

Thought for December 2024

By Revd. Claire Claxton

Do you have a favourite Christmas carol? There are many to choose from! Some are very old and, perhaps, fill us with nostalgia because we have sung them for many years. Others are more modern and try to tell the story of the birth of Jesus in a different way. The theme of our Christmas Tree festival is Christmas carols so do come along to see how our creative participants have interpreted their allocated carol in greenery, lights and decorations!

For me, any carol with meaningful words and a beautiful tune will make it onto my list of favourites. 'It came upon a midnight clear' is one of those. Unusually, it doesn't actually mention the birth of Jesus but focusses on the song of the angels when they appeared to the shepherds as described in the gospel of Luke, 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on the earth....."'

The words of the carol are poignant and powerful and, even though they were written in 1849, are still very relevant to today's world with their references to 'the weary world' and people '.. who toil .. with painful steps and slow.' The third verse speaks straight to those embroiled in wars and conflicts of any kind:

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not the love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing.

If the carol only referred to the despair and difficulties of this world then it would be rather depressing but it leads up to a real sense of hope in the final verse:

When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus, I pray that we may all be able to hear the angels sing and that 'peace over all the earth' can move ever closer to becoming a reality.

God bless you.

CMClaxton

Ste Marguerite de la foret



December 2024

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Christmas Tree Festival

Please will all decorators look after your displays during December and clear the church in the week after January 6th. Many thanks for all your efforts now and throughout the year.

Greeters

December 1st Brenda
December 8th Dorothy
December 15th Sara
December 22d Fiona
December 24th Anne R
December 29th Nancy



Lots to see in church, it is lovely when the care homes bring people in for a Christmas outing.

Retreat

You are invited to a 3 half day guided retreat at St. Peter's Church being run from Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th December. The theme of our time together will be "Listening to the still small voice". We will start each day at 10am and finish at 1pm. Coffee and biscuits will be available from 9:30am and lunch will be served at 1pm. (Coffee and lunch are optional). Monday and Tuesday will start with a Eucharist and on the Wednesday, we will incorporate our weekly Eucharist into the retreat which will be at 11:30am. There is no charge for this retreat but you will need to let us know in advance if you will be attending and any special dietary requirements. Helen Colmer is co-ordinating the attendance list and can be contacted on buttes50@icloud.com or 01481-265680

Congratulations to Floral Forest for their success in this year's Britain in Bloom competition.

So worthwhile keeping the parish and our church looking so lovely and cared for. In the written judgement given to Floral Forest a mention was made of the church's Flower Festival (timed to open when the judges visited), the theme of 'Water Use' was described as a 'great way of introducing this topic to a wider audience of both residents and visitors to the parish'. Floral Forest does need more volunteers to continue to flourish. If you think you may be able to help please contact Sarah Plumley on 263376 or sarniaplumley@hotmail.com

December news and events

December Advent Group You are invited to join our Advent Group which will meet in the church from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.

Wednesdays 4th, 11th & 18th December.

You are welcome to attend even if you cannot make every session and to bring a packed lunch or food to share if you wish.

Knit and Natter *Wednesday 4th Dec* in church. 2-4pm

Coffee Morning *Wednesday 11th December* 10.30-12.00 in church

Carol Singing *10.30am 21st December* at Forest Stores, come and join in the singing.

Solace is meeting at 10.30am on *Thursday 12th December, Friday 27th December and 3rd January* at St. Martin's Community Centre



Christmas Tree Festival

During December, in addition to the normal Christmas services, the Forest Parish Church will be open for a Christmas Tree Festival where all the available spaces will be filled with trees or decorations.



This year is about Christmas carols. Bring the family and enjoy a bright spot in the dark winter days. The festival begins with the Christingle service at 11am on Sunday 1st December and continues until January 6th. The church will be open from 10am-5pm every day and there is ample parking in the glebe field next to the church. This has become a popular outing especially for the young and the elderly.

This year on the church sale table there will be new packs of sponsored Christmas cards designed by a young member of our congregation, Jenelle Hunnisett, who now lives in the UK but joins our choir when possible. Thanks to Jenelle for a new fresh design, there is always something good to find at the back of church, jam, marmalade, books, cards gifts etc!



✠ **Please remember in your prayers:**

Margaret, our friend and Lay Minister who is in Southampton hospital and expects to be there over Christmas.✠

Welcome to Forest Parish Church

December 2024

Sunday December 1st 11am Family service Christingle
and opening of Christmas Tree Festival

Reader: Debbie Dorey TBA

Prayers: Nicola Hoyland Birch

Sunday December 8th 11am Parish Communion

Reader: Keith Wallace Malachi 3 v1-4
Philippians 1 v3-11

Prayers: Keith Bienvenu

Sunday December 15th 11am Parish Communion

Reader: Syd Bowsher Zephaniah 3 v14-end
Philippians 4 v4-7

Prayers: Peter Gallienne

4pm Nine Lessons and Carols candle lit service

Sunday December 22nd 11am. Parish Communion

Reader: Richard Heaume Micah 5 v2-5a
Hebrews 10 v5-10

Prayers: Katie Blampied



Christmas Eve

Tuesday December 24th Crib service 4pm

9pm Candle-lit Christmas Communion service

Reader: Linda Archard Isaiah 52 v7-10 15

Prayers: Peter Gallienne

Christmas Day

Wednesday December 25th 11am Family Christmas
Communion

Reader: TBA Isaiah 9 v2-7
Titus 2 v11-14

Prayers: Nancy Smith

Sunday December 29th 11am Parish Communion

Reader: Sara Dorey 1 Samuel 2 v18-20,v26

Colossians 3 v12-17

Prayers: Vivienne Rees

Sunday January 5th 11am Family Communion

Reader: TBA Isaiah 60 v1-6

Ephesians 3 v1-12

Prayers: Nicola Hoyland Birch

