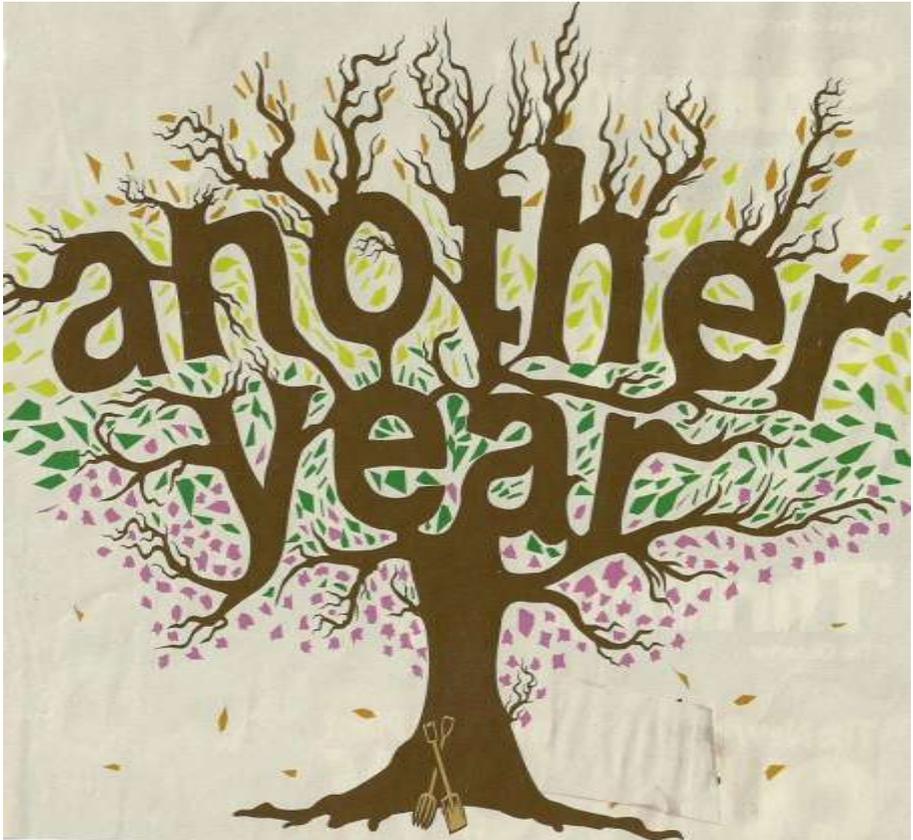


Newslink



St Faith's Church, Great Crosby
Parish Magazine

JANUARY 2011

Worship at Saint Faith's



- **SUNDAYS**

10.30am	Morning Prayer
11.00am	Solemn Mass and Children's Church
1.00pm	Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)
7.00pm	Compline and Benediction (1st Sunday)

- **WEEKDAY MASSES**

Monday 10.30am, Tuesday 9.30am, Wednesday 10.30am (1662 Book of Common Prayer in S. Mary's), Thursday 9.00am (Holy Days only), Friday 6.30pm, Saturday 12.00noon (or Midday Prayer - please check notices)

- **THE DIVINE OFFICE (The Prayer of the Church)**

Morning Prayer: 9am daily (except Thursday & Friday)

Evening Prayer: 6pm daily (except Wednesday & Thursday)

Please consult the weekly sheets or online bulletin for any variation in times for the Daily Office

- **SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION**

Fr. Neil and Revd. Denise are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

- **ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND DYING**

Please contact Fr. Neil at any time, day or night, if someone is ill and requires the ministry of a priest.

- **HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound
and those in hospital**

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, or be visited in hospital or at home, please ring the Vicarage or another member of the Ministry Team. We are always happy to make home or hospital visits to the sick and housebound so please call us to arrange this.



A Christmas Message from the Bishop of Liverpool

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the Cathedral during the weekend of the Mathew Street Festival there was an evening celebrating Peace, Love and Understanding. Tribute bands from all over the world played to a packed house songs by the Beatles. At the end I spoke for a few minutes and led the audience in a meditation on Peace and Love. One of John Lennon's songs is called "Gimme some Truth". It's a plea echoed by songwriters, poets and philosophers down the ages. Hearing this prayer God answers it in a unique way. Instead of sending us a set of statements about the truth God sends us a true person.

Jesus is the truest human being the world has ever seen. Whatever you imagine a true person to be, Jesus is it! A true human being would stand up for the poor, heal the sick, fight for justice, stand up to the bully, forgive his enemies, give people a glimpse of God. A true person would be full of peace, love and understanding. That's a picture of Jesus.

Christmas is the time to celebrate that truth came down to earth. The way Jesus lived and the things he taught are so down to earth and in touch with our world.

This Christmas will be tough for more people than usual. Things we took for granted many of us will not be able to afford. On the face of it you could think that this would be a miserable Christmas. But the true Christmas based on the true Jesus is not in the end about all the material things. It's about opening the gifts of God that money can't buy – love and peace. If you feel that your heart is half empty ask God to fill it with his love. If you feel your soul is restless ask God to breathe his peace into you. These are the real Christmas gifts. Money can't buy you a Christmas full of love and peace. They are presents which only you can unwrap. Well, go on! Unwrap them.

