



Christmas celebrations

To get us in the festive mood some of us, together with some friends from Northwood Hills, visited Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, to see the Christmas decorations. Each year one wing of the house is opened for about a month and a different theme is adopted, this year's being a Traditional German Christmas. There were large tastefully decorated trees throughout the house, with other floral decorations and depictions of some Fairy tales in each of the rooms. After touring the displays, some of us visited the Stables area for some light refreshments, including excellent mulled wine, whilst others browsed through the gift shop. It was getting dark as we left so the trees outside the front of the house looked even brighter. It was an excellent outing and we certainly felt as though Christmas was fast approaching.



The Toy and Parade service on Sunday 6th December was led by Murdoch and run by Ichthus and included a Scouting Award to Janet Clark (see article on page 11). During the service toys, games, soft toys, jigsaws, puzzles etc were brought forward and piled up at the front of the church. These were donated to the Salvation Army in Uxbridge, who wrote to say how much they were appreciated.

The week before Christmas was particularly busy. Starting on Monday 14th, the annual CTE Carol Evening was held at Eastcote Methodist Church. The well loved carols were interspersed with readings and musical items from the member Churches. The combined St. Andrew's and Northwood Hills choir acquitted themselves really well. Afterwards there was a chance to chat with friends from the other churches accompanied by mulled wine and mince pies. A retiring collection for Crisis raised £269.

On Wednesday lunchtime, two dozen of us sat down to an early Christmas lunch - turkey and trimmings, roast potatoes and parsnips, sprouts and carrots, mince tart and cream, accompanied by wine or juice and followed by tea or coffee. It was a lovely social occasion.

Thursday 17th was a bitterly cold evening when we held a Carol Service for the local community - friends, neighbours and people who use our premises. There were readings, choral items, drama pieces and the well known carols were sung lustily and enjoyed by those who attended. Heavy snow was forecast, which did deter some people. However, it was another joyful event and another opportunity to socialise over refreshments in the hall afterwards. As we left, the snow had started to fall making everywhere look picturesque.

Our Carol Service on Sunday 20th December was held 'in the bleak midwinter' - an extremely cold day with a covering of snow and ice on the ground. The carols were enjoyed and many people took part in the various readings and prayers. This, as always, proved to be a most enjoyable traditional seasonal service. Our thanks go to Jean and Tom for arranging this.



Regrettably the Carol Singing around the local streets had to be cancelled that evening owing to the sub zero temperatures and dangerous under foot conditions. The roads on our planned route had turned to sheet ice. This is only the second time this event has been cancelled in over 50 years.

On Christmas Eve afternoon, a Children's service was organised and run by members of Ichthus, then a combined Midnight service was held at Northwood Hills. On Christmas morning, a joint Family service, led by Liz, was held in our church and the children brought some of their new presents with them.

A united service was held on Sunday 27th December at Northwood Hills for member Churches - Eastcote and Northwood Methodist, together with St Andrew's, Northwood Hills and Northwood URC. This was led by our own Minister, Liz, and consisted of readings and stories told between the carols, with a number of people taking part. Afterwards, over a cup of coffee, it was good to meet members from the other churches and exchange seasonal greetings.

These various occasions all need organising and we want to thank all those who contributed in any way to the success of the many events. Particular thanks must go to Liz for all her hard work during this busy time.

Gavin Gillespie & Celia Williams



A CHALLENGE FOR THE NEW YEAR

On the first Sunday in the New Year, Tom Stevenson took our service and in concluding his reflection, set us challenges for the year ahead. Due to the dreadful weather, many people were unable to get to Church and so we felt that this part of the reflection should be printed for more people to see.

At the start of this New Year, the future of St. Andrew's must be in our minds. I would like to share three pointers from this morning's service, which is centred on the wise men and which I believe brings the story right up to date for us.

Firstly the wise men are our representatives in the story of Christ's birth. We know little about them; they used their God-given talents to reach the goal of their journey to find Christ; having found Christ they worshipped him; gave him their gifts; and listened to God who guided them home safely. Is it the voice of God, having given us a wake-up call, telling us to offer our gifts to him now and to use them? Is it the voice of God guiding us to serve him afresh in this place?

Secondly, Isaiah paints a clear picture of a united community worshipping God, which is echoed in the letter to the Ephesians. We must be prepared for change. We have accepted many positive changes during the past year. For example, Fiona Gauden and John Mulholland have joined us and added much to the life of this church as have the 'Coffee with a Cause' coffee mornings. An additional Carol Service was introduced and, although some of the people we targeted did not make it this year, many of our neighbours attended and we all appreciated the time of worship and fellowship together.

