

EXTRACTS FROM PARKMINSTER WINTER NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Advent, that time of waiting, anticipating and preparing. In this time before Christmas we will hear again the stories of Mary and Joseph, the stable, the shepherds, the heavenly choir - and much more. We will think about Christmas presents, decorations for house and church, buying a new or resurrecting the old Christmas tree, sending cards, organizing food for the season, and generally getting ourselves ready for a celebration of God's gift to the world, the gift of Jesus Christ.

It all sounds very busy indeed; in fact, it sounds a bit too busy! I usually avoid the busyness of preparing for and making Christmas dinner. I have never cooked a turkey or made a full-blown Christmas dinner - family and friends have always taken care of us or taken pity on us! My busyness, however, stems from preparing for worship and leading it during Advent and at Christmas itself. So, none of us seems to be free from the 'doing' that needs to be done preparing for the Christmas season.

But there is within all the bustle, a wonderful opportunity to enter into the mystery and the myth, the singing and the sharing, the worship and the wonder that really comes to the fore at this time. Yes, it is a time of waiting, anticipating and preparing, but it's the preparation of the soul as we wait for the saviour and anticipate all that this means, that is the heart of it.

Our worship during Advent is designed to guide us toward Christ, to that time when, after the four red candles are lit, we light the white central candle on Christmas Day and proclaim that the light of the world has come to us.

After Christmas, sometime soon in the new year, we will return to the busyness for we will move out of our premises and start using Synod Office. We will leave behind the Church we now know, but when we return we will be facing a new direction. We will look at the stained glass windows which bear candles symbolizing the light of Christ. We will look to that light as we worship and know that Christ, Immanuel, is with us always to guard and guide us and to lead us into our future.

May the blessing of Christ be with us all during this season of celebration,

Alison Mary Dummer

Prayer at Advent

Lord, in this season of Advent, come into our hearts.

May we turn towards you and be restored
May we recognise you as Immanuel, our Saviour
And know your forgiveness in our lives. Amen.

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES 10.30 am
Minister to lead worship unless stated otherwise

2011

4th December - Advent 2 - Communion

11th December - Advent 3 - Toy & Gift Service

Coffee & Fairtrade after worship

18th December - Advent 4 - Lessons & Carols

NB. 6.00pm - Carols with Candelight Service

25th December - Christmas Day Service

2012

1st January - Communion & Elders' Rededication

8th January - **Coffee & Fairtrade after worship**

15th January

22nd January - **Quarterly Church Meeting after worship**

29th January

5th February - Communion

12th February - **Coffee & Fairtrade after worship**

Dates for forthcoming activities

1st Dec - 10.30am. Carol-singing at Tŷ Mawr Home for the Elderly, Southminster Rd, Roath. Everyone welcome.

3rd Dec - 10.30am. Opportunity to share in decorating the church for Christmas. Coffee and tea will be served.

'Allsorts' - Thursdays at 10.30am

The last session will be a visit to Tŷ Mawr for Carol singing on 1st December and will then restart in February 2012.

Mid-week Evening Communion Service

The last service in 2011 will be on the theme of Advent:

Wednesday, 30th November at 7.00pm. The Services will then restart in March 2012

Fellowship Meetings, Wednesdays, 2.30pm

30th November - Mrs Pat Warren will speak on her visit to Hong Kong

7th December - Carol Service – led by the Minister.

'Fellowship' will then close until it restarts in February 2012

Fellowship. Wednesdays 2.30pm

We have had a good season with an interesting mix of speakers and open afternoons, where everyone contributed something to the afternoon's

entertainment. Alison has led Bible Studies and Harvest Festival and we will end the season with a carol service on 7th December. Denis Pollard talked to us about Sir William Sterndale Bennett, 'a Sheffield Prodigy', and entertained us with a piano recital of his music. Paul Carpenter gave a talk on Christian Solidarity Worldwide, an advocacy organisation working for religious freedom and human rights. It was a humbling experience to hear of those who in this day and age are persecuted and even killed for their Christian beliefs. Nancy Herbert gave a talk on angels and Colwyn Williams on our heritage of parks in Cardiff. We are looking forward to hearing from Paul Daniel of Gideons International on 23rd November and Pat Warren on Hong Kong on 30th.

We are very glad to welcome everyone to our meetings. As you can see, they are both varied and interesting and we conclude with a cup of tea and a chat. So, if you have a free Wednesday afternoon, please come and join us. And if you would like to come and talk to us on any subject, please contact me.

