



## PARISH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

### Sunday Services

**(Correct when newsletter printed but  
may differ after the present lockdown)**

#### Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December    *Advent 2*

**10.15 am    Parish Communion (Stanford)**

#### Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December    *Advent 3*

**10.15 am    Parish Communion (Stanford)**

#### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December    *Advent 4*

**10.15 am    Parish Communion (Stanford)**

#### Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December    **Christmas Day**

**10.15 am    Family Holy Communion  
at Stanford**

#### Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> December

**10.15 am    Morning Worship (Stanford)**

#### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021

**10.15 am    Parish Communion (Stanford)**

### **In Memory**

**Our thoughts and prayers go to all the  
family and friends of people who have  
recently died. Sadly, these include:**

**Mick Willis**

**Janet Lugg**

#### **WHO'S WHO IN THE PARISH?**

**Vicar**    The Revd Paul Eddy    710267

#### **Wardens**

Margaret Williams    710254

Nigel Archer    718163

**Verger**    Mrs Susan Mayall

### **VICAR'S WRITE:**

It all looked and seemed upside down, irregular, out of control, hopeless even.

A young couple, recently married, forced to travel miles by foot for several days, to register in a town of the father's birth, by an occupied force who, frankly, just wanted more names on a register to claim even more money out of them!

And whilst young, the wife was in the latter stages of pregnancy - now miles away from her own mother who was no doubt, a big part of her 'Birthing Plan'.

And, as the story carries on, on arrival in a small town called Bethlehem (population 25k now, but thought only around 1,400 two millennia ago), there was no room for them 'in the Inn'.

But despite the centuries of carols and nativity stories to the contrary, here's where the irregular, out of control nature of the birth of Jesus Christ, the baby who young Mary was carrying, as they went to husband Joseph's home town of origin, begins to turn for the better.

For there was no room for them "in the Inn" is not a reference to some back room store of a Horse and Jockey version of a Bethlehem tavern of its day. No. New Testament archaeologists and scholars tell us that the word "Inn" referred to an upstairs, often part 'open air' roof top room kept by families to offer hospitality to visiting family and friends - and even those who'd stay over after a Shabbat (Friday night 'sabbath') meal.

Because of the National Census called, it would appear that when young Joseph went to his relative who he thought would put him up (mobile phones/text not around then), that usual room was taken and so, the couple were invited to stay with what would be the rest of the family, who, in traditional Bethlehem tradition and times, would sleep on the ground floor level, often in an extended lounge room (communal sleeping very common in Middle East then and sometimes now).

And the 'manger?' Well yes, it was customary then, and even now, for very young or ill animals to be brought into the ground floor room for warmth, and to be kept an eye on. And the manger, the trough, would be there in that room often, archeologists tell us, cut out of the floor, and it would appear, became 'adapted' with straw/hay/swaddling etc as a convenient sleeping place - not unlike a drawer of a chest I'm told by my gran some war babies would be swaddled and put into soon after birth, or in poor families who could not afford a cot.

By now you are either thinking the vicar has gone totally Scrooge-like and mad and spoiled centuries of mystical glaze, or wondering where this is all going?

Joseph, as we know, was "in the line of David" - The King of Kings to Jewish people,

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and anyone of that line and heritage, NO-ONE would turn away! It's a bit like Prince Charles or Prince William turning up to distant relative or to your home or mine on a cold and windy night asking to stay over, and being told "sorry, no room - go away". It just would not happen to anyone 'in the line of David'.

No, here was Joseph, whose son or daughter - next in that historic line - was about to be born, so what happens? They are welcomed into the main living room of the family house, offered hospitality, no doubt the blokes were ushered outside, and the women took care of young Mary.

And then - not in some dirty, cow-dung backyard stable - but right at the very heart of family life - in the very centre where everything happened, the living room, Jesus, the son of God was born. Emmanuel - God with us - in the living room of a normal family home!

This Christmas, things for all of us seem upside down, irregular, out of control - hopeless even and yet, might it invite us to view the Christmas story afresh?

Instead of a God who was born out of sight of the world and, by and large, kept there by decades of authorities, governments, political systems - even families like yours and mine we have a God who cared so much to give everyone a second chance in life, a new start, a new birth, that He entered the world right into the very heart of family life - amid the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows, the agreements and disagreements, the best behaviours and the worst. Right into the heart of all of that He came - and wants to stay - even now.

This Christmas the 'inn' the 'guest room' in most of our homes probably won't be allowed to be used by the Government for extended family to stay over - certainly not cousins three-times removed, from a town 40 miles away with a baby on the way! But our lounges, our inner rooms - our lives even - are places into which we can invite the Christ-child and welcome Him in, like He was 2,000 years ago.

