



Newslink

St Faith's Church, Great Crosby
Parish Magazine

JANUARY 2013

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAY SERVICES

11.00am	SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church
1.00pm	Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)
6.00pm	Evening Service and Benediction (1st Sunday)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Monday	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	9.30am	Holy Eucharist
Wednesday	10.30am	Holy Eucharist (<i>in S. Mary's</i>)
Thursday	6.30pm	Reflections Prayer Group (<i>in S. Mary's</i>)
Friday	6.30pm	Evening Prayer
Saturday	10.30am	Holy Eucharist

Please consult the website or weekly sheets for any variation in service times, particularly for weeks where there is a Holy Day.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The Clergy 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.

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 the Eucharistic Ministers are happy to undertake this - please call 928 3342 to arrange this. Likewise, to arrange a visit to someone in hospital or at home, please call 928 3342 to arrange this.

IN A PASTORAL EMERGENCY

please contact a member of the ministry team directly or call **07986 478846**.



From the Ministry Team: January 2013

Dear Friends,

Although this magazine goes out before Christmas and we are still in the season of Advent, it is the January edition so I will start by not only wishing everyone a very peaceful Christmas but also a very Happy New Year.

Some of you may remember words from my Advent Sunday sermon when I said that in four weeks Christmas would be over, in five we would probably have made a new set of resolutions and in six the decorations would have been packed away for another year and we would be back to WHAT?

Will life just carry on in the same old way; will we still be the same or will we be changed? If we are taking this Advent seriously then I certainly hope we are growing spiritually because we have taken opportunities to think, reflect and pray once more about Jesus' birth at Bethlehem. A birth that brought promise and hope to the world.

A New Year too, is full of hope and promise - but new beginnings are often close to endings which may have been sad or difficult. Very often we want to move on but at the same time feel apprehensive; there is something in all of us that doesn't want to let go of the comfortable and familiar but new beginnings inevitably mean change. We have no control over time, so we have to age with it and January puts us on the threshold of something new whether we like it or not!

Hopefully, at St. Faith's this January we will all find ourselves in a place of hope, excitement and promise as we welcome Fr. Simon to our Benefice. We have been blessed with a short interregnum and I would like to thank everyone for pulling together and supporting each other in a way that has helped to enable the smooth transition from Fr. Neil moving on to Fr. Simon joining us.

We frequently read in the Bible how much God wants new beginnings for us. There is a constant theme which we hear again and again that God promises, cleanses, refreshes, blesses, and makes whole. In Biblical terms promises mark

something holy, a place where God is; so as we welcome a New Year and Fr. Simon may it be God who *'first foots'* into our hearts and our Church to take us with Him into 2013.

I pray that we can all be open and positive about change and try even harder to love our neighbour. This New Year can our resolution be to take the action needed to break bad habits and attitudes that stop us from sharing the gospel message with others. We can't force this inner change to happen but we can try to be open, ready, waiting and receptive to the gift of love being offered to us. Yes the lights and the baubles will soon be packed away for another year but God's love continues to shine brightly every day of our lives.

A Collect for New Year

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose years never fail
and whose mercies are new each returning day:
let the radiance of your Spirit renew our lives,
warming our hearts and giving light to our minds;
that we may pass the coming year
in joyful obedience and firm faith;
through him who is the beginning and the
end,
your Son, Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

With love and prayers

Revd Denise



Holy Happenings...

This issue of our magazine is dominated by two big stories – one of which looks back to the Christmas Tree Festival and the other forward – to a new ministry in a new year. Below, Fr Simon Tibbs writes his first letter for *Newslink*; then Maureen Madden provides the final interregnum bulletin, charting the events which led to Fr Simon's appointment. Finally we reproduce the biographical details of our new priest's life and background: these were supplied at our request for publishing on the church website, and are reproduced here for those who do not have online access. There can be no doubting the thirst for all this information amongst our readers and website visitors: for the record, the day (November 25th) that your editor posted the newflash about the appointment saw exactly 100 'hits' on the church website! Now read on...

A Letter from Fr Simon



Dear Friends,

New Year is a time of new beginnings, and especially for the Anglican family in our part of Crosby and Waterloo as we anticipate the beginning of a new phase in the life of our churches.

By the time you read this, Christmas celebrations will be almost upon us, I will be in the process of preparing to move into the Vicarage, and all of us will be eagerly anticipating the licensing service at St. Mary's on January 9th. What are our feelings as this event approaches? Relief, no doubt, that the vacancy has been short; curiosity as to what God may have in store for us; hope for the future; some degree of trepidation, perhaps. What on earth will he be like?

'Ring out the old, ring in the new!' is a phrase that is often repeated at this time of year. And on a personal level, some of us will be reflecting on the year that's been. It may well be that there are things we wish had turned out differently in 2012, and that we need to turn our back on.

But in our church life, 'ringing out the old' is not what we want to be doing. Rather, this New Year will be a time to honour and celebrate the best of what has gone before, and the considerable achievements of the past thirteen years. We will only build well on the past by appreciating it for what it was.