The Rt. Rev. James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool

The 12 days of Christmas?

No - the 40 days of Christmas...



The Season of Epiphany

(from the liturgical resource "Times and Seasons")

In the Western churches, the Epiphany ('manifestation') became an occasion to celebrate one element in the story of Christ's birth, the visit of the far-travelled magi, understood as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

Matthew's account speaks simply of 'wise men from the east'; later tradition fixed their number at three, made them kings and recalled their resonant names - Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. In this perspective, Epiphanytide is an apt season to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church. The feast of the Conversion of St Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, appropriately falls in the Epiphany season, as does the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the Eastern churches, the Epiphany is, rather, the celebration of Christ's baptism at the hands of John, when the heavens were opened and a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. The miracle of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus 'first manifested his glory', follows immediately:

**Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding-guest
in thy Godhead manifest. (*Christopher Wordsworth*)**

The arrangement of the Sundays of Epiphany in the Revised Common Lectionary deliberately draws out these aspects.

The season of joyful celebration that begins at Christmas now continues through the successive Sundays of Epiphany, and the festal cycle ends only with the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas). The child who has been manifested to the magi at his birth is now recognized by Simeon and Anna, when he comes to be presented in the Temple according to the Law of Israel. He is both 'a light to lighten the Gentiles' and 'the glory of God's people Israel'. But the redemption he will bring must be won through suffering; the Incarnation is directed to the Passion; and Simeon's final words move our attention away from the celebration of Christmas and towards the mysteries of Easter,

At Saint Faith's (and Saint Mary's) we celebrate the 40 day feast by keeping the Crib in place until Candlemass, when at the end of the mass it is covered to move us from the Crib to the Cross.

Christmas at St Faith's



Christmas Eve, Christingle Service, 6.00 pm

Christmas Eve, Blessing of the Crib, Procession & Solemn Midnight Mass, 11.30 pm

Christmas Day, Solemn Mass 11.00 am.

During Christmas Week the Eucharist will be celebrated each day at 10.30 am.

Special Services in January 2011

Saturday 1st - DAY OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

12noon Solemn Mass with prayers for world peace, followed by a glass of 'fizz' to welcome the New Year

Wednesday 5th - EVE OF THE EPIPHANY

8.00pm Procession and High Mass

Preacher; Fr. George Davis

(All Saints & St Mary Magdalene West Bromwich)



Sunday 9th - FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

11 am Sung Eucharist and renewal of Baptismal Promises

A Letter of Thanks

Dear Fr Neil,

Just to say a big thank you for the Advent service on Sunday evening. It was stunning and as good, if not better, than anything the cathedral can do.

Thank you all very much,

Penny Thompson

Liturgical and Poetic Thoughts for Epiphanytide

A Lesson in Humility

(Frances Copsey)

The wise men got it wrong.
It is *much* harder to receive
than to give.

Epiphany

(Mary Palmer)

Jesus,

may we not hoard,
but freely give

the gold of our hearts,
the myrrh of our grief,
the frankincense of our dreams,

to You.



Winter Blessing

(Mary Palmer)

When sleet blinds you, hail drowns out voices
and snow hides your path,

may you discern in each flake
a star, image of the one
that guided the Magi,

and find that in the pain
of birth, death or change

there is a light
to guide you.



The Travellers

(Pat Livingstone)

It was the light that struck me first.
The jeweled sea
clear as the Aegean.

The panoply-
the depth of colour that heightened a profound experience
and left me tired.

My senses were bombarded:

Soft white sand.
Whipping winds
whistling round the abbey,
snuffing out the pew candles on dark mornings,
reminding us of our insignificance within nature.

Rocks that geologists came and tapped
with their little hammers –
Iona,
the third oldest piece of
land on Earth.

But more than this exotica were the people
who had followed their own starts.
Wise men and women who came from afar
and found a motley crew of fellow travellers
trying to discover the next stage of their journeys.

These pilgrimage stayed a little while
and sang their songs
and delighted in each other's.

Travelers are rarely welcomed:
gypsies, asylum seekers, homeless folk, new age travellers,
people moving to a new town, disciples ...
they sing different songs, new songs, fresh songs,
exciting and disturbing with their novelties.

Troubadour troupes that sing new harmonies
that echo in the memory
long after departure.



Thank You!

Many thanks... are due to the Sunday School Teachers and helpers who gave the children yet another wonderful joint Christmas party at St. Mary's complete with Father Christmas! And all that hot on the heels of the children's Craft and Activity Day too which, once again, concluded with an all-age act of worship in Church which was simple yet profoundly very moving.

The Christmas Tree Festival has come and gone (and you will read more about this elsewhere in this magazine). For me it was a very exciting occasion because I missed the first one and had only the pictures on the website to look at. The Festival was a truly uplifting experience and has certainly helped us to look to Christmas with not a little excitement. So many thanks to the many people who not just made it work but made it work so well. I'm grateful also to our visiting musicians and our celebrity guest, Andrew Lancel, for making our *Celebration of Advent in Words and Music* a truly remarkable and moving evening. What better way to prepare for the Christmas Feast?

