

# The Old Church News

O P E N T O A L L - O P E N T O G O D

## VICAR'S VOICE

January 1<sup>st</sup>, a new year with twelve calendar months (and four seasons to enjoy). But the Church's Calendar is already one month old and we are about to enter the third "season." It began back on November 27<sup>th</sup> with Advent Sunday (and the time of expectation, hope and waiting for the Lord), then Christmas (which lasts until January 6<sup>th</sup>!) – the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ: the Incarnation – and then Epiphany (manifestation of who Jesus is: a King – which is why Magi, or Wise Men brought three gifts, gold, myrrh and frankincense to the son of God and worshipped Him).

But is it necessary to have a calendar at all in the church? After all, the post-resurrection groups of disciples didn't (it took nearly 400 years for the calendar to become: the Church can move at its own pace!) I think the answer is "yes," partly because we have so much to enjoy and mark in the Christian faith – it can't be put in one form of celebration on one day! But also because the Christian calendar reflects our own experiences of life as a whole (in the same way that our lives are a reflection of our faith). We celebrate birthdays, Christmas and other significant events; we prepare for important occasions (like job interviews, the birth of a child, rehearsing for a concert); and there are

long periods in life where life goes on well, pretty much as normal.

The calendar of the Church has the same pattern. While each Sunday is Easter Day and the celebration of a risen Lord Jesus, we do have "special" moments: Easter Day itself, Christmas, Pentecost (the gift of the holy Spirit and the birth of the Church), Ascension of Our Lord. We spend time preparing for those special moments (Advent and Lent especially) and whilst there are many festivals to celebrate, a lot of the year, designated as "ordinary time" is when we come, again and again, together to hear God's Word, to sing His Praise and to Worship Him, to pray and to intercede upon and for others and to be renewed and strengthened by communion, consecrated bread and wine.

And then there are all the moments when the Church building is open for anyone – and requests are made to baptise (to become Church), to marry, to be blessed, and to mark the end of life, to mourn, celebrate a person's life, to remember and to commend that person unto God.

The calendar rings the changes and its many traditions are a rich tapestry – like life itself – giving us the opportunity to explore the rich treasure-house of Christian faith.

## PAST MONTH'S NEWS

Singing seemed to be the order of the day during the month of December. The community choir Singwell visited several sheltered homes for the elderly where residents joined in singing a mixture of traditional carols and Christmas songs.

Later in the month a good number of the congregation received a warm welcome from customers and staff in the Asda store at Cape Hill. They spent an hour singing carols which everyone enjoyed and their sterling effort raised £158 for the Compton Hospice.

The prelude to Christmas continued in

Old Church on a Sunday morning when Junior Church and Big Fish entertained the congregation with their Nativity production. That afternoon St Matthews extended hospitality to many with shared fellowship and seasonal refreshments followed by carols and readings.

During their December meeting the Discoverers enjoyed an afternoon of festivity with a traditional three course meal at a local hostelry. Shared festivities were also enjoyed by Thrifties with mulled wine and a tantalizing takeaway in Charlotte's charming home.

## Q.I.... "FAITH"

- the body of truth, as found in the Creed, the teachings of the doctors and saints of the Church, and revelation contained in the Bible
- to follow the teaching of Christ
- a "subjective" as St Paul says, the first of three theological virtues, along with hope and love
- the human response to God (like Mary's "Yes" in her Magnificat)
- as indicated in the Gospels, a trusting acceptance of the kingdom of God
- but a journey: "Now we see in a mirror dimly, then we shall see face to face" (St Paul once more)
- an individual path, of acceptance, exploration and discovery, from the heart and intellectually: an act of the will
- of deepening one's faith as we continue our lives

God can make all things new, even you.  
Jesus adds life to your years and years to your life.  
The perfect "resolution" for the year 2012:  
**To know God and Jesus better.**



### JANUARY

- 1st 3.00 pm **New Year together** in the Vicarage! Tea and shared cakes (bring a plate and let's share and face the New Year 2012 together)
- 11th 7.30 pm **The Old Church PCC** meet in the Vicarage
- 16th 7.30 pm **St Matthews PCC** meet in the church
- 22nd 6.00 pm **Churches Together:** We are all meeting at the Baptist Church, Regent Street for this year's service with the preacher from the Methodist Circuit (Please try and come together as fellow workers of the Lord!)
- 26th 2.30 pm **Praying** in The Old Church  
7 pm **Evening service of Compline**

### The First Invitation

*The Chalice Outpoured*

Sweet joy and light and fullness be to you this day  
For he who was coming is come and will be with us always  
But what means this light?  
What is this sound?  
These praises and songs?  
Why is the darkness of night?  
Fled away as before the day?  
What means this once empty sky?  
Now filled with all these joyful throngs?  
Come.

Look and see for your own eyes to behold he who will forever be your friend  
He who will love and honour you and give you blessings and life without end.  
But how can just one child, an unknown son of unknown parents so poor.  
Born in a nowhere building in an insignificant town and a land obscure  
Be such a blessing and show power to cure?  
For the rich and powerful can easily buy and sell such as him and us  
Where will the power come from to raise such as he from the dust?  
Fear not for such sweet joy will fill your heart, soul and mind  
As his life unravels and weaves his love into our lives combined  
Come, leave your fields and sheep and bring your friends to the event  
Come greet the new life of promise that you will see is heaven sent  
Sweet joy and light and fullness be to you this greatest of days  
For he who was coming is come and will be with us always.

By Jeff Guest