The first part of the year, with Easter so early, will be very rich liturgically. After the service on 9th January, both congregations will come together to celebrate the Baptism of Jesus on Sunday 13th. I look forward to preaching to you for the first time on that occasion. A full church would really help us start as we mean to go on, so do please bring along as many curious friends, neighbours, family members and well-wishers as you can.

Candlemass at the beginning of February will be the next big day, and then in a flash, Ash Wednesday will be upon us, and then the great and solemn celebrations of Holy Week and Easter.

There will be much that is new for me in our first few months together, as I start getting to know you, and finding out what is important to you. I will not be looking to instigate immediate change: I want change, where change is needed, to be something we discern together. I may have questions about how things are done – you will find I'm someone who asks a lot of questions. But it is the people's church. The clergy are not there to rule over it. Real change, the kind of deep change that has the potential to bear lasting fruit, must come from you.

Newness, the possibility of a life renewed, transfigured, intensified, is the essence

of God's gift to us in Christ. Change in the church must always be about learning to embody the Resurrection promise better. It's apt then, that our first few months together will be drenched in Easter light. Away-days for the ministry team and PCCs will take place in Eastertide, as will the APCM, after which we will perhaps have a sense of the direction of travel for the next year or so. But for the first part of the year, let's allow the time-honoured wisdom of the church's rhythm be our guide.

I am approaching this move with joyful anticipation and gratitude in equal measure. As a first-time incumbent, I am very aware of the solemn charge that is to be entrusted to me. I am also thankful to God for calling me to this particular patch of his vineyard, and to so many who have been diligent, generous and kind in their discharging of various tasks: those who were involved in the wonderfully helpful and supportive appointment process, especially the reps. from both parishes, Mtr. Denise and other members of the Ministry Team, Geoff in the office, David, Maureen and Margaret for their help with the Vicarage, and the two Organists and the Catering Team for their work in preparation for the Licensing Service. Lots of things have had to be done at short notice, and at the busiest time of the year. The way you have all pulled together to make it happen shows me what a good bunch you are, and bodes extremely well for the future.

Much to be thankful for, much to look forward to.

Peace, light and life be to you all,

Fr. Simon



... the Final Update!

I was tempted to give this brief article the same title as an old Roy Orbison song: 'It's Over'.... But as we all know, 'It ain't over 'til the fat lady sings' and we still have the Licensing and subsequent bun fight to finalise. Thanks to the choice of location for that particular ceremony and our preoccupation with the Tree Festival, Margaret and I have played little part in the organisation of the Licensing, the before, during and after of the Trees keeping us busy whilst a varied team of musicians, caterers, typesetters and printers get on with organising our first big event after Christmas.

For those who may not yet know, the Licensing is to take place at St Mary's on Wednesday January 9th at 7.30 pm. Fr Simon will be arriving to take up residence just a few days before that and his first Mass will be at a joint service in St Faith's on January 13th. Elsewhere in this edition of Newslink you will have been able to read a little about Fr Simon in his own words. The Senior Citizens' lunch which had been scheduled for January 6th has now been postponed to a yet to be confirmed 'pre-Lent' date so that our new priest will be able to join us.

We had been prepared for a much longer wait for the advent of a new priest and are aware of how lucky we are to be starting a new year with Simon. I have to say that one of the things which pleases me most is that this is someone who saw our vacancy, read our Parish Profile and was drawn to us. His subsequent visits (one pre- and one post-interview) served to confirm his feeling that this was a place in which he wanted to minister and to make his home. Throughout the whole process of preparing for our vacancy and interregnum, my innate cynicism had made me watchful of an ‘inside deal’ and put me on guard of those gift-bearing Greeks previously mentioned. It is optimistic, therefore, to be able to welcome someone who came from an unexpected source and who is able to join us so soon.

On practical matters, the vicarage will be receiving a minor ‘make-over’ in terms of the parquet flooring being restored and refurbished and a couple of rooms will receive a coat of paint. Those of you who live locally may notice some comings and goings to this effect immediately before Christmas and in the period between Christmas and New Year.

In conclusion I am sure that, in order to welcome Fr. Simon, Fr. Neil would not object to me quoting his appropriate paraphrase of lines from the hymn ‘Lord for the Years’ at his last service in June:

“Past - to inspire us, for the Future take us,
Lord of the years, we give our thanks today”

Maureen Madden



Words on the Web

The online version of this piece features links to the various establishments and events referred to below: the editor particularly recommends the interviews during Fr Simon’s epic sponsored walk to Walsingham. Many of us have been there – but not (yet?) on foot...

I’m delighted to introduce myself as Priest-in-Charge-designate to St. Faith’s Crosby with St. Mary the Virgin, Waterloo Park (that’s a bit of a mouthful!).

I grew up in Sussex and Bedford. After a first degree in English Literature at Edinburgh University, and spells abroad teaching English in Istanbul and Tokyo, I proceeded to further studies at Newcastle University, completing in 2003 a PhD on perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in early modern writing in English. Through the Newcastle years, I had a growing sense of vocation to the priesthood. At the end of my time there, I returned to Bedford, where I spent a wonderful eighteen months as a church-based community worker at All Saints church. This was a rich period, working in a multi-faith, largely Muslim parish, served by a vibrant, multi-ethnic congregation. All Saints remains an important base for me, as my father is a retired priest on the staff there, and my mother is church-warden. The All Saints

website is well worth a look, and not just because I came up with the design, and wrote a fair bit of the copy myself!