Thanks also to everyone who helped to prepare and decorate the hall, cook and serve the **Senior Citizens' Christmas lunch**. For some years now it has been shared with our brothers and sisters from St. Mary's too. I know everyone looks forward to this and thoroughly enjoys it. This year was no exception at all! And we are grateful to St. Mary's for hosting the Quiz Night and to all who supported that and helped to raise the goodly sum of money for this event.

All this goes to show that whilst some churches have only 'armchair' or 'fair-weather' supporters, we at St. Faith's are truly blessed to have such a large number of people who are so committed and dedicated. That is truly something to thank God for.

Fr. Neil

First Communions

Please remember in your prayers those who received their First Holy Communion in December...



Beckie Roderick, Fay Bennett, Caitlin Stark, Maxim Ainsworth, Jude Ainsworth, Abbie Morley, Luis Williams, Roslyn Kirby, Natasha Voce, Eleanor Evison, Felicity Stafford, Anaya Hindmarch, Chloe Smith, Jenni Glenn

A person is admitted to Holy Communion on the basis of their baptism, the sign and pledge of incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ and the new life of the kingdom of God.

Maxim, Jude, Abbie, Luis, Rosslyn, Natasha, Eleanor, Felicity, Chloe and Jenni have been baptized, and they now receive the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ with us.

They are taking a new step in the life to which God has called them in baptism and which we trust they will later affirm in confirmation. We welcomed them and look forward to learning with and from them as we journey together on the Way of Christ.



At the Year's End

It's hard to believe that another year has flown by and the preparation of the Annual Accounts has started. The full Report will be presented to the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) at the very end of April but I thought it might be helpful to make a few early comments on the 2010 accounts.

The year began with us owing a very large chunk of the 2009 Parish Share and the debt on the 2010 one started to build up very quickly. Happily, that position is now much improved (though not resolved) and we end the year with a debt of about £12K to the Diocese. That has been achieved through some energetic fundraising, the "Talents' Scheme" and the Easter Gift Day receipts.

The Saturday Recitals continue to give much pleasure to so many and it has been another record-breaking year. We topped £3,000 in net income and over 1,700 people supported the recitals – that's an average of 81 each Saturday. Music is a very important part of S. Faith's and we continue to be so lucky in having such a high standard in both our "in-house" and visiting musicians.

We have managed to carry out repairs to the buildings and significant works were carried out on the Church Hall to provide an accessible toilet. As we end the year, talks are under way to seek external funding for major projects in church.

Gift Aid receipts continue to be very welcome, although the subsidy that was introduced when the tax rate changed ends in 2011 so the refunds will be less – unless people are able to be more generous with their giving!

At time of writing, the Christmas Tree Festival is on and looks set to be another stunning success. Local and national charities benefitted to the tune of £2,700 and the church received £1,500 from last year's Festival. We have also given to overseas aid and disasters during the year.

We continue to be grateful to all those who give regularly to the church through the

weekly envelopes or monthly standing orders through the bank – but we need to widen the net. If you, or anyone you know, would like to give on a regular planned basis, please ask me for details.

It has been another challenging year financially but we end the year in a stronger position than when we started. There's much more to do!

Thank you for your support. It is much appreciated.

David Jones
Treasurer



Please Sir!

‘A school is to ban its pupils from putting up their hands when they know an answer because it ‘alienates’ less intelligent children.

Children at Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy in Stoke-on-Tr4nt are no longer allowed to put up their hand if they know an answer to a question. Instead, they must wait to be asked.,

The plan comes after teachers at the school worked alongside Prof Dylan Wiliam, the television education expert, who claims that asking pupils to put their hands up to answer questions alienates the majority of youngsters.

Teachers will instead pick pupils at random to answer questions – to stop brighter children from answering too many.

Lynn Jones, the assistant principal of the school, said: ‘It means there’s no hiding place for children in a lesson. There’s no opt-out.’

Teachers at the school will also stop grading pupils’ work as part of the new teaching methods.

Prof William, from London’s Institute of Education, has even advised teachers to write comments about pupils’ work on separate pieces of paper – and then make them guess which comment is meant for their work. Prof Wiliam says that if work is graded, pupils often don’t bother reading teachers’ comments.

The editor may not bother reading the good professor’s comments in future.

Points from the P.C.C.

Another instalment of highlights from the latest meeting of the Parochial Church Council

Chairman's remarks

Fr Neil was pleased with the success of the latest Liturgy and Lunch event, and thanked Revd Denise organising it and involving children.



Premises Report

Maureen Madden reported on ongoing plans for the church, hall and grounds. Inside church there was concern about loose tiling and grids, and these would be dealt with as a matter of urgency before the Christmas Tree Festival. Outside the hall, and following a meeting with Crime Prevention Officers about insurance requirements, the installation of protective gates and fencing was being explored. In the rest of the grounds, she reported on the Garden of Remembrance, the church notice boards, and the trees. It was agreed that we should sign up to the Diocesan annual gutter clearance scheme, and that work would be undertaken to remove the tree roots at the Kingsway entrance so that the gates could be brought back into use.

