

A BRIEF LOOK BACK AND FORWARD

Some of our Christmastide services and celebrations receive special mention later. There was a very large congregation for the Midnight Eucharist, and a visitor from Pangbourne was so impressed by our Family Communion on Christmas morning - it was the first time he had experienced Series 3 - that he wrote me a long letter of appreciation on Boxing Day. There were two special services for children, at which we were also glad to see many parents and friends. The first centred on an intimate and dramatic telling of the Christmas story, during which the figures were placed around the crib; the second gave spirited expression to the difference the Light can make in our lives and the world here and now. The way to find Bethlehem and its grace and power for ourselves where we are was strikingly and movingly portrayed on the Eve of the Epiphany, and we were also stirred by the singing of very relevant modern carols. This was the Sunday on which we heard of the honour conferred on Bill Robinson by the Queen, and the news added to our mood of rejoicing.

We now turn with added strength and zest to face the grimmer facts of life. We gave £72 for Christian Aid over Christmastide, and we are shortly to be solemnly asked by our Bishops to get down to a more serious consideration of the part we should play in the alleviation of the poverty which afflicts the majority of our fellow-men. One simple thing which we shall be asked to do as a beginning is to forego one meal on every Friday in Lent and put the money saved aside for Christian Aid. We expect great things from the house-groups, and on the Monday in Holy Week we are looking forward to a visit from the Twentieth Century Christian Music Group, who will present a Folk Passion. We need to find hospitality and accommodation for one night for about twenty-two young people, all from Cambridge University.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The first Friday in March is the traditional day for the Women's World Day of Prayer and this year that will be March 7. Women of various churches of the Arab Republic of Egypt have prepared the service and they write: "We invite our sisters in Jesus Christ to join us in this Service of Worship centred on the theme, 'Become Perfectly One'. This was the prayer of Jesus as He agonised over His approaching ordeal on the Cross. He was thinking down across the centuries to all of us in our various places and situations. So we join in oneness of spirit and love to worship Him on this day. As it was His prayer, so it is our prayer too. We think in shame of our dividedness which makes ineffectual the witness of Christians and builds up walls of misunderstanding between the Church and the world. Let us become perfectly one as we pray together on this day that the world may believe". The women who wrote that are living and working in a Muslim country. Nine of them have prepared the service that has obviously been born out of the richness of the various traditions of worship and fellowship of their country. The Coptic Church which is the indigenous Christian Church of Egypt is the oldest of all the Churches of the world. The nine women are members of an oecumenical prayer fellowship and as well as the Coptic, Evangelical and Coptic Orthodox Churches they also have representatives from the Roman Catholic, the Episcopalian, French Reformed, German Protestant and United Presbyterian Churches.

The work of preparation of the theme will have started at least two years ago because to get the final version translated and put into suitable form for

distribution to the rest of the world takes that time, so it is interesting that the theme is so closely related to our oecumenical Council of Churches theme for this Lent and it is illustrated from the Epistle to the Ephesians which we shall be studying in our house-groups. I thought that perhaps one study group only would therefore, be enough for us to get the depth of the service beforehand. I have a few copies of the study outline and can get more if they are wanted. For those who would like to get together to study it I suggest Wednesday afternoon February 26. As this will be already into Lent I don't think we can arrange an evening meeting this year, but would still like to recommend this preliminary study because of the added depth it gives to worship on the actual day. On the day itself, the services will be held at 2.30 p.m. and 8.00 p.m, at the Methodist Church, Percy Road. Arrangements will be made for transport: please let me know if you can offer it or would like to receive it.

C.H. Brunt.

HELP!

As a congregation we spread our wings further and further in the 'service' field. This is fine. But some mundane areas are left rather thinly covered. One such area is church cleaning. The cleaning-squad is a diminishing body and although the faithful few manage to keep the pews dusted and swept for you to sit down each Sunday and the brass bright and beautiful, not much else gets done. If we could rely on two cleaners to give one hour a week of organised work the weekly problem would be met. Without this we have achieved a backlog that makes the whole place look and feel a bit drearier than it need. So two requests: urgent one, please will you offer to me at the Vicarage or 979 2069 immediate help to tackle a good clean up; and long term, can you offer an hour a month (or more) regularly?

C.H. Brunt.

MOTHERS' UNION

Everyone who has heard or met her will be delighted to know that we are to welcome Mrs. Kay Campbell from Whitton as our speaker on Wednesday March 5. Her subject will be different kinds of prayer. Please make this known to anyone who would be interested and bring them along.

C.H. Brunt.

GROWTH IN THE SPIRIT

The contrasting models referred to under this heading in last month's 'Spire', those who seek and expect a dramatic "break-through" by God in the life of a person accompanied by the gifts of the Spirit (speaking in tongues etc.), and those who go for "gradual growth" reflect some difficulties in the term 'Baptism in the Spirit' which is being increasingly heard today.