While in Bedford, I went through the selection process for ordination, and in 2005 I proceeded to Westcott House in Cambridge. While there, I co-ran the Chapel music for a year, read for a Cambridge degree, in which I largely focused on Old Testament and Hebrew, and was also involved in kick-starting the relationship between Westcott and neighbouring All Saints, Jesus Lane, a beautiful Victorian church, long-redundant. I have a passion for Victorian churches, and am looking forward to having the care of two lovely examples in Crosby/Waterloo.

From Westcott, I moved (via a stint teaching in seminary in the Solomon Islands) to Edinburgh, serving as Curate at the well-known Anglo-Catholic church of Old Saint Paul's. I particularly enjoyed the liturgical life, various community contacts, and opportunities to spend time with young adults by setting up a new group for the under 40s, XYMonday. During my curacy, I also undertook my 'walking to Walsingham' project, a 400-mile pilgrimage on foot, commemorated in a video diary which I made en route, and partially available online.

At the end of my curacy in 2011, the opportunity came up to go to South Africa, to take up a fixed-term, 12-month post teaching Biblical Studies at the College of the Transfiguration in Grahamstown. South Africa is in my DNA, my father and grand-father both having served there as priests (my four elder sisters were also born there). That was a wonderful experience, and the opportunity to journey with ordination candidates in South Africa for a time was a great privilege. On returning to the UK in July 2012, wondering what to do next, I got taken on as an assistant priest, on a temporary basis, by St. Andrew's Bedford. Having established that a return to my former job in South Africa was not an immediate possibility, I began to look around in the UK. Very soon, St. Faith's and St. Mary's came up. The rest, as they say, is history.

After such a varied programme over the past few years, involving a lot of moving about, I am looking forward to settling in one place and starting to put down roots. Alongside ministry, I hope to resume former interests, or pick up new ones. I shall be getting dogs, and look forward to taking advantage of the great cultural scene in Liverpool, particularly the Phil concerts and opera. Time permitting, I'd also love to do some organ-playing, hill-walking, and church-crawling.

My licensing takes place at St. Mary's on Wednesday January 9th at 7.30pm. Richard Blackburn, the Bishop of Warrington will preach, and it promises to be a joyful and uplifting occasion. Whoever you are, and whatever your interest in the parish, do come along on that occasion to wish us well if you can.

Best wishes,

Fr Simon

Talking of the Trees



The highlight of our blessedly short interregnum was the fourth annual Christmas Tree Festival, which took place between December 2nd and 8th. Below, Margaret Houghton, *fons et origo* of this and the three previous events, writes about her delight at how things went, and Eunice Little, founder of our Services Family Support Group, waxes similarly lyrical about the splendid event of the Wednesday evening.

Resilient, energetic, enthusiastic, good-humoured, talented and good team members. Just some of the qualities shown by all those who volunteered to take part in the 2012 Tree Festival. Having spent six months in pursuit of a new priest, some of us were failing fast but were spurred on by the tremendous response from so many volunteers for the running of the stalls, stewarding, printing, stirring the soup cauldron each day to serve a delicious choice of menus for lunches. From despair at realising all the cakes had been sold, to relief when an abundance of freshly baked cakes arrived each morning, to batteries constantly renewed to keep each tree brightly lit, to washers-up who kept a supply of clean china going throughout the day and so many other tasks all performed without question or complaint. No wonder this year was such a success.

How can one describe the value of such a team? From mid morning to evening the helpers kept on working and the atmosphere grew. Small children visited with their teachers and charmed us with impromptu singing, or almost; groups of young mums gathered for coffee when little ones enjoyed colouring pictures to be hung on the stands made available for them, ladies met for lunch and a chat and fond grandparents came to listen to the various school choirs, much enjoyed by all. To our delight a teacher arrived with her Celtic harp and accompanied the children as they sang carols, certainly a first for St. Faith's, but maybe we will see more of the harpist in the future.

The Festival was brought to a close with another excellent recital given by the Liverpool Saturday Morning Youth Orchestra and all was then suddenly quiet and still; but how the lights continued to twinkle, difficult to darken such a wonderful sight.

One of the greatest experiences the writer had this year was the warmth which filled the building. No, not the over-burdened heating, but from the way visitors embraced the atmosphere and appreciated the welcome received - and the best comment "This is a real church". Top that!

Margaret Houghton

And the Band played on



What a brilliant evening!

That was the consensus of opinion about this year's Carol service. The magical atmosphere the trees bring, the subdued lightening, a church full of people who had come from far and near, not to mention the Military Band! What can I say, even though their late arrival which did panic me somewhat, couldn't detract from their wonderful performance and superb accompaniment to our carols, especially the spine tingling drum roll that started the last verse to each carol, just spectacular!!

I have to say a huge 'thank you to all who gave so generously to the retiring collection, for although as yet I do not know the exact total, I do know that the three charities, Combat Stress, BLESMA, UK Forces Support, will each receive an equal share to help towards the very valuable work that they do. As soon as I know the total collected I will make it known. Also, to all those who helped me in so many ways, especially the ladies who helped with the refreshments, thank you.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 6th at 7.30 pm in church, when Rev Simon Farmer, padre with The Royal Welsh, will join with us to talk about his recent tour of duty in Afghanistan, so I hope to see you there. Until then I hope that you all have a very Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2013.