Finance Report

The Treasurer reported on a meeting held with TFL Solutions, a local company that specialised in sourcing funds for special projects. They are keen to work in the charitable sector and had approached St Faith's to consider possible schemes. The joint Standing Committee considered schemes that would benefit our churches and the wider community and would be environmentally friendly and energy-saving. Two schemes were recommended for St Faith's: toilets and a kitchen at the rear of church and an improved lighting system. These were approved and will be referred to TFL Solutions for action.

Report of the Treasurer

The Treasurer gave an up-to-date report on the church's financial position with current balances and the amount of the outstanding Parish Share. There is to be a 1% increase in our Parish Share (the sum to be paid annually to the Liverpool Diocese) in 2011 to £44,702. It was recommended and approved that a further £10,000 be sent to the Diocese. £6,600 had been received in Gift Aid with one quarter of 2010 remaining. Since the online donations facility had been set up on the website in August 2009, over £3,900 had been given through this means. Fr Neil was very pleased with the success in keeping St Faith's afloat and in clawing the church back towards viability.

Events 2011

Updated details of December events are now in the online diary on the church website. All changes in future would be made via Parish Office manager Geoff Dunn

for updating in the online diary, which would replace the previous printed version. There was discussion on potential date clashes, because of the late Easter in 2011.

AOB

Director of Music Sam Austin informed the PCC of his proposal to install a peal of 6 small bells in the tower, at a cost of c£28,000 (no VAT would be charged as ours is a listed building). This would be funded entirely from private donations from various sources. If it went ahead, St Faith's might become a Diocesan centre for bell ringing. As the tower is already sound proofed, noise would not be a problem. After discussion and further explanation the PCC was happy on principle for Sam to proceed and prepare documentation for the next meeting. Finally, there were reports on plans for commemorative plaques for John Taylor and George Smith.

Lillie Wilmot PCC Secretary

Dedication of New Standard for the Royal British Legion

On 26th November 2010, a new Standard for the Crosby Branch of the Royal British Legion was dedicated at St. Faith's Crosby. The ceremony involved "laying up" the old Standard which will now rest in St Faith's, whilst the new one is used for all future Crosby Branch RBL engagements.

The old standard is over 50 years old and it is the norm to lay a standard up after approximately this length of service. Interestingly, the previous standard to this was laid up in September 1958 at St Mary's church in Waterloo Park.

Great Crosby British Legion was formed in 1928 and amalgamated with Waterloo and Seaforth in 1941 to become the Borough of Crosby British Legion. Royal status was granted to the British Legion in 1971, requiring the wording on the standard to be altered. So thus far, our local RBL has had just three standards in its time and the two old ones now reside in our own two churches in the United Benefice.

The standards are well-travelled. The one now laid up in St. Faith's was one of the 124 standards selected to parade at Westminster Abbey when the British Legion became "Royal". Later in the same year, two members of Crosby's RBL were invited to Buckingham Palace and the standard was taken with them. In 1977 the Crosby Standard went to Horse Guards Parade and then on to Windsor Castle in celebration of the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

On the 25th April in 1997, the 75th anniversary of Anzac (national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand) the standard appeared in Ballarat in Victoria, Australia.

The new standard was donated by the generous giving of the people of Crosby, Waterloo and Seaforth. At the recent ceremony to dedicate the standard, attendees included The Lord Lieutenant, Dame Lorna E.F. Muirhead DBE, The Mayor of Sefton, Maureen Fearn, Mr Joe Benton MP, Mr Bill Esterton MP plus a number of RBL County members.

A parade from the Civic Hall to St Faith's and back again took place and involved the Territorial Army and various other Associations. Parade Marshal Mr. A. Millar (Dusty) kept good order and a short gathering for refreshments and photographs took place at the Civic Hall afterwards.

Geoff Dunn

Talking Talents

As the year ends, we are about to declare the Talents Scheme formally closed.



Back at the beginning of October, 2009, a goodly number of 'Talented' members of our congregation received their cash 'starter' and were challenged, not to bury it in the ground, but to help it to go forth and multiply. They offered to do things, make things, help with things, sell things (and other things), making a gift of their talents and the money they raised to help our church finances.

Throughout the fifteen months to the present date, the money has come in, in instalments large and small, but all most welcome. We didn't set a specific target, but I thought that, God willing, we should be able to manage £3,000. At the time of going to press (as they say), the total is actually in sight of a magnificent £5,000, and by the time the relevant part of the proceeds of the December Christmas Tree Festival sales is added in, that total should be more or less achieved.

The whole scheme has been a resounding successes, as indeed the two previous such schemes some years ago proved also to be successes. This writer, who was rash enough to propose, and thus inevitably to end up running, the enterprise, is both relieved and very grateful. Thanks are due to all who committed their talents and all who made use of them in so many ways. To name them all would be invidious, but an especially honourable mention must be made of the ladies who slaved away in the kitchens of the Jam Factory. Their jams, marmalades, chutneys, jellies and pickles have already raised over £1,000, and as I write, a table at the back of church groans beneath the weight of some 250 jars ready to tempt visitors to the Tree Festival.

Needless to say, the formal closing of the Talents Scheme is not an end but a beginning – or even a continuation. The willingness of so many folk at St Faith's to



The Tale of the Trees

An army blessing at the end of the Forces Family Support service; trees on parade throughout the church; children of Waterloo Primary and St John's C.E. Primary school entertain visitors to the Christmas Tree Festival.



