

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN

The Parish Magazine of the Seven Churches

St Peter Upper Slaughter – St Faith Farmcote – St James Cutsdean – St Andrew Naunton
St Mary Lower Slaughter – St Michael Guiting Power – St Mary Temple Guiting



*The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you
good news of great joy for all the people'*

DECEMBER 2020 Interim Edition

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DEADLINE for the next issue TO BE ADVISED.

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DEAR FRIENDS ...

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Christina Rossetti

While contemplating what to write today, I am listening to the Young Chorister of the Year Final: heavenly voices singing of a heavenly event in a stable in Bethlehem.

The first chorister sang “In the Bleak Midwinter” as a solo – a beautiful performance, almost faultless.

I thought of those first words of Christina Rossetti’s, which could almost be set in the Cotswolds, and thought, “It is pretty bleak here at the moment, quite cold and frosty”.

The winter scene of that first verse is unlikely to have been Mary and Joseph’s experience, but bleakness perhaps describes their feelings as they sought somewhere to stay, sleep maybe, and for Mary to deliver her baby.

It must have been chilly at night, and among the animals positively smelly. Not quite the birth experience Mary had been expecting. Not normal, even for first century Palestine standards.

But out of that bleakness came joy. Joy to Mary and Joseph.

And then the visitors pitch up; shepherds and lambs; the angels and archangels are already there, and the Wise Men.

Out of the bleakness came joy. Joy to the world.

It has been, at times, a pretty bleak year; more for some of us than others. Not the year we have expected, not normal.

As we come to the end of it, with the hope that things will be better in 2021, and we once again encounter the birth of Jesus at Christmas, it may not be the Christmas we were expecting. It may not be a “normal” Christmas.

We hope that you will be able to celebrate this very different Christmas with us in the activities which you will find advertised in the pages of this 70x7. You will be most welcome to any or all of them.

Our prayer for you is that out of this bleak year, joy will be yours too, as we celebrate the birth of Christ once again, and look forward with hope to the year ahead.

With love and prayers,

Katrina, Sue and Catherine

COMMUNITY MINISTRY ...

WEDDINGS

“May God bless them”

Gordy NELSON and Emma BUTCHER at Temple Guiting on 31st October 2020

Jac HILTON and Lorna CANDLISH at Lower Slaughter on 1st November 2020

Liam REDDING and Laura EDGEWORTH at Temple Guiting on 3rd December 2020

FUNERALS

“May God grant them light and peace”

Donald BRYNE, Funeral and Burial at Naunton on 28th October 2020

Stuart CORDWELL, Burial of Ashes at Temple Guiting on 9th November 2020

Elizabeth JOHNSTON, Funeral at Upper Slaughter on 12th November 2020

Robin HORLOCK, Burial of Ashes at Upper Slaughter on 20th November 2020

PRAYER LINES



We have set up a prayer network – a group of people who are willing to receive any requests for prayer and to pray for anyone in need. It is set up as a simple email group, co-ordinated by Jean Bird, and an email is sent to all the ‘pray-ers’ asking them to remember a particular person when there is a need. If you would like to be remembered in prayer, please contact Jean at jaybeepip@aol.com or Rev’d Sue Pestell on susan.pestell@gmail.com.

THIS CHRISTMAS WEEK

visit our life size nativity at Temple Guiting Church

from Monday 21st December, pop into St. Mary’s and visit the nativity scene created by local children, and enjoy some fun activities



CHRISTMAS SHOE BOX APPEAL

We took the charity shoeboxes (for Teams4U) to the warehouse in Evesham and counted 171 Boxes in total, which was a fantastic number. Here is a picture of Bob James with the school's Christmas Boxes on the trolley waiting to be packed in large packing cases ready for the huge lorry to collect them and take them through wind, ice and snow to Moldova, Eastern Europe.

Rose Shepherd-Cross



NEWS FROM ...

NAUNTON

Although Boris banned a proper Remembrance service, we were able to hold a micro-service at the Chapel memorial (thank you Alasdair and Moira at the Chapel) - complete with the bell tolled at 11:00 and a trumpeter for the Last Post and Reveille.

St. Andrew's cinema started up again for October and November, although we are running it in the village hall for the moment, rather than the church itself, as that makes the social distancing easier.

Bob Steiner



TEMPLE GUITING AND CUTSDEAN

On the 1st of December we were able to open St. James for a Day of Prayer in conjunction with St. Mary's Temple Guiting. This was inspired and organised by Ali Clifton Barnard, and it was a joy to be able to prepare our churches and welcome worshippers – if only for a day. The aim was to hold our church (both the people and

the buildings) in prayer between 9.30am and 3.30pm so that those taking part were able to spend time in the churches or in their own homes. It was a glorious day too, so some took the opportunity to walk or cycle between the two churches. Several people commented on the very strong feeling inside the churches that people had been praying there.

The event was very well supported and the response gave us an indication of how our churches are valued in the community...

"Both churches had a lovely welcoming atmosphere and thank you for a most helpful prayer sheet."

"Through the day I had a sense of excitement for the future. And a sense of the need to be brave as we step forward."

and from one of the children at Temple Guiting School ...

"Can God make Covid go away so we can go to church again because I miss going?"

Mark Evans and Ali Clifton Barnard

TEMPLE GUITING CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

We are now drawing to the end of what has been a very unusual term. Covid – 19 has restricted a great deal of what we would normally be doing, but with careful thought and planning we have managed to get lots of activities and events to happen.

Remembrance day



We felt this was such an important event to remember we decided to create an installation of poppies on the Village green. All the classes participated, we made poppies out of recycled plastic bottles and then displayed them on a tree. Children also heard stories about life in World War 1 and 2, they wrote poems and read diary entries from soldiers and people left behind in this country.



