

'Not the Parish Magazine' but something a little different! Issue 19



Across Holy Trinity, South Chatham
we want everyone to be safe

If we can be sure of one thing at the moment, it is that this year's Christmas worship will certainly not be as it has been. As this Newsletter goes to print we have had to acknowledge that there will be no 'in church' services this month.

Christmas is not cancelled. There will be a Christmas Eve Nativity Service but with a difference!

The Angry Innkeeper & the Annoying Donkey

a Christmas Nativity with a difference

(based on the story by Nicholas Allan)

out in the Community and live on Facebook!

Thursday 24 December 2020 at 3pm

in support of the Medway Night Shelter www.medwayshelter.org



Holy Trinity South Chatham
(St Alban's, St David's and St William's)
A Church of England and Methodist Church
Ecumenical Partnership
Reg. Charity No. 1135416



And on Christmas Day we shall be 'Waking Up to Christmas' on Zoom at 9.00am.

Bible Focus and prayers for the coming weeks

Although we shall not be in church, here are the readings and collects for the coming weeks.



3rd Sunday of Advent – 13th December

**Isaiah 61:1-4,8-end, Psalm 126, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28**

God for whom we watch and wait, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for your Son: give us courage to speak the truth, to hunger for justice and to suffer for the cause of right, with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4th Sunday of Advent – 20th December

**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Cantic: Magnificat,
Romans 16:25-end, Luke 1: 26-38**

Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see with her, our great salvation, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christmas Day – 25th December

Isaiah 9:2-7, Psalm 96, Titus 2:11-14, Luke 2:1-14

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth; accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.

1st Sunday of Christmas – 27th December

Exodus 33:7-11a, Psalm 117, 1 John 1, Luke 2:19b-end

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations into one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Christmas musings!



Even a few days ago I could not have imagined what thoughts I would be sharing with you in the Christmas edition of our parish newsletter. Yes, there are words of thanks for the skills and expertise of the scientists who have delivered the first vaccine that begins to point towards the end of our current situation and to all working in our hospitals and care homes this Christmas but I had also hoped to be sharing plans for Christmas worship in each of our churches over the coming weeks.

Whilst there are most definitely still plans to celebrate Christmas: **God with us, Emmanuel** remains our message! Such are the rates of Covid infections across all our local communities that it is clearly unwise to encourage people to gather in our buildings for the traditional services (no singing, no mingling before or after, face coverings, social distance, etc.) As you are aware our local hospital is under immense pressure at this time and we must support all those working there and in associated services by minimising risk at all levels.

Again I encourage each of you, especially those for whom facebook and Zoom are another language but who have been using your phones, tablets, etc. to keep in touch with family over these past months to risk clicking the links to join with familiar faces in our church family, to invite friends and even strangers to find a new church not constrained by buildings but open to all.

This is certainly going to be a Christmas like no other but it is a time when we can ponder not only the glorious song of the angels but perhaps also the vulnerability of human life in the birth of a baby at Bethlehem. Vulnerability has been very much part of our lives this year. We have been anxious and confused. We have gazed in wonder at the sacrifices made by the many key workers across our community. We have given thanks that knowledge and skills have come together to develop both treatments and vaccines.

Yes, for some of us Christmas will not be in the midst of family gatherings (except on screen!) Perhaps for the first time we shall be on our own so that others might be safe but we are not alone. We remain in the presence of the light of love that illuminated the humble stable and drew the most unlikely characters. Whether it is by telephone or app may we support one another and share the wonder of that first Christmas sure that God's everlasting arms enfold each one of us now and forever.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be with you all this Christmas.

Elaine



Worship and more this month

As you have seen on page one it really doesn't seem safe or appropriate to attempt to worship in our churches this month. In the meantime we continue to offer a weekly Thursday morning service on YouTube that can be watched live at 11.00am or caught up with later. Throughout Advent we are also offering four studies, again on YouTube – more information is on page seven.

Christmas Worship

Page one gives information about our Nativity (Crib) Service for this year which will be unfolding across the parish and broadcast live at 3.00pm on Christmas Eve!



On Christmas Morning why not **'Wake Up to Christmas'** with a service of readings, carols and more on Zoom from 9.00am – Christmas pj's, cake and presents welcome! The Zoom link will be in forthcoming Saturday email updates and our Facebook page.

I know that none of this will feel 'normal' but I do encourage you to give these new ways of worshipping together a try. There are also many other online alternatives – the North Kent Methodist Circuit is providing Christmas Eve worship at 9.00pm and 11.30pm as well as a Christmas Morning service at 10.30am. We shall share links to these and more in our weekly emails (if you don't receive this, email me elaine.cranmer@gmail.com) and also on our parish Facebook page Holy Trinity South Chatham.

Helping Medway's Homeless

Once again the Medway Churches' Winter Night Shelter will be operating from January through until March. Previously the shelter has moved around Medway with several local churches offering accommodation and hot food. For 2021 it will have just one location throughout the period. We have usually supported this through our Christmas collections and carol singing but help is still needed and financial donations can be made by visiting www.medwayshelter.org

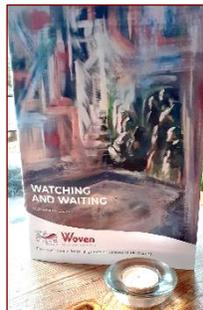
Weekly Giving

Many thanks to all who have been able to bring their weekly envelopes to church on the occasions we have met this year. Thanks also to those who have not felt able to come back but who have still been using their envelopes week by week waiting for the right time. Unlike most organisations our church 'financial year' runs from January to December and it would be really helpful if any 2020 envelopes could be collected before the end of this month - but we shall not be in church! If this applies to you, please do telephone the clergy who will 'safely and socially distantly' call and collect over the coming weeks.



Tremendous thanks to everyone who has been able to continue to offer their regular giving by cheques and bank transfers and to all who have made special gifts this year. This is much appreciated in these trying times.

Watching & Waiting: an Advent Course for 2020



Continues at 6.00pm on Sundays 13th and 20th December. The YouTube link will be posted on our Facebook page on the Saturday beforehand and sent out in the weekly emails. If you would like the full booklet which can be used at home without the online input or need any help to follow online just get in touch.

Simply keeping in touch (on Zoom)



It looks as though we shall be continuing our pattern of social events on Zoom for the foreseeable future so coming up we have:

Tea at Three: Monday, 14th Dec. - 3.00pm
Coffee Morning: Tuesday 22nd Dec – 10.30am
Tea at Three: Wednesday, 30th Dec. – 3.00pm

Have you booked the date?

There is still time to let Elaine know that you want to join in! Sherie assures us of a Christmas theme and an entertaining evening is promised for all – it's the taking part not the winning that counts!



Friday, 18th December, 7.30pm
Parish Christmas Quiz Evening on Zoom

**St. Alban's
Church,
Bluebell Hill.**



**St. David's
Church
Lordswood**



**St. William's
Church,
Walderslade**



Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call us:

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or visit the parish website

www.southchatham.org

and, of course our facebook page **Holy Trinity South Chatham**



***This is our last Newsletter before Christmas,
keep safe, God bless, see you in 2021***

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Holy Trinity is a partnership between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, serving the communities of Blue Bell Hill, Lordswood and Walderslade. A registered charity no. 1135416