Picture Parade

Royal British Legion on parade: laying up of the old standard in St Faith's.

Sunday Schools' Party at St Mary's: Father Christmas works the crowd.





Toys and Trees

The church was full for the Parade and Toy service at the opening of the 2010 Christmas Tree Festival. Ten young people made their first communion. The evening Advent celebration saw music by candlelight and poetry by actor Andrew Lancel. During the week there was an evening carol service with a military band, and by day parties of schoolchildren called in to sing and admire the trees.



put their talents to use year in and year out means that the income flow will surely be maintained in the years ahead as it was in past years., with or without the focus of a sustained Talents Scheme. The Treasurer will I am sure join me in encouraging a steady flow of monies into 2011 and beyond: the Parish Share rises year on year, as do most things, and I guess there will never be a time when we have no need of the dedication and commitment of our Talented congregation. Oh, and if you still have any Talents money sitting around at home somewhere, it's never too late to hand it in!

Chris Price



Can you Help?

We are looking for some volunteers to come forward and help to keep the Beaver section going – it's just a couple of hours a week on a Thursday night, around 5pm – 6.30pm.

In case you are wondering what Beavers is, it's the part of Scouts that boys and girls join at ages 6-8, before they move up into Cubs. Beavers have great fun playing games, doing crafts, learning skills and earning badges. Their motto is 'fun and friends'

We won't throw you in at the deep end – other experienced leaders will be there to help – so why not give it a go? Or just try helping for a couple of weeks to see if it's right for you? If you would like to find out more, please contact us on the number/email below for a chat, or call in to see us on a Thursday night, we would love to hear from you!

Go on – you know you want to...

The Leader Team
St Faith's Scout Group



Contact:

Mike Carr or Helen Kibbey, Tel: 0151 2933416
email: bobcatcubpack@live.co.uk

Or call down to St Faith's church hall
on a Thursday night, 6.30pm



The Wise Men

G. K. Chesterton loved Christmas, with all its trappings, and wrote numerous pieces on the subject. In this poem he ponders the experience of the three wise men, whose Christmas revelation far exceeded any earthly knowledge they had gleaned until then.

Step softly, under snow or rain,
To find the place where men can pray;
The way is all so very plain
That we may lose the way.

Oh, we have learnt to peer and pore
On tortured puzzles from our youth,
We know all labyrinthine lore,
We are the three wise men of yore,
And we know all things but the truth.

We have gone round and round the hill
And lost the wood among the trees,
And learnt long names for every ill,
And served mad gods, naming still
The furies the Eumenides.

The gods of violence took the veil
Of vision and philosophy,
The Serpent that brought all men bale,
He bites his own accursed tail,
And calls himself Eternity.

Go humbly... it has hailed and snowed...
With voices low and lanterns lit;
So very simple is the road,
That we may stray from it.

The world grows terrible and white,
And blinding white the breaking day;
We walk bewildered in the light,
For something is too large for sight,
And something much too plain to say.

The Child that was ere worlds begun
(... We need but walk a little way,
We need but see a latch undone...)
The Child that played with moon and sun
Is playing with a little hay.



The house from which the heavens are fed,
The old strange house that is our own,
Where trick of words are never said,
And Mercy is as plain as bread,
And Honour is as hard as stone.

Go humbly, humble are the skies,
And low and large and fierce the Star;
So very near the Manger lies
That we may travel far.

Hark! Laughter like a lion wakes
To roar to the resounding plain.
And the whole heaven shouts and shakes,
For God Himself is born again,
And we are little children walking
Through the snow and rain.

G.K. Chesterton

Shepherds to Shepherd

(Luke 2:8-20, John 10:11)

You will find the baby,
Said the angel,
You will find the baby
In Bethlehem,
The baby of glory and peace,
The baby of good news and joy.
So the shepherds began
Their journey of trust
In the word of the Lord.
Hurrying,
Finding,
Telling,
Glorifying,
Praising,
It was just as the angel had said.
And they went back to watch over their flocks,
Having met one of their own.



Daphne Kitching

St. Faith's Bell Project

At the last PCC meeting, I raised the possibility of installing a peal of six bells in the tower at St. Faith's.

Despite the financial circumstances of the church, it may be possible for this project to proceed by raising the money from outside sources. So far, we've already been promised a grant of £5,000 from the Lancashire Association of Change Ringers, a donation from the Keltek Trust and a family from the church has offered to donate one of the bells. This is even before fundraising has begun in earnest. I am keen to point out that any money raised will only be from resources otherwise unavailable to the church and not detract from the general fundraising at St. Faith's.

Further details in due course along with details of our precarious trip up the tower at St. Mary's!

Sam Austin



The 100 Club Winners

November draw

1	36	Eric Salisbury
2	136	Sarah Evison
3	93	Angie Price
4	128	Peter Burket

December draw

1	4	Anne Holland
2	67	Anne Holland
3	129	Peter Burket
4	7	May Clark

Indoor Bowling

We would be pleased to welcome any new members to play in St Faith's Church Hall on Thursdays from 1.30 to 3.30 pm.

It is very informal – just a good afternoon with a cup of tea and a biscuit and a good laugh! The cost is £2.00 every Thursday between October and March.