Liz, at the 70th Anniversary service appealed for better attendance at Church meetings, to which I would add the Away Day. I endorse that plea. They are our meetings – members have a duty to attend as often as they can so that their voice is heard in matters that affect the administration of this, God's Church.

What do you want from your Church Meeting ?

Is it the time you want changed ?

Is it the content you want to be different ?

Can you support 'consensus' even if your thoughts are different ?

It is of no value to criticise the people running the church's affairs if you do not hear what is being said and agreed by fellow members. It is of no value to sit on committees of the church and not to hear the will of the members first hand at Church meetings. I believe that we are charged with putting differences to one side. We too must seek a united community, which encompasses God's will for all in this community, old as well as young.

Thirdly, God's original plan for creation is now entrusted to the Church. We must incorporate into the solution for the future of this our Church, God's Church, not our blinkered vision, but the wider vision which can only be achieved by listening to each other as the way of determining God's will. We must not lose sight of the command of Jesus to love one another, and that includes caring for and supporting all the members of this congregation at this period in the life of this church.

So the real story of the wise men seems to be about the challenge of God's coming. God's kingship is not what we might expect, and his revelation is blindingly unpredictable. However, at least the wise men did recognise the true meaning of Christ's birth when they saw him. We are told that they were 'overwhelmed with joy'. They left their strange presents and went home satisfied. Let us hope that in that, at least, they are our representatives.

As our Mission Statement pronounces 'through Christian worship and witness we seek to share God's love for all', we too pray that we can go out with that same joy and serve our Lord.





Senior version of Jesus loves me

A Minister once stated, "I always notice that it is the adults who sing the children's hymn 'Jesus Loves Me' the loudest, because I could see they knew it the best."

Here is a new version just for us who have white hair or no hair at all. For us over middle age (or even those almost there) and everyone else, here is a new version of this hymn.

Jesus loves me, this I know,
 Though my hair is white as snow.
 Though my sight is growing dim,
 Still He bids me trust in Him.
 (CHORUS) Yes, Jesus loves me.
 Yes, Jesus loves me.
 Yes, Jesus loves me,
 For the Bible tells me so.

Though my steps are oh, so slow,
 With my hand in His I'll go,
 On through life, let come what may,
 He'll be there to lead the way. (CHORUS)

When the nights are dark and long,
 In my heart He puts a song.
 Telling me in words so clear,
 "Have no fear, for I am near." (CHORUS)

When my work on earth is done,
 And life's victories have been won.
 He will take me home above,
 Then I'll understand His love. (CHORUS)

I love Jesus, does He know?
 Have I ever told Him so?
 Jesus loves to hear me say,
 That I love Him every day. (CHORUS)

HOT CROSS BUNS

Why do I want to make for tea
 Hot Cross Buns, when there's only me?
 At Tesco's they're six for 30p.
 I like the wait for the yeast to rise.
 The meaning is in the waiting you see.
 And then you bash it about a bit,
 Divide into twelve and again, we wait.
 It won't stay put - it rises again
 And will always rise until you choose
 The time of cooking.
 Then into the oven go those twelve
 And come out later, much improved.
 Gleaming and sugary and lovely to smell,
 And delicious to eat at tea-time as well.

Hilary Babbage



TO: God.Com

Dear Lord,
 Every single evening as I'm lying here in bed,
 This tiny little prayer keeps running through my head:
 God bless all my family wherever they may be,
 Keep them warm and safe from harm for they're so close to me.
 And God, there is one more thing I wish that you could do
 Hope you don't mind me asking, please bless my computer too.
 Now I know that it's unusual to bless a motherboard,
 But listen just a second while I explain it to you, Lord.
 You see, that little metal box holds more than odds and ends;
 Inside those small compartments rest so many of my friends.
 I know so much about them by the kindness that they give,
 And this little scrap of metal takes me in to where they live.
 By faith is how I know them much the same as you.
 We share in what life brings us - from that our friendships grew.
 Please take an extra minute from your duties up above,
 To bless those in my address book that's filled with so much love.
 Wherever else this prayer may reach to each and every friend,
 Bless each e-mail inbox and each person who hits 'send'.
 When you update your Heavenly list on your great CD-ROM,
 Bless everyone who says this prayer sent up to GOD.Com
 Amen

By popular demand some cracker jokes!

