

Longfleet United Reformed Church

NEWSLETTER



December 2009

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

Worship rota for December

December 6 th -	The Revd Bryan George (Communion Service)
December 13 th -	NO MORNING SERVICE
2.30 pm -	Traditional Carol Service Incorporating the BBC Big Sing collection in aid of Christian Aid and followed by light refreshments
December 20 th -	Mr Dave Goodall
December 27 th -	To be confirmed (Details on website once known)

LECTIONARY READINGS

6th December	Malachi 3:1-4, Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3: 1-6
13th December	Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12: 2-6, Philippians 4: 4-7; Luke 3:7-18
20th December	Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80: 1-7; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45
Christmas Day	Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2: 1-14, (15-20)

Welcome rota for December

Mrs Jean Hunt



The Little Round Button

At a clearance sale, the wife of a senior judge found the perfect green tie to match one of her husband's sports jackets. Soon after, while the couple were relaxing at a resort to get his mind off a complicated cocaine-conspiracy case, he noticed a small, round disc sewn into the tie. The judge showed it to the police, who were equally suspicious that it might be a "bug" planted by the conspiracy defendants.

The police took the tie away for some serious analysis. Two weeks later, the judge phoned Scotland Yard to find out the results of their tests. "Well, we're not really sure where the disc came from," the police told him. "But we did discover that if you press it, it plays Jingle Bells !"

Why does Christmas begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight - a mythical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the hour of His birth.

Certainly in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its "domestic convenience" in 1947: "for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time" (so things don't change then!)



Local News

The Annual **Council Christmas Carol Service** will be held in the Council Chamber, at the Civic Centre on Thursday 17th December at 12.30 pm. Our speaker this year will be the Dean of Salisbury Cathedral. All welcome. Non-Council Staff should report to Reception on arrival.

For further information contact Chaplaincy on 01202 733580 or 07980 002676

HopeFM and Poole Rotary in association with Poole Christmas Parcels Fund present a **Christmas Celebration** on Friday 11th December at 7.30 pm, St James Church, Thames Street, The Quay, Poole. Featuring commUNITY Choir, Pieces of Eight Police Choir, Sunnyhill Puppet Theatre and Poole Salvation Army. Tickets £7.50 for Adults and £5.00 for Children available from Bournemouth YMCA, Poole Salvation Army, Blue Pebble Money and Keith Jones Christian Bookshop. Book early to avoid disappointment.

For more information contact John on 01202 767949 or Sheena on 07968 088840.

Could you be a volunteer Chaplain? (Approximately 4 hours per week with expenses paid). Poole Chaplaincy are working in Partnership with North Dorset District Council to provide a new chaplaincy service to the Council, delivering and facilitating the provision of a listening/pastoral care services to staff of all faiths and none. This exciting and innovative opportunity is open to lay and ordained individuals from any faith tradition who have the support and backing of their faith community.

For more information please contact Poole Chaplaincy in the first instance. m.brett@poole.gov.uk. or m.phillips@poole.gov.uk.

Rehearsals are underway for the second **Poole Community Passion Play** to be performed at Easter time. It will be bigger and better than last year. Workshops at Parkstone URC. Not only actors required, technicians, costume makers, set design and stage management also needed.

Contact Roger Bayldon for more details and to become involved. 01202-730683.



A PRETTY GOOD MIRACLE

Many of us have wonderful childhood memories of Christmas. For some of us, it was the wonderful Midnight Communion of Christmas Eve. when we visited our candle-lit country church nestled among snowy fields, under a starlit sky.

Special memories of Christmas can move us to tears. Perhaps it is when certain carols are sung, or tables are laden for meals. Faces glowing by candlelight during "Silent Night" is hard to beat. Christmas is indeed full of wonderful emotions, yet there is so much more to this special day. For the warm emotions are built on rock - solid truths that will stand for ever. For the events were historic, and the miracles really happened.

To the normal, logical, rational, 21st century mind it is all bizarre. An angel came to a girl who was not even married telling her she was going to have a baby. To cap it all, the "father" was not her boy-friend but the Holy Spirit. The girl - Mary - not only bought the story but then told her cousin Elizabeth who was promptly filled with the Holy Spirit. She then told Mary she was unbelievably blessed. Mary then sang an amazing song that people have been singing ever since.

It gets more crazy and complicated because Elizabeth's husband had had an extraordinary meeting with an angel and been struck dumb ever since. it was only when the baby was born and he

wrote down: "His name is John" that he got his voice back. He started praising God.

The miracles heap up with the birth of Mary's child. Shepherds in a field saw the sky full of angels who told them to go and see a baby in nearby Bethlehem. They believed it was God telling them to go. They came back praising God. Others went too, some of them poor, others very rich - but they all came away praising God and wanting to tell others.

