lots of trolls, plenty of reindeer, some pretty snow petals, zillions of hilarious jokes, and oh, I nearly forgot, some of the characters and songs from Frozen as well. What more could anyone want?

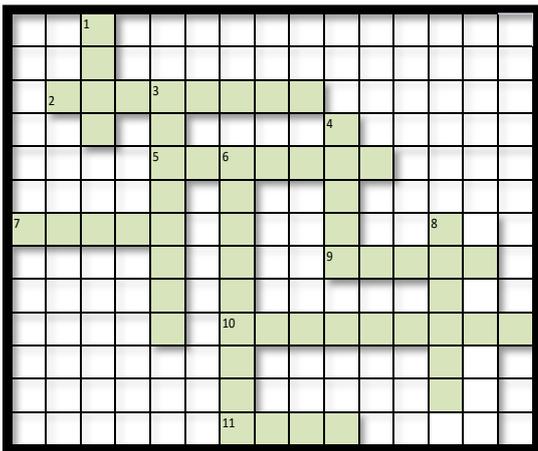
This very cool feast of entertainment will be brought to you by over 70 children and young people in February half term: Friday 12th at 7.30, Saturday 13th at 7.30, and Sunday 14th at 4.30. We even include some real romance in the show for St Valentine's Day.

You can only get in to see this extravaganza with a ticket, but the tickets are free. Members of the cast can order their tickets in December, and everyone else can order tickets in January. Last year everyone who asked for a ticket got one, but it will be first come first served in January.

To order tickets please contact Glenn Evans:

telephone - 235 1057, text - 07814 905883, email - dglennevans@hotmail.co.uk

Christmas Crossword



Across

- 2 The childhood home of Jesus
- 5 The name of the angel who told Mary she would give birth to a son
- 7 Jesus died on theso we can receive his salvation
- 9 The ancestor of Jesus who was also a king of Judah
- 10 John the Baptist's mother
- 11 The wise men from the East

Down

- 1 The wise men follow the ... and find Jesus
- 3 The name of the Caesar who ordered the census throughout the Roman world
- 4 the king who ordered all infants under 2 years old to be killed
- 6 Jesus' birthplace
- 8 A man who prayed for the baby Jesus in the temple

Fact or fiction about the birth of Jesus? -

Although the Bible does not give these details, we think we know them for a fact. Here a few 'facts' are examined more closely. Researched by **Derek North**.

1. Jesus was born in OAD

This date doesn't fit with any of the facts we know. Jesus was born in the reign of King Herod, who died in either late March or early April 4BC. By OAD his former kingdom had split into three and was in chaos. The best estimate is that Jesus was born in 5BC.

2. His birth coincided with a census

We know that Caesar Augustus ordered a census of the whole Roman Empire in 8BC. We don't know the exact dates that the census took place, but it would have taken a year or two at least to make all the arrangements for it. So this part of the Biblical story fits with the other facts we know.

3. His birth was announced by the arrival of Halley's comet

Halley's comet was already long gone, having passed by in August to October 12BC, when it was tracked by Chinese astronomers. Anyway, a comet wouldn't have slowed down, stood still over Bethlehem and then accelerated on its way again, would it? However Chinese astronomers recorded seeing a bright new star in 5BC, a star which appeared in the same place in the sky for 70 days running. This star would have first been seen in the eastern sky in Persia, where the Magi probably came from

4. Jesus was born in December

The shepherds would probably have caught pneumonia with average minimum temperatures around 6 degrees. It would have made much more sense for the shepherds to have slept with their flocks at spring lambing time, when the newborn lambs would have been at greatest danger from predators. Jesus was probably born in March or April of 5BC.

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

Service of Healing: Sun 24 January 6.30pm.

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
Sunbeams	0-4	Wed 9.15-12	Katie	07833086480

For children and young people

Girls' Brigade	5-18	Thurs evening	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 evening	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

1 DECEMBER	SHEAF SINGERS
8 DECEMBER	CHRISTINE SPENCER & FRIENDS ENTERTAIN
15 DECEMBER	PIE & PEAS
5 JANUARY	MUSIC
12 JANUARY	HOW THE TUDORS CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS
19 JANUARY	WILD, WET AND WINDY: MAKING A GARDEN IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS
26 JANUARY	HOW DID IT GET THAT NAME?

For more information contact: Pat Hutchinson: 0114 2497280
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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 Sunday 17th January 2016.

Coffee Mornings in the Church:

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

Games, chat and crafts group

Wednesdays 12.30 to 3 pm in the church. Indoor bowling, scrabble, chess, dominoes, jigsaws and cards, knitting and crafts.

Contact Ruth: 0114 2686507

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 each week. 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

A community church sharing the love of Jesus

Bents Green Church

A community church sharing the love of Jesus

Continuing the series about Bents Green

Each issue of Hilltop features a local shop or business, when the people involved tell who they are and how they serve the community. At Bents Green Church we decided to do the same.



Who are we?

We have 109 members. Most live within walking distance. Our main meeting is on Sunday morning. About 100 people come, aged from 6 months (or younger!) to 90+. Some of us grew up at Bents Green, others have arrived from other parts of Britain and the world. We send people out too – three young people who grew up in the church now live in Africa. We are all different, but united by our faith in Jesus.

What do we do?

- We focus our lives on God through worship and grow our faith through courses and discussions, often midweek in people's houses. This gives us the inspiration for everything else.
- We run activities for all ages. Some are weekly, others annual, such as the Fun Day – 11 June next year. Rehearsals are under way for next year's panto - there were 85 children in the last one!
- Our premises are open for community use. The pre-school, art group and Bents Green Singers meet weekly. We have frequent bookings for children's parties.
- We care for each other and the community in prayer and in practical ways – we are collecting for the Archer Project (for homeless people) and for the Grace Food Bank at Lowedges.

We try to make all we do relevant to the whole community in this fast-changing world, believing that the love of Jesus can enable us to live better lives and tackle the challenges of today. We think our main strength is work with children and families, and want to build on this in the coming months, for instance, through the new toddler group. But we have a lot to learn, and would welcome feedback. We believe we can best serve the community when we do it together.



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