What sort of shoes do frogs wear?
 Open toad sandals.

What do you get when you cross a hen with a clock?
 An alarm cluck.

What do you call a snowman in the summer?
 A puddle.

Why does a giraffe have such a long neck?
 Because its feet smell.

A barrel of beer fell on a man's head - why wasn't he hurt?
 It was light ale.

Why don't ducks tell jokes when they're flying?
 Because they would quack up.

What should a prizefighter drink?
 Punch.

Why was Cinderella thrown off the football team?
 Because she ran away from the ball.

Who writes the most letters?
 A fisherman - he always drops a line.

What do snowmen eat for lunch?
 Icebergers.

How do snails keep their shells shiny?
 They use snail varnish.

What do baby apes sleep in?
 Apricots.



24 hours of Prayer

St Andrew's held another weekend of prayer in November, this time focusing on turning prayers into action. There were times when Liz or members of the Worship Group and the World Church Concerns Group led a short act of worship or reflection, in a variety of different styles, and there were periods when people could just sit quietly and pray, read or take part in some of the activities on the tables. We began at 9am on Saturday, moved into the John Greer Hall for the coffee morning (which appropriately was for Commitment for Life), saw a DVD on the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship, shared a faith lunch, had a chance to join in singing some of our favourite hymns and later had afternoon tea. In the evening members of Ichthus had a late pizza supper and stayed through the night, enjoying a fine cooked breakfast at 7am. More people came for another breakfast as the 24 hours came to an end. So food played an important part in the weekend - as it did on many of the occasions when Jesus met his friends in New Testament times. We hope the weekend provided an opportunity for those who came to have met with Jesus, to have relaxed in the glow of His love and have gone out challenged by Him.

Roy Cadoux



I've been twisted inside, washed, wrung out and hung up to dry. The wind blows where it will, the fire is lit within. All is as it should be. I was warmed by the presence of others who were there that night. We stayed awake as long as we dared; too long would not have been enough for Jesus' sake – but those hours were as many as He needed from us at that time.

When we hold these times of prayerful watching and waiting, we are driven deeper within ourselves. I don't know where I'm going but am aware that I'm on a journey and no longer alone. My fellow pilgrims are with me and encourage me on.

This is the third time that St. Andrew's Church has prepared a vigil of prayer and each has been unique. It has left me with vibrant memories of movement, colours, songs and, as the afternoon turned towards the evening, everyone gently slowed and softened into the silence of the night.

We will have different stories to tell as no-one was there all the time, but continuous prayer was being offered to the Glory of God by his servants.

Hilary Babbage



THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A Sunday School teacher decided to get her young class to memorise Psalm 23. She gave them one month to learn this. One little boy was particularly excited about the task - but just couldn't remember it, he barely got past the first line. When the day came to recite the Psalm in front of everyone else he was so nervous. Eventually his turn came and he stepped up to the microphone and proudly said, 'The Lord is my Shepherd - and that's all I need to know.'

MOSES AND THE RED SEA

Nine year old Joe was asked by his mother what he had learned at Sunday School.

'Well mum, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.'

'Now Joe, is that really what your teacher taught you? his mother asked.

'Well, no mum; but if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!'

MORE CHILDREN IN CHURCH

A little boy was overheard praying:

"Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a good time as I am."

A Sunday School teacher asked her class if they thought Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark.

'No,' replied one boy, 'How could he with just two worms?'



LONDON RAMBLE

In early December ten of us made our way to Paddington by a rather circuitous route due to weekend engineering works on various tube lines. The weather was just right - sunny and reasonably mild for the time of year. Our walk started at the Paddington Basin on the Grand Union Canal, passing a strange statue as we made our way along the towpath



Our lunch stop



towards Little Venice, so named by the poet Robert Browning who lived overlooking the canal.

We soon came upon the floating 'Waterside Cafe' where we stopped for lunch. Suitably refreshed, we continued alongside the canal with its assortment of colourful boats. At one point the canal disappeared into the



We lost the men but picked up another!

Maida Hill Tunnel and at the end, an old house straddling the mouth of a tunnel is known as the 'upside down house' as the first floor is on the level of the road and the bedrooms are downstairs.