These were supernatural stories of people meeting Jesus and believing in Him. Their lives were radically changed. Amazingly, Jesus continues to do the same today. In John 1:12 we read that for those who did receive Him and believe in Him "He gave them the right to become God's Children"

Let's all of us make this Christmas a chance to receive Him and believe in Him, that in itself is a pretty good miracle.

WISE MEN

I was telling my three boys the story of the Nativity and how the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus.

Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six year old observed, "Mum, a wise woman would have brought nappies."





News from Bridging Communities

As I write this I realise you will be reading this as the height of Christmas preparations are underway, the new community library in Hamworthy is almost complete and the designer for the Living Histories will be being recruited to design our mobile multimedia display for you the community to enjoy. At the moment we have actually had active input from over one hundred and ten individuals. We have access to various artefacts, pictures as we find the need from within the community, with lots of different pictures etc already scanned to be used. Being a multi media exhibition we are really lucky to have many really interesting sound bites. The most exciting for me has been the spontaneous singing by a women's group of a May Day song from their childhood in the 40's. This will be juxtaposed with a group of teenager boys who have developed a rap expressing how it feels to live here in Poole today. If this whets your appetite, so that you would like that exhibition to come to your group, building or organisation please don't hesitate to get in contact with us as we would love to share these stories of ordinary peoples experience and thoughts about Poole and Hamworthy with as many people as possible. We've already got 10 groups who are willing to host the exhibition once it is ready. In case you've forgotten **Living Histories** is a multi media project with various strands, its overarching aim is:

To celebrate Poole and its diversity by exploring Poole's Past, Present and Future as experienced by you, those who live, work, play or visit Poole.

This strand is a multi media exhibition of ordinary people's memories, thoughts and ideas related to Poole and its development and includes pictures and memorabilia that people have shared with us through that story telling. If you would like to

host that exhibition when it is developed then we would love to hear from you.

Our contact details are: 07908110121 or crcw@faithworkswessex.org.uk

One of the aims of Bridging Communities is to empower, support and enable people's voices to be heard, the Living Histories project is one way we have tried to achieved that, another is the Shout Out. What is the Shout Out I hear you ask? How does it work? Well we start with a light meal and the chance to chat. Then we feed back information from our previous conversations at the last Shout Out Forum, What this actually means we invite organisations, groups to feedback helpful information in 5 minutes slots. Then we split into groups to discuss what we hope is a relevant issue, e.g. at the last Shout Out Wilts and Dorset came to ask what people felt about their bus service. We then finish by feeding back and giving everyone the chance to raise an issue for us to consider in the future. So if you have an interest in the Regeneration area of Poole, Old Town and Lower Hamworthy, then please join us at our next Shout Out at Skinner St United Reformed Church on Thursday the 14th of January 2010 between 12.00-2.00pm.

If you want to know anymore about any of this please don't hesitate to contact us as detailed above.

Best wishes, Alison Dalton, Church Related Community Worker



GENTLEMEN'S CHRISTMAS

God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
You may be sure the ladies
Have sorted Christmas Day!
They've shopped and chopped and scrubbed and wrapped,
They've bought and dressed the tree
So you'll have a joyful Christmas Day, Christmas day
So you'll have a joyful Christmas Day

Now come, ye merry gentlemen
and follow my advice
You'd better not upset her,
Or you will pay the price!
So get you to the nearest town
And buy her something nice-
Then have a joyful Christmas day, Christmas Day
Then have a joyful Christmas Day!

So then, ye marry gentlemen
who've tied those marriage knots,
Once Christmas lunch is over
Tell her you love her lots.
Then prove it , merry gentlemen
By washing up the pots.
And you'll have a joyful Christmas Day, Christmas day
And you'll have a joyful Christmas day!

Then, just as you are thinking
What a good chap you've been:
Perhaps you'll watch the movie -
It's one you haven't seen
Forget it, merry gentlemen,
She'll want to watch the Queen!
But she's earned a joyful Christmas Day, Christmas Day
She's really earned a joyful Christmas Day!

By Nigel Beeton

St Nicholas

Father Christmas seems to be as old as Europe. Once he was Woden, lashing his reindeer through the darkness of northern midwinter. Then he encountered the church, and She transformed him into a saint, the much loved Nicholas, Bishop of Myra(in south west Turkey) in the fourth century. St Nicholas became the patron saint of children, and was given 6 December as his day.

Since the 6th century St Nicholas has been venerated in both East and West, though virtually nothing is known of his life. Some believe he may have been one of the fathers at the Council of Nicea (325) imprisoned during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution.