Please contact Miss G. Prescott on 474 8921

How to Summon the Police

A true story (or so the internet alleges...)

Phillip Hewitson, an elderly man, from Norwich UK, was going up to bed, when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which

bedroom window. He opened the back door to go and turn off the light, but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things. He phoned the police, who asked "Is someone in your house?"

"No," he said, " but some people are breaking into my garden shed and stealing from me."

"All our patrols are busy," came the reply.. You should lock your doors and an officer will be along when one is available."

"O.K." said Philip. He hung up the phone and counted to 30. Then he phoned the police again. "Hello, I just called you a few seconds ago because there were people stealing things from my shed. Well you don't have to worry about them now because I just shot them." Then he hung up.

Within five minutes, Six Police Cars, a SWAT Team, a Helicopter, a Paramedic, and an Ambulance showed up at the Hewitsons' residence, and caught the burglars red-handed. One of the Policemen said to Phillip, "I thought you said that you'd shot them!"

Phillip merely said, "I thought you said there was nobody available!"



Following the Star

An article from 'The Times', published about 1930, supplied by Fr Dennis

Few stories have won such willing attention as the narrative of the Wise Men who were led by a star to the infant Christ. It would seem as if Christian art and literature found in it something at once irresistibly beautiful and convincingly true; and whatever the origin of the story it serves to illustrate certain characteristics of Divine revelation.

All religions claim to be founded on a special disclosure of the supernatural world. How can man learn about God except it is told him from above? Our customary distinction between natural and revealed religion, though it may have some justification, may easily give rise to no little confusion. It is true that much may be learnt about God through an attentive study of nature and history by the use of the faculties of reason, but to truth thus learned must be added what is revealed to men through supernatural media. Everything that brings us to the knowledge of God is His revelation. We accept Carlyle's dictum that "Heaven and earth are but the time vesture of the Eternal: The universe is but one vast symbol of God: nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself, but a symbol of God?" We need not try to restrict the conception of revelation, or to place it in different categories, as if part were dependent on man's discovery and the other on special supernatural acts. Revelation is all one; and man's highest privilege is to respond to it.

The Wise Men of the East who followed the star acted as men determined to satisfy themselves of the real significance of facts which had come under their observation. They had the spirit of true seekers in their determination to find out the meaning of phenomena presented to them. If they had been content merely to note the appearance of the star they would have learnt but little, for it did not reveal its secret until they went out to follow it. And even then its significance seemed uncertain. In some way its light failed them, and they were compelled to inquire, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the East, and are come to worship Him." It was not until they had received help from the learned men in Jerusalem that they found the Child to whom they presented their gifts.

Men ask, if God reveals Himself to men why does He not save them from the uncertainties and perplexities in which they still live? We must, however, reflect that in all instruction there are two people concerned, the teacher and the taught, and that the wise teacher knows that he must frame his lesson in terms level to the capacities and experience of the student. This is also the law of Divine revelation. If it were remembered, half the difficulties which confront so many in the study of the Bible would vanish at once. It records a revelation made in terms congruous to the experience and ideals of life among those to whom it was granted in each age. The contrast between the cruel tribalism of ancient Israel's religion with the lofty conception of God in the prophets shows how revelation is always conditioned by man's moral and spiritual receptivity.

Revelation demands a real effort from those who would rightly apprehend it. The notion that men must become passive recipients of supernatural truth is contrary to experience. The Wise Men would not have imagined anything significant in the appearance of the star if they had not already trained themselves in the science of astronomy, nor would they have learned its real importance without the arduous journey they were content to undergo. The fact that man's apprehension of truth is only partial and conditional is regarded from two points of view. Some so emphasize what is still hidden and so lament their perplexity that they seem to grow in doubt rather than in knowledge. Others are grateful for what they have seen and learned, diligently following where it leads and using all other helps to a better understanding of it. They have their perplexities and doubts, but the light shines still and as they follow it the light grows brighter.

The Hellenistic mind deified the forces of Nature, counting the stars as animate and in a measure divine. "The stars are the visible gods, and yonder world above, in which the shining beings move, is the world that is truly divine." The Magi were not content with this faith. When they went out to search for the newborn King they were animated by a faith which regarded the star only because it would lead them to One who shared man's fortune and who in Himself manifested the perfect unity which exists between the Divine and human. This was the true end of their quest and they could be satisfied with nothing less. The late Poet Laureate has provided a free rendering of the epigram, of Ptolemy, the second-century astronomer, who gives beautiful expression to a thought

which very nearly approaches it:

Mortal though I be, yea ephemeral, if but a moment I gaze up to the night's starry domain of heaven, then no longer on earth I stand; I touch the Creator, and my lively spirit drinketh immortality.

The Star of Bethlehem led the Magi to One before Whom they knelt in worship. It also showed them a little Child in Whom men learned to see the pattern of their own manhood. He taught them how, as they lived and worked and died according to the will of God, in the mingled weakness and strength of human life they too might shine forth in the light of their witness to truth and goodness, guiding tired and perplexed men to worship Him in Whom all that is Divine and human comes to its perfect unity.