Eunice Little

From the Visitors' Book



'Beautiful trees, soup and cake ... absolutely lovely – makes me reflect on how lucky I am - what a welcoming church ... I appreciated all the hard work ... absolutely delightful, will be back ... nice and warm, tasty cakes ... all the hard work shone through ... well done, lovely as always ... good luck with all the work you do and thank you ... must come back tomorrow with a friend ... back again for more cake! ... lovely idea! Really enjoyed beautiful trees and lovely carols ... such a good idea ... wonderful choirs ... a beautiful, thoughtful display ... very uplifting ... thank you for all the work putting it together ... lovely service ... lovely start to Christmas ... very festive and joyful ... wonderful to see this beautiful church brought to life. Thank you! brings back memories ... choir sound lovely ... as good as ever ... fantastic idea, well done to all ... have enjoyed it - each year something new ... very helpful trees, nice decorations ... James loved the golden tree and Anna loved the baby clothes tree! ... wonderful concert, excellent jam sale ... fantastic as always. Enjoyed all the singing and concerts ... really lovely festival

– we come every year – thank you so much ... we thought it was brilliant ... a really warm welcome for a wonderful occasion ... fantastic welcome and fantastic trees ... amazing ... lovely festival, beautiful trees and lovely people helping for charity ... how very beautiful! A great idea and loved the opportunity for ‘low key’ meet and greet. I am going to tell people about it for next year. Thank you ... Wow! (Jenny and Fr Michael Raynor, St Andrew’s, Orford!)



From the Prayer Tree

‘Dear God, thank you for guiding me through this life, giving me comfort, support and helping me learn, grow and be a better person. All my love, Sophie. Amen xx ... Lord please watch over the poor people and look after us all please Amen ... To God Please make sure my nan is okay she is my world and my best friend thank you ... Pray for Maurice he has several problems, ears and dementia. God bless you thank you ... Please pray for my bronchitis that keeps coming back thank you and God Bless ... For my dear Mum and Dad now safe in God’s keeping. Pray too for the few family members I have left and grant them good health. Amen ... For my beloved dog Chloe. May you forever be chased by Heidi until we meet again when we can be walking in heaven, you leading me. I will never forget you ... Dear god you are really helpful and there for us always. Thankyou so so much for acshaly being there armen ... Dear Lord My granma is missing Grandpa so so much, Please look after him in heaven. Please let us have a wonderful Christmas ... I wish Jesus will come back and comfort me again. I love God Amen ... Dear God, I pray for world peace and for this event to be successful ... God please look after my dead dog and gran-dad ... Please give my dad the strength to overcome his depression and my family and I the strength to support him through it ... I wish that my sister’s knee would get better, from Tommy ... Please pray for my gran in Scotland because she has a very bad hip and she only lives with her dog so it may be lonely thank you ... Dear God please make my nan feel better and I hope all my pets are safe and could you make my grandpa remember me ... Dear Lord, We give you thanks for all new babies this Christmas. Pray especially for the safe arrival of Catherine and Sean’s baby next June. Please can it be a boy. AMEN ... Dear Jesus, I pray for my Poppa in heaven who has died. I pray for my grandma who I love and want to be happy, sharing laughter with her family ... Remember before God those who are homeless in this bitterly cold weather ... I wish that Jeysis was God love HANNAH. Amen.’

All of us who scanned the pages of the Visitors’ Book were struck as always by the warm and appreciative nature of every comment – as well as by those who were discovering our existence for the first time. It is so good to be serving our parish and people in this way to and to be able to feel that we are meeting a need. And to read the outpourings of prayer hung on the Prayer Tree in the Lady Chapel was likewise to be moved and humbled beyond measure.



Picturing the Trees
 The December 2012 Christmas Tree Festival is reported upon in words in this issue. These four pages of pictures add the colour to a wonderful week.



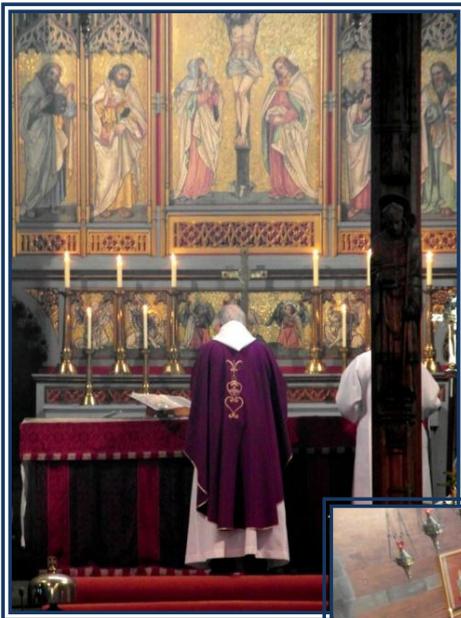
As can be seen, there was much to tempt visitors on the sales stalls – tasty home-made preserves and lovely gift items.