According to legend, Nicholas was an extremely generous man. He revived three schoolboys murdered by an innkeeper in a tub of pickles. He rescued three young women from prostitution by giving their poverty-stricken father three bags of gold. (Hence the use of three gold balls as the pawnbroker's signs.

Over the centuries many, including children, sailors, unmarried girls, pawnbrokers and moneylenders have claimed him as their patron.

Perhaps it was on account of St Nicholas' generosity that in recent centuries children began to write little notes sometime before 6 December, to tell him about the toys they specially wanted. These notes were then left on the windowsill at night - or else on a ledge in the chimney.

But St Nicholas day chanced to lie in the magnetic field of a much more potent festival and after a while his activities were moved towards Christmas. Then in Bavaria the children still left their notes on the windowsill, but they addressed them to Liebes Christkind - Krishinkle as they know him - and the saint's part in the matter was simply to deliver the letters in heaven.

The most popular result of the cult of St Nicholas has been the institution of Santa Claus. He is based on Nicholas' patronage of children and the custom in the Low Countries of giving presents on his feast. Santa Claus has reached his zenith in America, where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam (New York) united to it Nordic folklore legends of a magician who both punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with presents.

Longfleet URC on the Internet

A little reminder that the Church now has its own website which can be found at :

www.longfleeturc.org.uk

Our Webmaster has advised that since the launch at the end of October we have had around 100 visitors. Whilst these have been mainly from the UK we have welcomed some viewing from Canada.

The Church can now also be found on the popular where you can view contact details and photos.



... and finally

A big “thank you” to those at www.biblequizzes.org.uk for allowing us to reproduce two of their quizzes on the website.

For those without internet access you can have a go at some of the questions on the next few pages but you’ll have to wait for the next Newsletter for the answers !

The Real Christmas Quiz

Just “simply” answer True or False for the following :

- Q1. The Bible says that Jesus was born in December ?
- Q2. Jesus was not born in 0 A.D. ?
- Q3. We are told that Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey ?
- Q4. The angel said “Peace on earth to all men” ?
- Q5. The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus ?
- Q6. The tradition of giving presents at Christmas comes from the wise men presenting gifts ?
- Q7. 25th December was originally the date of a Roman festival ?
- Q8. The Bible tells us that three kings riding on camels visited Jesus ?
- Q9. The barn animals miraculously spoke the night Jesus was born ?
- Q10. The star led the wise men straight to Jesus ?

Having got the simple questions out of the way 😊 let's try some a little harder :

Q1. Which prophet said, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son" ?

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel
- Daniel

Q2: What does the name *Emmanuel* mean ?

- God is for us
- God is with us
- God loves us
- God saves us

Q3: Who sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord" ?

- Elisabeth
- Angels
- Mary
- Joseph

Q4: The angel said to Mary that Jesus would reign over the house of which Old Testament character?

- David
- Solomon
- Jacob
- Abraham

Q5: What was the name of the old prophetess who saw Jesus in the temple when he was presented to the Lord after his birth ?

- Huldah
- Deborah
- Hannah
- Anna

Q6: Who said, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and glory of thy people Israel," when he saw Jesus ?

- Joseph
- Simeon
- Zacharias
- Angels

Q7: Which prophet said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" ?

- Hosea
- Jeremiah
- Isaiah
- Malachi

Q8: How long did Jesus remain in Egypt ?

- Until the barley harvest
- Until the death of Herod
- Until he was five years old
- Until the rising of the first full moon of the year

Christmas Wordsearch

P A T I H F S Y A D I L O H N Q L
A Y N N G C L E N I W D E L L U M
R A S G E N O M I S T L E T O E X
T M R U E V I D Z P B A U B L E S
Y Q E E S L D G O L E L U Y Y N C
B D P T K E S A N T A C L A U S R
O C A R Y A J S L I Y W N N R S O
X R P E F L C F T E S L G I G P O
I L G I O S I S O N S L L B M E G
N Q N N O F Y M A H E N O O K E E
G N I D D U P S A M T S I R H C L
D E P E J Q N C K F T R E T A H V
A M P E E R T S A M T S I R H C E
Y E A R U D O L P H Y V I B P H S
Z S R B E L L S H E P H E R D S N
X I W X T U R K E Y E N M I H C Y
M W N A M W O N S R E K C A R C R

Can you find the following words and phrases :

Advent
Bells
Carol singing
Christmas pudding
Elves
Holidays
Mince pies
Party
Reindeer
Santa Claus
Snowman
Turkey
Yule log

Angels
Birth of Jesus
Chimney
Christmas tree
Family
Holly
Mistletoe
Presents
Robin
Scrooge
Star
Wise men

Baubles
Boxing Day
Christmas cake
Crackers
Food
Ivy
Mulled wine
Queens speech
Rudolph
shepherds
Tinsel
Wrapping paper