Sylvia Abel

Synod meeting Newtown 12 November 2011.

Once again a coach left Cardiff at 8am, stopping to pick up more passengers at Nantgarw, Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil and arriving at Newtown about 10.45am in time for a quick coffee and to greet old friends. It was good to see a number of children and young people join us at Pontypridd.

The opening worship was led by a Pilot company from North Wales, in recognition of Pilots 75th Birthday. Then new ministers in the Synod were welcomed, Julia Bartholomew to the Bay of Colwyn, Sue Fender to Elfed Avenue, Penarth, Paul Robinson to Christchurch, Rhyl and Paula Parish-West to Stow Park, Newport. Later, ministers and elders who had died since March were remembered, including Douglas Bale, Peter Trow and our own Betty Mitchell. Three new Synod Elders were inducted, Clive Curtis and Tony Welpton for South Wales and Ruth Henriksen for Mid Wales. This was Peter Noble's last Synod as Moderator before becoming Chaplain to the Lightship in Cardiff Bay.

There was quite a lot of business; reports on the work of the various Boards and reminders of the difficult financial situation the Synod finds itself in. We still get help from Inter-Synod Resource Sharing, but other Synods too are feeling the pinch, so this may not last much longer. Some difficult decisions will have to be made and priorities agreed. One of the problems is the deficit in URC Ministers Pension Fund due to the general financial situation, so money has to be taken from reserves to plug this gap. At a time of financial stringency, appeals suffer. The Finance and Property Board was unable to respond to the Westminster College (Cambridge) Appeal, but due to some heavy lobbying by members of Synod, it was asked to rethink again and return in March.

Churches were reminded that they had received details of the appeal and were urged to support it.

Linda Elliott reported on a recent visit to the church in Madagascar, which is faced with a difficult and dangerous political situation and great poverty. An appeal was made for churches and individuals to subscribe to religious journals and send them to Madagascar.

One new project agreed was to hold a Synod Day next summer, to enable church members to meet together and join in fun, workshops and worship. So look out for details shortly.

Unfortunately, on the way home, we got caught up in the Wales GB Car Rally, so didn't get home as early as we expected. I for one was very thankful we were on a coach and didn't have to drive all the way home in the dark.

Sylvia Abel

Church Christmas Cards.

This year we will again have one large card for everyone to sign and a box for your charity donations. This is an opportunity.

Church support for charity.

It was agreed at the last Church Meeting that our charity for the next three months will be Health Help International. So don't forget - after communion or during coffee after service - put your donation in the plate on the table.

Coffee morning at the home of Tudor and Pat Thomas.

This was held on Wednesday 16th November and was a very happy occasion with a good number present. About £100 was raised for the Wales Air Ambulance. Many thanks to Pat and Tudor.

The Cardiff Christmas Story.

This will again take place in Tabernacle in the Hayes from 1st December.

Development News

The church has had a lot of visitors over the last 3 or 4 weeks. There has been a stream of representatives from the building firms which have been asked for tenders for the redevelopment of the building.

The tenders should be with us by the end of November and during December we hope to decide on a building firm and commission it to do the redevelopment work.

Robin

Just tell us once...

You may have seen in the Capital Times that there is a new service available when registering a birth or a death. They can pass on details to other Government Departments, saving you from having to contact various different offices, such as Department for Work and Pensions, local councils, Revenue and Customs and DVLA. There are explanatory leaflets available at the back of the church.

Bible Society Christmas Stickers.

Did you know you can help spread the Christian message of Christmas by getting free stickers for your Christmas cards from the Bible Society on 01793 418330 or visiting ChristmasUnwrapped.org.uk? Samples are on the table at the back of the church. You can also download an audio version of the New Testament from biblesociety.org.uk/ygtt

[Location of Parkminster URC](#)

You can locate Parkminster URC by going to the National Synod of Wales website: www.urcwailes.org.uk – and by clicking on ‘Find a Church’ or go directly to: <http://www.urc.org.uk/church/search>

Cytûn – Churches Together in Roath

Saturday, 17th December, 10.30am - Carol Singing in Albany Road

Wednesday, 18th January, 7.00pm - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service in St Edward’s. Des Kitto from St Andrew’s URC to preach [provisionally]

For latest ‘Network’ giving details of services in the member Churches of Cytûn, please go to:

<http://roath.org.uk/Network/pdf/net51.pdf>