After the Liverpool Music School concert on Saturday, and a photo-opportunity for the catering team with their remaining wares, the following afternoon saw the traditional operation of hoovering up the pine needles and carting away of the stripped trees. The Fourth Festival was over – now what about 2013...?
Pictures: Chris Price



Just before the Festival officially opened, the church's Uniformed Organisations started in the Advent Sunday Toy Service amidst the waiting trees





The Advent morning service was celebrated at the High Altar ... a splendid Military band accompanied a full church singing carols on Wednesday evening ... the Prayer Tree was hung with a hundred heartfelt petitions ... several schools brought classes and choirs to entertain lunchtime visitors ... who ate their way through the excellent refreshments on offer

Online extra 1 ...Wardens at Work!

Churchwardens Maureen Madden and Margaret Houghton had a busy few weeks at the end of the year. After a flurry of behind the scenes activity with diocesan dignitaries, patrons, St Mary's representatives and, of course, would-be incumbents, they were delighted and relieved to be able to announce, on Sunday, November 25th, the appointment of Fr Simon Tibbs as vicar-designate of the United Benefice parishes. With parish representative David Jones alongside, they received the applause of the congregation.

Just a week later, on December 2nd, they are seen standing in the porch ready to declare that the 2012 Christmas Tree Festival was well and truly open!



Online extra 2... Crosby Christmas

Chris Price

The turning year brings Christmastide to greet a waiting world,
And over men and nations see its message now unfurled,
As distant thoughts turn home again and wandering paths draw near
To hearth and home and fireside and memories held dear.
In countless homes now, harassed mums check lists and lay their plans,
And scurry home from Sainsbury's weighed down with bags and cans.
They shop around for gift-wrapped soap and nuts and tangerines;
For cards with cosy messages and jolly Christmas scenes;
While fathers long for mighty meals, old films and fat cigars,
And children dream of talking dolls, computer games and cars.
Now office boys and secretaries, made bold by party cheer,
Think naughty thoughts and dream wild dreams to last another year.
And Merchant's boys assemble to perch on wooden pews
To sing the well-worn Christmas hymns and hear the Christmas news.
Once more their blended voices ring, the fair sounds rise and fall,
As messages of love and peace waft gently over all.
The dying echoes wander out and steal beneath the door,
To lose themselves across the street in Crosby traffic's roar.
One rising tide of happiness sweeps gloom and grief away,
Till far and wide the bells ring out to welcome Christmas Day.

To other ears the Christmas bells toll out a different sound,
And melancholy is the song their echoes ring around.
They sound a world divided, by hatred torn apart,
Where fear and doubt and misery clutch at the human heart;
Where colour, race, or class or creed still sunder man from man,
With all the ancient agonies heaped up since time began.
Where greed and pride and selfishness rule in a world of fear,
And violence and racial strife bring down the dying year.
Those bells ring out in requiem for love and hope and trust,
And peace lies broken, trampled down in grey and lifeless dust.
Across the sea, yet close to home, the bombers' murderous blast
Reaps still the senseless harvest of a long and bitter past.
In Europe and in Africa the starving children plead
In ruined towns and barren fields for pity on their need.
All through the world, beneath their flags, the nations threaten war
On refugees, on outcasts and all the helpless poor
Who have no love at Christmastime and none to hear their cry,
As in the doorways of the world they watch our world go by.

Yet still the ancient Truth is shown to those with eyes to see:
The Prince of Peace comes as a child in awe and majesty;
The angels' song sounds clear above our world's discordant din,
As still to willing hearts and minds the Christ child enters in.
He comes between the drawn swords and the nations armed for war:
A helpless outcast innocent as once he came before.
In him alone is found our peace: the Life, the Truth, the Way;
He comes once more to rule our hearts - Christ born on Christmas Day.

Poems for Christmas and the New Year

Christmas Landscape

Tonight the wind gnaws
with teeth of glass,
the jackdaw shivers
in caged branches of iron,
the stars have talons.
Tonight has no moon,
no food for the pilgrim,
the fruit tree is bare,
the rose bush is a thorn,
and the ground is bitter with stones.

There is hunger in the mouth
of vole and badger,
silver agonies of breath
in the nostril of the fox,
ice on the rabbit's paw.
But the mole sleeps, and the hedgehog
lies curled in a womb of leaves
the bean and the wheat seed
hug their germs in the earth
and the stream moves under the ice.

Tonight there is no moon,
but a new star opens
like a silver trumpet over the dead.
Tonight in a nest of ruins
the blessed babe is laid.

Laurie Lee



A Clarion Call for the New Year

Trumpet of God, sound high,
Till the hearts of the heathen shake,
And the souls that in slumber lie
At the voice of the Lord awake;

Till the fenced cities fall
At the blast of the Gospel call,
Trumpet of God, sound high!

Hosts of the Lord, go forth:
Go, strong in the power of his rest.
Till the south be at one with the north,
And peace upon east and west;
Till the far-off lands shall thrill
With the gladness of God's good will,
Hosts of the Lord, go forth!

Come, as of old, like fire
O force of the Lord, descend,
Till with love of the world's Desire
Earth burn to its utmost end;
Till the ransomed people sing
To the glory of Christ the King,
Come, as of old, like fire!