The Tale of the Trees

As this magazine goes to press, the second St Faith's Christmas Tree Festival is well under way. Those who took part in or attended last year's pioneering event will know just how much planning and effort go into getting the show on the road - and just how inspiring and splendid the finished product is.

The 2010 Festival bids fair to be even more successful. Building on last year's foundation, the church is again filled (and we mean filled: there are 50 trees as against the mere 40 last year!) with beautifully lit and decorated trees. Entry is again free, there are refreshments (this year including hot soup - very welcome given the arctic weather), together with stalls selling the products of the Jam Factory and a range of other enticing items. Visitors are this year invited to vote for their favourite tree - with handsome prizes funded by the generosity of two members of our congregation. Each afternoon groups from local schools visit to sing for us; there is a Saturday morning concert, and two extra special events. The first was a moving Advent Celebration service, with actor Andrew Lancel (reading to us), Mirfield College students (chanting plainsong) and an local string quartet (playing to us) - in a church glowing with candles and amidst the lit trees. And on one evening we are joined by a military band to play carols for all to sing in the context of the monthly meeting of the St Faith's Services Family Support Group.

The whole week is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the team of planners, stewards and salespersons, and, as the warm and touching tributes in our visitors' book are showing, is greatly appreciated by the people who visit us.

There are photos of this and other events in this issue, and more, in full colour in the online edition and on the dedicated website pages which track the unfolding tale of the

trees from the entry of the trees to the final sweeping up of the needles. They tell the story of a superb week, and one of which St Faith's in general, and the team in particular, can be justly proud.

Controversy Corner



Editing a magazine, and making sometimes forthright statements of one's personal beliefs, rarely brings any hard evidence that anyone has ever read one's words at all. It is of course gratifying when readers speak of their approval of what they read, but when they disapprove I guess they usually prefer to keep silent - and pens are rarely actually put to paper on either side of an argument. Stephen Hargreaves' letter, reproduced in full below, is therefore more than welcome, for all its hard-hitting criticism of my views. Using editorial privilege, I have followed it with a relatively brief reply, and would welcome submissions on either side of the debate from other readers. For those who missed the original piece (which I entitled 'Pontifications', and which can be read on the church website), I commented on the great success of the Papal visit but regretted the fact that the official line of the church of Rome on Anglican priestly orders - and of course even more on the ordination of women - was still to regard them as entirely null and void. I contrasted the unyielding refusal to change with what I saw - and see - as the tolerance of the C.of E. *Ed.*

Dear Chris,

I was surprised to notice half way through reading the 'Pontifications' article in November's Newslink that its author was a time served worshipper at what always used to regard itself as a catholic parish. Were I to put into writing everything that went through my head for some time after absorbing your thoughts (as I perceive them, and possibly wrongly) then I should probably be accused of ranting - so instead I will try to exercise some restraint by restricting my open reply to more or less a single point.

That point is simply this. It is to say the least glib to describe the Anglican church as "tolerant" at a time when General Synod has stated in the clearest possible terms that it has no interest whatsoever in accommodating anyone with traditional beliefs on the ordination of women as priests or their consecration as bishops.

The tolerance to which you refer does of course exist, but is generally reserved for more politically correct causes (although it does appear elsewhere in a very different form and purely by default - mainly in situations where senior figures in the C of E either don't have the courage to exercise their authority or simply can't be bothered).

Tolerance is reserved for bishops who deny a physical resurrection or who no longer believe that Jesus was divine; for clergy whose knowledge of the BCP and whose basic understanding of other fundamentals of Anglicanism is limited to a general

outline because it is possible to train for ordination doing less reading than would be required for even a couple of softer A level options; for ordinands who are accommodated in their refusal to take oaths to the sovereign as Governor of the C of E because they "don't agree" with monarchy; for images of crucified female forms in church buildings (highly imaginative and perhaps even powerful but totally irrelevant to the faith), faculties for which have been sanctioned by politically correct careerists on a Diocesan Advisory Committee; for disastrously irresponsible financial management decisions which go unquestioned at so many levels; and for supposedly full time stipendiary clergy who regard their office as some part time inconvenience to be squeezed around the rest of their busy lives if and when they feel like it.

The list goes on, but here I am of course straying from the point (and yes, I probably am ranting) - so let's return to tolerance of belief within the C of E and how apparently it should be the envy of the rest of the world.

Contrast the above examples with the lot of people steeped in traditional C of E doctrine to whom promises made and enshrined in law in 1992 (The Act of Synod) have been shamelessly broken. Synod's response to them: "Tough - accept it and pretend to have changed your beliefs or go away - yes, you might have devoted your life to date to the church, and yes, you might be too old to do much else with your life by way of a career, but frankly that's not our problem and we will take full advantage". The former Bishop of Fulham is absolutely spot-on in having compared the uncompromising arrogance and vindictiveness of the approach adopted on this single issue with a fascist style of government - zero tolerance is the policy.

Having given up smoking some years ago now I find that I personally (and I stress personally, but this isn't about me) have very little in common with the Pope beyond his love of music. It is therefore with some genuine detachment and indifference that I say that in relation to what might have been Rome's prospective communion with Anglicans I have not the slightest difficulty in understanding his position.