The 'Upside-down house'



The 'Blow up' Bridge

The canal runs along the north side of Regent's Park where we could see some of the white villas built in 1980s to the original Nash designs. We passed under one span of the Macclesfield bridge where, at 3am on 2nd October 1874, the boat 'Tilbury' carrying gunpowder to a quarry in the Midlands, exploded, demolishing the original bridge, killing 3 people. The rebuilt bridge is often referred to as the 'Blow up' Bridge. Soon after, we could see parts of London Zoo - something spooked the African hunting dogs causing them to run excitedly around their enclosure. The birds in the Snowdon aviary were far quieter! We continued on until we reached the colourful Feng Shang Chinese floating restaurant moored in Cumberland Basin, where we turned



On Primrose Hill

away from the canal and headed for Primrose Hill. After a steep climb we reached the viewpoint, but unfortunately rain had started to fall and the view had become very misty. We decided that it was time to head for home.

On our travels we saw some very interesting (and expensive) properties. Three had blue plaques showing where some famous people had lived - Arthur Lowe (you stupid boy!), Guy Gibson (of Dam Busters fame) and the former home of Irish poet William Yeats where, coincidentally, around 90 years later, the upstairs maisonette was also occupied by the writer Sylvia Plath, until she ended her life in 1963.

This was another excellent walk. Thank you Laurie for organising this.

Celia Williams

SCOUTING AWARD

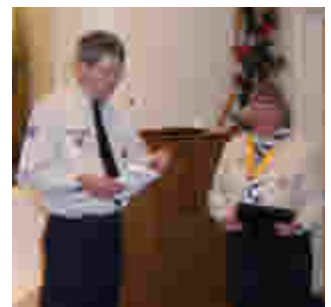
Janet Clark was presented with a badge and certificate to mark 40 years service with the Scouting movement at the Church Parade Service on December 6th. It would seem that somebody cannot count, since Janet obtained her first warrant as an Assistant Cub Scout Leader at the age of 18 – which, without giving away too many secrets, is a bit longer than 40 years ago.

Janet actually started Scouting at the age of 14 when she helped her father run the 21st Fulham Pack, which met in the Fulham Palace Road Congregational Church (now the Fulham United Reformed Church) before she went on to become an ACSL. She also helped her mother run a Cub Scout Pack for Cub Scouts with special needs at a nearby school.

It was at this time in Fulham that Janet met Laurie, who was involved with the running of the Scout Troop. They married and both will soon be eligible for a different 40 year landmark in their lives!

On moving to Eastcote in 1981 Janet took a short break from Scouting but eventually took over the running of the 5th Eastcote Cub Scout Pack at St. Andrew's and later became the Scouter in Charge of the Group, a position which she still holds.

Congratulations Janet, and we look forward to you receiving another badge and certificate – for 50 years service, in a few years time!





Activities at Northwood Hills URC

Please have a look at what is going on at Northwood Hills and if you think you'd like to come please turn up. We would love to see you. * See note about lunch.

Book Circle 7.30pm at The Case is Altered, Eastcote

14 April, 26 May

Table Tennis 7.30 - 9.00pm informal sessions, all welcome in the Kingsland Hall, NHURC (contact Margaret 020 8428 1534)

1 March, 19 April, 17 May

Coffee Morning 10.00 - 12noon in the Church

13 March, 10 April, 8 May

Neighbours Contact 1.45pm Mansfield Room, NHURC

2 March	Social Afternoon
16 March	Celia Williams talk and slides about a holiday
6 April	Social Afternoon
20 April	speaker to be confirmed
4 May	Social Afternoon
18 April	Speaker to be confirmed

*Church Lunch 12.15pm in the Kingsland Hall, NHURC. If you would like to come, please telephone Carolyn at least a week before to let her know you are coming.

28 March Palm Sunday
25 April
28 May Pentecost

Choir 8.00pm on Friday, 5 March.

For other dates please see the notice sheet

PAC EVENTS

Saturday 13th March	12.15pm	Christian Faith Lunch with Christian Aid Speaker at St. John's Parish Church
Monday 29th March	7.45pm	Worshipping Together Service to close Lent Group Series at Love Lane Methodist Church
Friday 2nd April	10.20am	Good Friday Silent Walk of Witness from Little Common Park Followed by Coffee and Hot Cross Buns in St. Luke's Church Hall
Tuesday 13th April	12.30pm	PAC Welcome Lunch at Love Lane Methodist Church



The articles in this Bulletin are the views of the individual writers and not necessarily of this Church, the Minister or the URC.

Next Issue
Articles, news etc.
to
Celia Williams or Gavin Gillespie
By
2nd May 2010