Christmas Carol

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary was the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the Kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary, is the world.
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at him,
And all the stars looked down.

G.K.Chesterton



The Strangers

Dim-berried is the mistletoe
With globes of sheenless grey,
The holly mid ten thousand thorns
Smoulders its fires away;
And in the manger Jesus sleeps
This Christmas Day.

Bull unto bull with hollow throat
Makes echo every hill,
Cold sheep in pastures thick with snow
The air with bleating fill;
While of his mother's heart this Babe
Takes His sweet will.

All flowers and butterflies lie hid,
The blackbird and the thrush
Pipe but a little as they flit
Restless from bush to bush
Even to the robin Gabriel hath
Cried softly 'Hush!'

Now night's astir with burning stars
In darkness of the snow;
Burdened with frankincense and myrrh
And gold the Strangers go
Into a dusk where one dim lamp
Burns softly, lo!

No snowdrop yet its small head nods
In winds of winter drear;
No lark at casement in the sky
Sings matins shrill and clear;
Yet in this frozen mirk the Dawn
Breathes, Spring is here!

Walter de la Mare

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Mum, say,
Why do we stay
Close-knit at home over our Christmas holiday?
- Well, dear, we're
A nuclear family
And we're supposed to be
Together, sharing the jollity.
- Oh - I see.
Not because Dad hates visiting Auntie May, then?
No. Don't ask again.

Mum - hey,
How did we receive
All those exciting parcels on Christmas Eve?
- Well, lad, we had
A chat with the man in red,
He it was who came to your bed.
- Oh, yes, that's what Dad said
As he patted my head.
And that's the story we should believe, then?
Yes. Don't ask again.

Mum - pray,
What is a star,
And why do we follow it from afar?
- Well, you see,
That's what we
Call the people who appear
On television, this time of year,
For they are the models by which we steer.
- Oh, dear.
Not a Creator's sign of his mercy and power,
then?
Stunned silence. Amen.



Stephanie Dunning

An Epiphany Reflection

After his birth astrologers from the east arrived in Jerusalem . . . (Matthew 12:2).

It is Matthew, the most Jewish of the gospels, that records the coming of the magi to worship the infant Jesus. Yet perhaps that should not surprise us. The evangelist portrayed Jesus as the fulfilment of the Messianic hopes of the Old Testament, and

throughout those hopes runs the prayer that, one day, those beyond Israel will also come seeking the God of the Jews. There will come a day, said Zechariah, when men will grasp the hem of a Jew's coat and ask him to lead them to his God.

Christ was born of a Jewish mother, in a Jewish community and as the fulfilment of Jewish hopes. His disciples were all Jews, his teaching and healing ministry was carried out among the Jewish people. It was Jews who witnessed his death and Jews who witnessed his resurrection.

The reconciliation that he brought, however, was to embrace all mankind for, as one of the greatest of all Jews was to see, in Christ there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Gentile, male nor female. All are one, forged into one body by Christ's death upon the cross.

That promise was already present at the birth of Jesus. From the very beginning and nowhere more clearly than in the story of the Magi, it is seen that he comes for all of us, of whatever race or colour.

Bible scholars and translators have described the Magi in differing ways. Tradition has it that there were three of them. They have popularly been thought to be Kings. Others have interpreted Magi as "wise men". The New English Bible, in one of its more prosaic moments, calls them "astrologers", no doubt an accurate description for men who followed the movement of the stars.

Another tradition holds that one of them was black. Where did they come from? Persia, where the study of the stars was intermingled with religious belief? Africa, with its ancient tribal civilizations? Did they travel by land or sea? Did they navigate by cities or did they dare to follow the star across uncharted desert land? Had they made a journey such as Geoffrey Moorhouse describes in his compelling book "The Fearful Void", or had they come only a stone's throw from beyond the borders of Israel?

We will never know. We only know they represent those who are constantly coming to find Christ from beyond the known boundaries of the church or what was once known as Christian civilization. They represent the universality of the gospel and its message. It is for all, and finally there is no boundary beyond which it does not reach, no need to which it does not speak, no hope of which it is not the ultimate fulfilment.

It was a star that brought them to Bethlehem. For such men, pursuit of a strange star was no eccentricity, no sudden impulse of men mesmerized by stars at which they had gazed too long. It was a calculated risk, certainly, but one within the disciplines of the science they studied and as it was understood at that time. We should not see them as the centre-page astrologers of our own time, handing out general predictions for one-twelfth of the human race at any one time. They were the forerunners of men like Galileo, men concerned with the nature of reality and the meaning of the universe within which they lived.

They interpreted the star as the omen of a King. It was, for them, a star without precedent. They could have made notes on it, assembled data, or turned their attention

to more manageable and less disturbing phenomena. Instead, they packed their bags and followed it, travelling by night, sleeping by day.

There have been those since then who have come to find Christ in similar ways. As a palaeontologist, Teilhard de Chardin believed that the study of the origins of life, the quest of the mysteries locked in the earth could only lead people to faith in him who is Alpha and Omega, the end as well as the beginning of all things.

E. V. Rieu, a classical scholar and linguist, set himself the task of translating the New Testament, without any prior faith or commitment to the figure to whom it bore witness. As page succeeded page the conviction grew strong within him that the testimony of the church was the truth. What began as a linguistic exercise became a journey of faith.

