

St James, Badsey with Aldington

Parish Newsletter

December 2000

I am writing these words on my birthday, some five weeks before Christmas. Yet the shops are imploring us to buy our Christmas goods and the supermarkets have had shelves of Christmas foods for many weeks. A number of people have already asked me if I am looking forward to Christmas.

Apart from articles such as this, I don't start thinking about Christmas until Advent Sunday. I certainly don't start planning family celebrations and I certainly don't buy Christmas presents. I take the rather old fashioned view that Advent is about getting ready for Christmas and so I leave it all until then.

I know that many people have become weary of all the preparation and build up to the commercial side of Christmas. It so often seems that amidst all the sales hype and pressure, the real idea of what Christmas is all about has been lost.

If we are to rediscover the real image of Christmas, then we need to see it through the eyes of a small child. A child who has not yet learned to demand all sorts of presents and who is still amazed by the gifts which Christmas brings. A child who still looks with wonder and awe at the sight of a Christmas Crib and who mouths the words 'Baby Jesus' with feeling and reverence.

It is perhaps fitting that it is the small child who still understands something of what Christmas is really about. The small child who expects little and receives with genuine surprise. The gift of the Son of God at that first Christmas was quite truly an unexpected surprise and one which virtually no-one was able to understand for a considerable period of time.

We are so used to the idea that Christmas is about Jesus that even if we have forgotten, it still comes as no surprise. Yet Christmas marks what is a unique event in the history of the world. An event which has shaped our whole civilisation and which effects us all very deeply whether we want it to or not. The gift of the first Christmas is about giving of one's very self without wanting anything in return and, in so doing, inspiring people to go to enormous lengths to make an adequate response.

With very best wishes

Adrian

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CHURCH SERVICES

Wednesday 6 th December	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 3 rd December	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Christingle Service Sung Eucharist
Sunday 10 th December	11.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion (Rite A) Evensong
Sunday 17 th December	11.00 a.m. 4.30 p.m.	Holy Communion (Rite A) Carol Service
Sunday 24 th December (Christmas Eve)	11.00 a.m. 11.30 p.m.	Morning Worship Midnight Mass
Sunday 31 st December	8.00 a.m. 6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion Evensong

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30 a.m.	Bretforton	Holy Communion
11.00 a.m.	Badsey	Christmas Morning Worship
11.00 a.m.	Offenham	Holy Communion

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Sunday 3 rd December	11.00 a.m.	The Christingle Service
Sunday 17 th December	4.30 p.m.	The Carol Service
Tuesday 19 th December	4.00 p.m.	Blackminster School Choir Carol Service (open to all)
Sunday 24 th December	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Mass
Christmas Day	11.00 a.m.	Christmas Morning Worship



BADSEY REGISTER

BAPTISMS:	Daniel Rees Thomas
WEDDINGS:	Christine Ann Perry and Arron Michael McDermott
FUNERALS:	Patricia Walker (in the Chapel at Waterside Cemetery)
	George Albert Anderson (followed by cremation at Cheltenham)
	Dorothy Grace Jerrin (at Cheltenham Crematorium)

MOTHERS UNION

We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Sandra Sparrow has been elected Branch Leader. Members are delighted by this news and will support her in her new role with their love and prayers.

Dates for your Diary:

Saturday 2nd December – 2.30.pm. Preparation in Church of the Christingle Oranges – if you are able to help please come along.

Wednesday 6th December – 10.00.am. Corporate Communion followed by coffee.

Tuesday 12th December – 2.30.pm. Advent Carol Service followed by tea in Church.
(Tickets for New Year Party on January 23rd will be on sale at £6.00 each)

The Members of The Mothers Union in Badsey wish all readers a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

Sue Cole (831260)

W.I. MILLENNIUM BULB PROJECT

1000 daffodil bulbs have been planted in the Chapel Street end of the Churchyard outside the Church wall. The Contractor has been able to obtain 15,000 Remembrance crocus bulbs and will plant them as soon as they arrive from Holland. The Contractor has also visited the Garden of Remembrance and is to provide quotations and ideas for the landscaping of the Garden. Once again a very big thank you for all your support, donations, prizes etc. Badsey W.I. wishes you all a very Happy Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.



SATURDAY ACTIVITY GROUP



Our next Activity Group will be on Saturday 2nd December at the Church. We meet at 11.00.am until 1.00.pm and fun is the order of the day with creative activity, songs and games. A small charge of 50pence per child is made towards materials and refreshments so do come along and join in the fun. A very Happy Christmas to everyone. Please note: There will be no Activity Group in January. We meet again on the first day of February 2001.

MILLENNIUM GROUP

Millennium videos are still available from Chris Helm. Photographs taken in 2000 of any location in the Parishes for a collection to be kept for future reference. Have you any? Please bring them to our meeting on November 30th at 7.30.pm. at the Royal British Legion or contact Chris Helm or any other Group Member.

A SHORT SERVICE OF MIDDAY PRAYER (approximately 15 minutes) will be held in Church at 12.30.p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays during Advent. All are welcome to attend. The dates are:

6th, 8th, 13th, 15th, 20th and 22nd December.

ST. JAMES FLOWER GUILD – DECEMBER

Thank you ladies for the flowers in Church during November. There are no flowers in Church during Advent but there will be a meeting on Saturday 9th December at 2.00.p.m. in Church to discuss the Christmas floral decoration of the Church.

BADSEY AND ALDINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council has recently installed a play frame and a new slide on the recreation ground. Young people have requested a BMX facility. Due to the cost of even a small provision, the Parish Council would welcome assistance from the community. Grants are available to 'community groups' which are not available to councils. The Clerk will be able to offer advice on 833238. Minutes of the council meetings are kept in the Post Office for residents to read. There are two vacancies on the council – please contact the Clerk for details.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND – 'THE FIRE FLOWER OF THE HOLY NIGHT'

There is a delightful legend told by the Mexicans about their Poinsettia plant, which bursts into glorious crimson leaves at Christmas time.

Many, many years ago a poor little girl stood outside a Church on Christmas Eve. The people were carrying in large bunches of flowers to decorate the Altar and the Crib. She longed to have some flowers to take in but she had no money to buy them and there were no wild flowers growing at that time of the year. The girl was very sad. She so badly wanted to give something to the Church at Christmas time.

She was standing by one of the stone angels in the Churchyard. The angel looked sad and neglected and was nearly hidden by all the tall weeds which had grown around it. Suddenly the girl had an idea. If she could not help make the inside of the Church beautiful, perhaps God would understand if she tried to tidy up the untidy patch outside. She began to pull up the weeds, tugging at the thick, strong stalks. It was very hard work for a girl, but she was determined to clear the space round the stone angel. At last she had finished, but where could she put all the dead weeds. As the girl was looking round for somewhere to hide them, she heard a voice telling her to take them inside the Church. There was no one in sight; it must have been the angel speaking. In great wonder the girl picked up the stalks and walked into the Church. People looked at her in dismay. Whatever could they do with dead stalks? The girl went straight to the Crib, and as she gently laid the stalks in place they burst into the most beautiful fiery red leaves. It was a miracle. Ever since that Christmas Eve the Mexicans have called the Poinsettia "The Flower of the Holy Night" because it still blooms at Christmas time. Every year they use the Poinsettia to decorate their Churches and their houses, but they never forget the miracle that first turned the dead stalks into red flowers for Christmas.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

O God we thank you for the message of peace that Christmas brings to our distracted world. Give peace among nations, peace in our land, peace in our homes and peace in our hearts, as we remember the birth at Bethlehem of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