At worst it is indeed criminal, to borrow the Pope's own term, for the C of E to have allowed itself to be hijacked by feminists, and I use the word advisedly for that is precisely the mentality which prevailed at Synod this year. They rejoice in having brought centuries of other people's traditions to an irretrievable end in satisfying their own purely political agenda. These supposed paragons of tolerance and equality have not even the common decency (let alone humility or charity) to make gracious concession for those who dare to cast doubt over whether such a radical move can legitimately be taken by the Anglican Church more or less in isolation from the rest of the world.

At best, on the other hand, it sends out at a macro level a wholly inaccurate and deeply saddening message to the rest of Christendom: that while the C of E is happy to smile for the cameras during the occasional ecumenical "do" the reality is that we consist

exclusively of protestants who never saw anything very worthwhile in developing any meaningful unity with anyone else; and that all previous gestures in that direction by others have been nothing more than a sham. I wonder if you had been Pope for a day, how would you have reacted to that message?

Sincerely,



Stephen Hargreaves

The editor replies... Stephen is right to speak of this writer as 'time-served' (more or less a life sentence, actually), and as such I have always been entirely happy to belong to and serve a 'catholic' parish; one which is, if anything, more so now than it was forty years ago, and whose developing thought and practice I have witnessed, shared and found to be good. He focuses his attack on my labelling the Anglican Church as tolerant, seemingly because its policies and legislation over recent years take positions of which he strongly disapproves. Seen from a different perspective, very large numbers of Anglicans, whether in our church or the wider communion, might think that the church has rather been over-tolerant of those who have fought so hard to hamper the preferment of women as priests, and now bishops, and more than generous in its treatment of, and provision for, those who leave its ranks for Rome. The seeming willingness now at least to consider allowing congregations and priests who 'go over' to stay in their old church buildings speaks to me of compassion, even humility, rather than the arrogance and vindictiveness of which Stephen speaks,

I have always been proud to belong to an 'umbrella' church: one which accommodates the residual British qualities of compromise and fairness, and indeed tolerance to those who don't fit in or whose views don't chime with our own. To be both Reformed and Catholic is to be able to take the best of each tradition: to me this is strength not weakness.

Unlike many other churches, the C of E is a democracy, however flawed. As such, the decisions it ultimately makes begin at parish level, progressing through local to Diocesan and finally General Synod level. Which means that these decisions are owned by, and represent, the majority view of Anglicans and that those who disagree must either accept the changes or, sadly, choose to leave the fold. This is not 'criminal', nor the result of hijacking, but, one would like to think, the result of long and prayerful thinking and of seeking the will of God. We do not have a Pope, nor even one in every parish, but an amalgam of priests and people, High and Low, male and female, to carry us forward in faith. And, though I am often exasperated by our church (nationally, that is!), I would not have it any other way.

I am more than grateful to the people (more than a few) who have said that they wished to be identified with my views in the original article. There is, thank the Lord, room for us ail under that umbrella, and beneath its compassionate protection I look forward to continuing the debate. *Ed*

The Parish Directory & Church Organisations



VICAR

Fr. Neil Kelley, The Vicarage, Milton Road, Waterloo. L22 4RE
928 3342; fax 920 2901

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 8870
Canon Peter Goodrich, 16 Hillside Avenue, Ormskirk, L39 5TD. 01695 573285
Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

READERS

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813
Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726
Mrs Cynthia Johnson, 30 Willow House, Maple Close, Seaforth, L21 4LY. 286 8155

CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Margaret Houghton, 16 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0548
Mrs Maureen Madden, 37 Abbotsford Gardens, Crosby. L23 3AP. 924 2154

DEPUTY CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325
Mrs Rosie Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TL. 924 6267

TREASURER

Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Road, Waterloo. L22 3XA. 920 5563

PARISH OFFICE MANAGER

Mr Geoff Dunn 32 Brooklands Avenue, L22 3XZ • Tel & fax: 0151 928 9913
Email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

GIFT AID SECRETARY

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TL. 924 6267

TUESDAY OFFICE HOUR: 6.30 – 7.30 pm (wedding and banns bookings)

Mrs Lynda Dixon, c/o the Vicarage. 928 7330

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mr Sam Austin, 42 Arch View Crescent, Liverpool, L1 7BA. 07921 840616.
email samOaustin@googlemail.com

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mr Stephen Hargreaves, 86 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 07939 119220

SACRISTAN

Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

ASSISTANT SACRISTAN

Mr Leo Appleton, 28 Hougoumont Avenue, Waterloo. L22 0LL. 07969 513087

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Angie Price 924 1938

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

CHURCH CENTRE

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

UNITED BENEFICE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

James|Roderick 0141 474 6162

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Adam Jones 07841 125589

Thursday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Tuesday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. George McInnes 924 3624

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Sue Walsh 920 0318; Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm. Sam Austin 07921 840616

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938

The **February 2011 'Newslink'** will be distributed on or before **Sunday, January 23rd**. Copy by **Sunday, January 9th**, please - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

Church website: <http://www.stfaithsgreatcrosby.org.uk>

Online magazine accessed at <http://www.stfaithsgreatcrosby.org.uk/magazine.html>

Email: cdavidprice@gmail.com



Designed and printed at
THE IMAGE PRESS
Marchant Taylors' School, Crosby



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**



Diocese of Liverpool