Others have come in other ways, through their music, their art, their writing, their medicine, their science or their historical research. Christian faith does not begin with the renunciation of our earthly wisdom or the disciplines in which our minds have been trained. Rather that knowledge may become the starting point of faith. The material that we handle raises questions: we can remain indifferent to the questions, spectators, collectors of data, or we can pursue our questions even though they lead us into faith, lead us from our certainties to what is less tangible, from truth that can be analysed to truth that has to be lived to be known.

That is the meaning of the Magi's journey. Once they had seen the star, once they had interpreted its meaning, it then became a matter of pilgrimage. It needed faith to begin the journey and faith to believe that, at the end of it, they would find the King whom they sought.

They brought gifts with them. Even they could not have known how appropriate their gifts were, how redolent with symbol and meaning. Gold they brought for a King, incense for a priest, myrrh for a burial. The Kingship they could only vaguely understand, which is why they sought the object of their journey in Herod's palace. Where else look for a king?

They could know nothing of the priestly work of him who was to intercede for mankind before God and to make the sacrifice of his own body for the sins of all. All they could know for certain is that one day the King would die. What they could not know was that he would rise again and, with him, all who believe.

When we come to faith we too bring our gifts. Carols and hymns have woven a multitude of variations on the theme of the gifts that Magi brought and those we bring.

In the setting of our own times, the Magi represent the universal offering of mankind. For peoples from many cultures have brought many insights that have enriched our understanding of the faith. In the triumphalist years of the nineteenth century, missionary endeavour was too often seen not simply as the conversion of people to a faith but also their assimilation into a culture. Christianity was identified with the ideals and ethos of western civilization.

Today we are more aware of what other cultures bring to faith. As Hans Kung has put it, “The depths and riches of man’s religious experiences, as they find expression in the innumerable forms, shapes and ideas of the great religions, are ineffable.”

From the east we learn the value of interior silence and that peace within our bodies that has to reflect the peace that has been made with God. From Africa we learn again our roots in the natural world from which civilization has separated us. From the people of southern America we learn again the meaning of celebration, and the living source of rite and symbol.

The Magi came with their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh and, premeditated or not, what they brought expressed a facet of the truth they came to find. Those who come to the Christian faith in our own time, from whatever nation or culture, bring the gift of their own background, their own way of seeing and doing things, their own inherited wisdom.

Today, perhaps more than ever, we are able to embrace openly what others bring, see the universality of the faith in ways our forefathers couldn’t, and learn that what we believe embraces far more than the history and traditions of our western world.

The early church learned that the faith does not remain static as it gathers in people of other cultures. The expansion of the church from Jews to Gentiles was not simply a matter of numerical increase, it demanded a re-statement and re-appraisal of what Christians believed. That work goes on still, for the church is more of an international community now than ever before.

The feast of Epiphany is a feast of light, candles flickering from hand to hand, symbolizing the light that Christ has brought into the world. It was all light, that first pilgrimage. The Magi had the light of their own academic discipline, the light of the start and the lights of their own culture, embodied in gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They found what they were looking for. There is a wisdom by which Christ still may be found.

Fr Dennis



Registering the Past *episode 6*

For those who have persevered with this writer (glad you’re enjoying it, Margaret!), these chronicles, being highlights of the annotations and observances on the first St Faith’s service register, s resume at the beginning of 1911.

For some time now, the main Sunday morning service had been registered as Mattins, with the addition on some Sundays of ‘with H.C.’ I have not been able to trace any obvious logic to the respective occurrences, but note that the pattern continues into 1911. We are still a good many years from the introduction of ‘H.C’ on its own as the main Sunday service, let alone anything so controversial as a Sung Mass, or even a

Sung Eucharist. And there seems only to have been one weekday service – a regular Thursday Communion at 7.30 am, with some additional Lenten services on Wednesdays.

But on turning the page into Lent, the margin, usually the preserve of meteorological observation and financial records, is crammed with minutely recorded summaries of daily eucharists. Each is listed as ‘S’ or ‘B’ – which must be [Fee] Smith and Baxter, and numbers vary between 2 and 13. True to form, each has a collection recorded – those were the days! - with daily income ranging from 1s 2d from the two attendees and 6s.0d from the thirteen. By Easter Day these precise records have gone, to be replaced by the reassuring ‘showery’. There were 320 communicants between the three celebrations that day.

‘Low’ Sunday was also the dedication festival, marked by the Vestry Meeting at 8.00 pm. For some months then, little disturbs the even tenor of St Faith’s Days, apart from ‘Coronation Day on June 22nd’.

Mr Fee Smith runs the show during the vicar’s weeks off in July and August. His entries are sometimes abrupt – ‘Morn’g Pr.’ and ‘Even Pr.’ occur – and he has still not mastered the art of using blotting paper to limit the spread of his ink-blotchy scrawlings. Mr Baxter is Soon back and the careful archival script resumes. Whether his break had involved deep political thought is of course not recorded, but a week later at Evensong his sermon subject is ‘Socialism’.