Teams 4U shoebox appeal

As in previous years we were pleased to participate in collecting toys and gifts to fill shoeboxes for children in other areas of the World who may not otherwise have Christmas presents. As always, the generosity of our families was amazing and we were able to donate a lot of shoeboxes filled and many other presents that will help to fill more shoe boxes at the Team4 U depot. We believe this is great way to teach our children about love in action and that we can make a difference to someone else's life with kindness.



Nativity play

This was a very unusual way to do a nativity play with no audience and everyone having to be in separate bubbles. But with careful measuring and creative use of the Village hall we managed to do a whole school nativity and it is now available to watch on the school website :

<https://www.templeguiting.gloucs.sch.uk/class-pages/>



We have also put up a virtual school tour, so if you would like to get a flavour of what we get up to in school, please do take a look.

<https://www.templeguiting.gloucs.sch.uk/>

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and may 2021 be a good year for you all.

Ann Barry, Head Teacher

CHURCH SERVICES IN DECEMBER

We are delighted to be able to offer a variety of worship across the Christmas period, which includes services within our church buildings, outdoors in our communities (bring your own umbrella / chair / warm clothes!) and online on Zoom. All the details are here:

Sunday 13th December:

11am - Service of Holy Communion at Farmcote

11am - Service of Holy Communion at Temple Guiting

6pm - Service of Holy Communion at Guiting Power

Saturday 19th December:

3pm - Drive-In Carols at Guiting Manor Farm (GL54 5UX) *Come along in the warmth and safety of your own car, dress up as your favourite nativity character and join in some fantastic carols!*

Sunday 20th December:

11am - Service of Holy Communion at Lower Slaughter

11am - Service of Holy Communion at Cutsdean

3pm - Outdoor Carol Service at St. Andrew's Naunton

4pm - Outdoor Carol Service at St. Mary's Temple Guiting

Monday 21st December:

4.30pm - Outdoor Carol Service at Home Farm Yard in Upper Slaughter

6pm – A Zoom traditional Lessons and Carols Service

Tuesday 22nd December:

6pm - Outdoor Carol Service at St. Mary's Lower Slaughter

Thursday 24th December:

11.45pm – A Zoom Service across Midnight to bring in the special day!

Christmas Day - 25th December:

9.15am – A Zoom nativity service for all the family, to celebrate Christmas Day!

11am - Outdoor Communion Service at St. Andrew's Naunton

For all our Zoom activities, join us on phone or online as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7979867589?pwd=h6UaQN2VhIdx79AlafPNV50YxJVtZA>

Meeting ID: 797 986 7589

Password: 815669

It is possible to join in **by telephone** also, you should be able to do this by phoning: 0203 481 5237 and entering the above Meeting ID and password.

Dear Friends,

*We would like to invite you to join us for a **Zoom Social and Christmas Meal** on the evening of **Friday 18th December at 7pm.***

The meals are ready prepared, cooked and frozen by The Long Table in Stroud and cost £5 for an individual meal.

The meal options, both vegetarian and meat, are at the bottom of this invitation.

All are welcome.

Why not buy a meal for yourself and for a friend or neighbour who you think might like to join in? Or you can just ask for a meal, for free, for yourself or others, in confidence. The important thing is that we can eat together and enjoy one another's company.

So that we can organise the meals, please can you email Sue Pestell by Tuesday 15th December at susan.pestell@gmail.com to let us know what you would like.

If you would like to join us, but prefer not to have a Long Table meal, we would still love you to join in.

We hope that you can join us!

Katrina, Sue and Catherine

Menu options

- ❖ Piece of chicken baked in a Christmas spice rub [lemon zest, clove, star anise, cinnamon, bay, nutmeg, sage, golden caster, clementine], with trimmings
- ❖ Hearty cottage pie
- ❖ Chicken curry with rice
- ❖ Tasty meatballs in a tomato sauce with pasta

There are also vegetarian options available; speak to Sue for more information

Payment can be made via Sue Pestell, in confidence



Adoration of the Shepherds by Agnolo Bronzino 1539-1540

Hark! the herald angels sing...

Hark! Can you hear it?! Christmas is nearly here and if ever there was an *Awesome* hymn to belt out at the top of your voice, this is it! That this hymn proclaims the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ just makes it even better!

And yet, the word “Hark” suggests that we must listen out for these Angels.

When this hymn was first written in 1739, capitalism was progressing at such a pace that the birth of the industrial revolution was just around the corner. The dawn of the modern world, how it must have felt that everything was changing. Even then, before the construction of William Blake’s dark satanic mills, this hymn implies that the Angels already required a certain concentration for us to be able to hear them.

Hark! the herald angels sing. Difficult though it was to hear them in 1739, this year, a quarter of a millennia later, when a million brands clawing for our attention stream through that widescreen window into homes that we have spent a year forbidden to leave, the angelic choir is competing with an incredible cacophony.

And yet, if you listen closely, the sound of the Angels is all around us, in even wider screen.

This morning I looked out of my window towards where the sun was rising. Like any other morning it was an everyday scene. But an exercise I like to do, is allow myself to be awed by the things that I experience, and to allow myself to see (and hear!) the God in things. By listening to the sunlight, those rays were full of God for me, and “full of God” is an awesome thing indeed.

Hark! the herald angels sing. I can hear it, and I hope you can too, in the moments we stop to reflect and be awed by God in front of our face, wherever we choose to see Him, and the wonder and glory of His son, our new born King.

I will be feeling the awe and belting the tune out this Christmas, with you, for you, for God, and joy, and I hope, this strange year, you have many wonderful chances to do so too.

Catherine

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