The impact of His entrance into our world 2,000 years ago does not diminish as the years go by. Yes, some forms of formal, legalised religion quietly die off because they no longer allowed Jesus to stay in the living room - they quietly put him in the barn outside and replaced him with tradition and ritual.

But 2,000 years later, "to those who receive him, to those who believe in His name, he (still) gives the right to become children of God" - and to live life to the full with Him by our side!

Through famine, through war, through plague, through pandemic, Jesus, for 2,000 years has journeyed day by day with whoever reaches out and simply says: "Jesus, I can't live life on my own. I've made mistakes, I've tried going it all my way, in my own strength without you. But I know something is

missing at the centre of my life that nothing I've tried can fill.

"So, I'm sorry. Please forgive me and from this moment on, I want to welcome you into every room and relationship of my life, and for you to show me how to live life to the full, as you have created for me. Amen"

If you have prayed that prayer and would like to know more about how God can help you through this Pandemic, and know His presence in your home this Christmas, I'd love to hear from you and talk to you.

Why not drop me an email [vicar@stdenys.org](mailto:vicar@stdenys.org) and I'd love to give you a little book to help you take the first new steps of living life with Jesus, by your side, every day.

A Very Happy Christmas to you all.

Yours Paul Revd Paul A. Eddy, FRSA,

**THANK YOU!** Over the first two weekends of October we held a Thanksgiving Appeal opportunity for the church family – and village – to make a donation to help with the church's finance for 2020.

As a result, we are delighted to announced that as of today, donations are £8,735, plus Gift Aid we can reclaim of £1416.25, making a total

Thanksgiving of **£10,151.25!**

The Vicar and Churchwardens would like to thank all who gave so generously!

### Stanford in the Vale and District Local History Society

So that the second article about the history of Stanford's WI Group can appear in its centenary year, Phil is rushing out a special Christmas edition of *The Stanford Historian*. Hot off the press, on sale Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December! Phone Phil on 710285 if our normal sales outlets are closed, or if for other reasons you find difficulty in getting a copy. (And by the way, a few copies of the Autumn edition are still available.) Substituting for our monthly meetings, another e-newsletter, *This Month in Stanford Long Ago*, will also reach all members in early December. This time we will be chronicling turbulent events exactly 190 years ago. Finally, Christmas greetings to all the membership from the Committee

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### John Wakefield.

Joanna and family would like to say thank you to everyone who sent cards and messages of sympathy on the sudden death of John, so much kindness has been received. Please accept this as a personal thank you. Joanna.

Dear Music Lovers,

Our next concert entitled "Linking Classical & Folk" was to have started at 3.00pm on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 in St Denys Church, Stanford in the Vale. The concert was to have featured The Moonrakers: Eleanor Dunsdon – harp, Jacqui Johnson – cello, harmonium, Sarah Fell – voice, drums Jon Bennett – voice, guitar, Irish bouzouki and flute, performing traditional and contemporary folk music – and exploring their roots.

However, the impact of the present lock down means the church is no longer available. We have therefore had to cancel this concert and will now start our planning process for our 2021 programme. Meanwhile our sincere thanks for supporting our Music in the Vale programme so well and our best wishes for the lock down and for Christmas and the New Year.

David Pedder

Music in the Vale

### The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

Members of the public are welcome to attend virtual Council meetings (By video or telephone), details published via our web site and noticeboards.

### FARINGDON & DISTRICT U3A ON 10TH DECEMBER '20

Dr Francis Burroughes, an acknowledged expert, will talk on Zoom at 2.30pm about "The Wonderful World of Glass". This talk will be illustrated with items from his own collection to show the history of glass making from 3,000BC to the present day. Dr Burroughes is often asked to lend and speak about such items for television antique programmes. Details of accessing the Zoom talk can be found on the U3A website – <https://faringdondistrictu3a.com/> or by contacting the chairman on 01367 615 385.

### Stanford Community First Responders

Community First Responders (CFRs) are volunteers who are trained and equipped by the ambulance service. They carry out life-saving treatment while an emergency ambulance is on its way to a patient.

Stanford has had an active first responder team for 12 years – and Jeanette Gill has been responding for seven of those. During the pandemic, Jeanette has continued to respond for the ambulance service within our community and was on call for over 127 hours in October alone (CFRs are asked to be on call for 20 hours a month). She has helped many people suffering a medical emergency (including cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis, chest pain and stroke) – not just in Stanford, but as far afield as Wantage, Clanfield, Watchfield and Southmoor.

I should like to express my thanks to Jeanette for her dedication and selflessness in these trying times.

If you would like to know more about being a CFR and how you can truly make a difference in the community, please email me on [les.harding@sca-charity.org.uk](mailto:les.harding@sca-charity.org.uk).