A detailed tiny note on September 15th reads: ‘At 10 a.m a Commission consisting of the Rural Dean, Canon Dickson, Rev F.Bartlett met in the Vestry to enquire into the income of the Benefice and report to the Ecclesiastical Commissioner. The Commission was appointed by the Bishop.’ It would be good to have been a fly on the vestry wall. It was ‘cold and wet’ on 23rd Sunday after Trinity, and the mood would see to have been continued at least until 24th Sunday, when the Evensong sermon column reads ‘Malachi iii.8. “Will a man rob God?”’ Disendowment Bill.’

Money continues to loom large towards the end of 111: ‘Decr 8th + 9th. Sale of Work for Building Fund of Parish Hall. During Advent appears the large bold signature of John Nankivell, S.Columba’s Egremont’. Later there is recorded a weekday Lantern Service’, Christmas saw 224 communicants, despite it being ‘wet’ – but on Innocents’ Day there was sadly ‘no-one present’. 1911 slips quietly into 1912, with ‘The Circumcision’ opening the years’ festivals. The Epiphany seems almost an afterthought, squeezed in in Mr Fee Smith’s writing and attracting just 3 communicants and 3d on the plate.

A ‘Men’s Service’ on the afternoon of Epiphany2 did better, with £1.3.6d accruing to the CEMS - the Church of England Men’s Society. For several weeks in the early months of the year there are no weekday services in the register, but the inclement weather gets several mentions. There is evidence of collections for the Curacy Fund, and a Communion service crops up again on Ash Wednesday. Although no daily services are specifically logged in Lent, there is a marginal note giving numbers for Daily Eucharists for some weeks.

Holy Week was crammed with worship: daily eucharists and two children's services. The Three Hours Devotion was led by H. Heriot Hill, of All Saints, Oxton, and that evening saw a performance of 'The Passion' by J. Varley Roberts, 'sung by combined choirs of St Faith and St Luke, Crosby', the latter providing the soloists and organist and our Mr Lewis conducting. Following this, Easter Day saw an impressive 353 communicants, with no fewer than 144 of them turning up at 7.30.am.

Just after Easter came news of the sinking of the 'Titanic'. The events as seen through the pages of our register, with the particular poignancy of the death of Joseph Bell, Chief Engineer of the ill-fated liner and a worshipper at St Faith's, are recorded in detail, with reproductions of appropriate parts of the register, in the pages of the church website. Concerns closer to home are reflected in a marginal note for April 30th: 'Meeting of Protest against Welsh Church Bill in Waterloo Town Hall 8 p.m. Bishop of Liverpool in Chair.' This clearly refers to the move to disestablish the Welsh Church, which culminated in the setting up of the Church in Wales two years later.

Thereafter men feature largely in the register: on May 8th, at a C.E.M.S meeting, 23 new members were elected and 13 admitted.' What they admitted to is not recorded, but there were 7 more admitted after Evensong a few days later. Then on Ascension Day at 7.45 am we read 'Breakfast for Men in Parish Hall. 40 present and 4 ladies.' These latter would doubtless have been spoilt for choice: there had been 54 communicants at the 7.00 am service preceding the meal, so presumably the other ladies went home unbreakfasted.

Mr Baxter took off during July, and the services were taken by E.B.Smith - as opposed to D.G.Fee Smith. The vicar took up the reins again on August 4th, in time to record the weather as being Very wet all morning. His sermon on August 14th is annotated 'The house was filled with the odour of the ointment' - presumably the nearest he could get to incense in these early years. Soon we read of 'Self Denial Sunday' with a collection of a mere 10/-, and another no-show Communion on a Thursday. A few weeks later there is an entertaining juxtaposition: a sermon on 'The sons of Eli were sons of Belial' and 'Sunday School Treat'! September 16th saw 'Blundellsands House Cadets Church Parade', and soon after 'H.C' for Mrs Jackson of 33 Fir Road 'previous to journey to New York'.

There were several visiting celebrants and preachers, including J.H.Astley of [New Brighton, Theo Madden, H.W.Campbell Baugh, C.E. Garrad of Mandalay, Burma, C.H.Hyatt and Frederick Jones, this latter delivering a Lantern Lecture, all during the early autumn. October 6th, St Faith's Day, fell on a Sunday, but is still not marked for our patron saint. Late November saw 'Divorce Commission Report' and 'Very Rough' weather. December 11th is registered as 'Adult Confirmation - Lady Chapel. 5 from St Faith's.' Given the size of our Lady Chapel, Mr Baxter is clearly referring to that at the Cathedral. Christmas Day saw 234 communicants, but no one present at 7.am two days later. After the traditional Watch Night Service at 5 11.15 pm on New Year's Eve - with £1.6.1 in the collection, we enter the last full year of peacetime with the dawning of 1913.

Chris Price



The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



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PARISH OFFICE

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Parish Office Manager: Geoff Dunn; email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

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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

Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

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

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mr Daniel Rathbone. Tel: 07759 695683

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, 928 7330

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

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

SACRISTANS

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087

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

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

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 474 6162

BEAVER SCOUTS

Thursday 5.00 – 6.15 pm Mike Carr 293 3416

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Adam Jones 07841 125589

Thursday 6.30 – 8.00 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Tuesday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

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.

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

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