Les Harding (Stanford CFR and coordinator for the Faringdon and District CFR Scheme)



### Stanford in the Vale Repair Cafe

Stanford in the vale Repair café, is a group of volunteers sharing their skills, normally we would meet once a month in the coffee shop, where people with broken household and personal electrical and electronic items are matched with skilled people who like fixing things. The purpose of the events is to bring about a shift in consumerism, and the way we view normal household items like toasters, radios and

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garden equipment as throw-away. The focus is on skill-sharing and building community as attendees will be invited to learn how to fix their broken item alongside the repairers instead of throwing them in the bin.

The important thing about Repair Cafés (there is another in Wantage) is that they are a community event not a service, and repairers are volunteers sharing their skills, not professionals. Therefore, volunteers cannot be expected to know how to repair everything!

We do not charge for any repairs, donations only, any spares required must be supplied or purchased separately. Any donations received are used to cover costs, such as Insurance, equipment calibration, specialist tool etc.

Due to Covid-19, we have been unable to meet up, however we have been taking in some items to distribute to our volunteers to repair at home. For more information see the notice boards or contact Derek Sayers email: [reco@clara.co.uk](mailto:reco@clara.co.uk) or 'phone 710283 Or Bill Hart email [stanfordrepaircafe@silkie.co.uk](mailto:stanfordrepaircafe@silkie.co.uk) or phone 07768486262

### **Stanford in the Vale Pre School**

The Pre-school children enjoyed making Apple Crumble at the end of last term using apples from the village. They enjoyed using their 'crumble fingers' to make the topping and of course taking them home to share with their families.

We have been introducing the new children to the wonder of Woodwork. They have used the hammers to attach a variety of resources onto balsa wood. The levels of concentration and engagement are fantastic, and they have been very proud of what they have made.

We had a very successful and well attended Zoom AGM where we were able to replace those members that were standing down. We feel positive and look forward to working with our new committee over the coming year

### **Stanford in the Vale CE Primary School** **Reported by the School Council:**



Year 1 - AJ & Mary,  
Year 2 - Isla & Lewis,  
Year 3 - Scarlett & Ethan,  
Year 4 - Tommy & Toby,  
Year 5 - Ruby & Orlaith,  
Year 6 - Alex & Whitney

We are all working really hard and starting to work on our Christmas performances.

#### **Foundation**

We have been looking at fireworks and learning about the Diwali Festival of Light

#### **Year One**

We have been grouping and sorting animals and learning about nocturnal animals. We went on a village walk to look for signs of Autumn. In phonics we have been working hard and have been busy using capital letters and full stops in our writing.

#### **Year Two**

We have been learning about instructions. We wrote instructions about how to trap Mrs Willis and how to make a jam sandwich, which we made and ate.

#### **Year Three**

We have been writing our own Charlie and the Chocolate Factory stories. We have also drawn self-portraits and been busy multiplying and subtracting in maths.

#### **Year Four**

In maths we have been exchanging 1000s, 100s and 10s. We have been drawing the characters in Alice in Wonderland and have designed our own clocks. For Remembrance Day we wrote poems.

#### **Year Five**

We have been writing about what makes a good friend as part of Anti-Bullying Week and have been doing mindfulness colouring linked to our feelings. For Remembrance Day we wrote poems and created thought provoking images. In Maths we have been creating and interpreting line graphs.

#### **Year Six**

In History we learnt about evacuations and rationing during WWII. We have also learnt to name body parts in French and have learnt about the Christmas Story in RE. In Maths we have been learning equivalent fractions.

Please do look on our school website for more information about what we have been doing. You will even see recordings of our learning for our virtual sharing assembly and photographs from our own socially distanced remembrance service.

To include items in January's newsletter please send to send to [jmwarren302@gmail.com](mailto:jmwarren302@gmail.com) or telephone **01367 710789** and leave a message. **Closing date: 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Late items cannot be accepted.**



# Christmas in Stanford

29th Nov - **Big Christmas Switch On**  
**Decorate your Windows for Advent.**

Spread Christmas cheer for people walking in the village throughout December. Include a Christmas star if you can. How many stars can you count? The St Denys' Church floodlights and tree lights will be switched on on 29th. If you're ready to decorate on the same day it would be fabulous! How about a nativity or snow scene, a Father Christmas or tree.



19th - 20th Dec - **Stay At Home Circus Trip.** Visit YouTube.com and search for 'Cirque du Soleil #14'. Share the experience with Stanford friends in the Facebook group or by phone.

20th Dec at 5:30 - **Carol Singing on your Doorstep.**

See [carolonthedoorstep.co.uk](http://carolonthedoorstep.co.uk) for a sheet. Tune to Premier Radio or Freeview 725 or download the Premier Radio app. Stay at least 2 metres away from your neighbours and don't mix with people outside your household/bubble (singing is a higher risk activity, so stay as far apart as you can). Wear a Christmas jumper and bring something to rattle.