The New Testament is quite clear that since Jesus there is only one baptism - that Christian baptism is in both water and Spirit. The problem is that most of us do not live as though we have been baptised (immersed, drenched) in the Holy Spirit. Where is the power, the love, the joy so apparent in the early Church? We may have been baptised in the Holy Spirit when we were baptised in water, but to the extent that our lives lack these qualities we might just as well not have been. This realisation points to the need for some kind of "breakthrough", and when a person is ready and acknowledges the fact,

opening the way for God, then God will act because this is the point for which he has been waiting. God acts, the Holy Spirit breaks through, and some people would call this experience itself the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Those who take a sacramental view would see in this the appropriation of what had been theirs since baptism. God fills the now admitted need and emptiness with the Holy Spirit, and the sign that this has happened will certainly be a new awareness of the love and power of God and of a compulsion to share this in some way with others who have the same experience, and to try to lead those who have not into it. It will be evident in a whole new dimension to praise and prayer in which there is a new freedom, and maybe in some of the more dramatic gifts of the Spirit. Whole areas of particularly the New Testament come alive in a new way because those who wrote there shared the same experience. The danger of spiritual arrogance is clear. The fact that a person has received so much can be so overwhelming that he feels that he has arrived; but these things are not a sign of spiritual maturity, rather of grace given to one who may be relatively immature to enable him to progress further along the path of faith. Here the need for steady growth comes in, but assisted by the development of the gifts of the Spirit. One great Christian, asked if he had been filled with the Spirit said "Yes, but I leak". It is necessary to be always open to God and to continually receive the grace of his Spirit - to grow.

Those who do not expect anything dramatic will probably not receive it, but as the one model needs to beware of arrogance, so the "gradual growers" need to beware of taking things too easy. Yes, this is a both-and situation. The seed, before it can germinate and grow must first rupture what may be a very tough shell. If it does not, growth is impossible. The experience of filling with the Holy Spirit must not be confused with conversion. Before Pentecost the apostles were followers of Jesus, and they were convinced of his resurrection. It was only after Pentecost that they received power to do what they did.

S.D.H.

SERVICES A LA ST. JAMES

The last two evening services have been special events. The first was called "Carols by Candlelight" and certainly lived up to its name. Each person was handed a lighted candle as he or she came in, and by the time the last few latecomers arrived the church was looking extremely pretty. The service itself was a variation on the Nine Lessons and Carols theme - there being six lessons, a few well-known carols for the congregation and some very enjoyable singing from the choir (I heard some comments to the effect that there was too much choir and not enough congregational participation, but that is a matter of opinion).

The second 'event' entitled "Can You Tell Me the Way to Bethlehem?" was an extremely well presented selection of reading, dialogues, carols and hymns, all centred round the main theme. The official choir had the night off and the singing was led by those taking part accompanied by Mr. Kenneth Sharpe on the organ.

May I congratulate all concerned, as obviously a lot of hard work had gone into the production of these events, especially the latter, and I hope we may see what other talent the parish has to offer in the not too distant future.

G.M.G.

CAN YOU TELL ME THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM ?

How does one find Bethlehem? One can look on the map under the correct longitude and latitude; one can go there, visit the tourist shops, buy souvenirs, take a guided tour; one can pause to admire the crib in one's local church or one can find the old peaceful, holy Bethlehem by coming into God's house, to his altar and table in worship or by praying wherever one happens to be and finding Jesus and his birthplace in one's heart.

This was the message of Lesley Mortimer's beautiful production in which she was so movingly and reverently helped by every one of the readers and singers. Obviously a great deal of hard work and worship had gone into this seemingly simple presentation - about 50 people attended on the evening of : Sunday, January 5, and benefited by it. I would be very happy to think that it could be presented again next Christmas in front of a full congregation.

M.O.

THE PARISH PARTY

There can be no doubt, the New Year's Party was a success. The committee had organised everything beautifully, it was a lovely finale to the festive season

The hall looked very welcoming with a pretty lighted bough decoration and well-placed refreshment tables. The theme this year was "Sports and Pastimes", and I was amazed at how inventive people had been, from comic to most artistic themes.

Jack Gostling and his fellow "Gamekeepers" had arranged an excellent programme of dancing and games which was great fun for everyone, regardless of age - all participated with enthusiasm.

The refreshments were superb, both liquid and buffet - it was obvious that a great deal of thought and effort had gone into everything and the ladies worked very hard.

I for one thoroughly enjoyed my evening and am sure everyone would like to join me in saying "Thank you for a lovely Party".

L.C.

THE CHOIR PARTY

The invitation said: - "The Choir Party will be held at Wayside on January 17. Please come and bring a friend and a pound of sausages." Some people had to take cakes and somebody had made piles of sandwiches. We left our packages with the ladies in the kitchen and went into the big room. We had lots of good games. Shirley did those. We played statues and vegetables and stations and a tunnel race. That was funny, because the grown-ups got stuck under our legs, and we all got stuck under the girls' long skirts. One of the men in the choir had brought a big bag full of prizes and we could choose one when we won. Someone had a model, but I chose plasticene. There were some pink pants which made the girls giggle. I would have liked a pink panther. We had a concert, Julie and Karen sang and George made his sleeve into a puppet who had eaten too much at the party. Mark did Clement Freud, and Shirley was the dog who died after his Chunky Meat. Two of the grown-ups sang a psalm, but it was all about making jam. There were lots more games and then it was time to go home, so we had three cheers for Shirley. I like parties.

One of the choir,

TODDLERS' CLUBS

Since last July two Mother and Toddlers' clubs have been meeting regularly in Hampton Hill and Hampton. You may have seen them mentioned in the local press or read the report in the Hampton Hill Association Newsletter.

The Idea was first put forward at the inaugural meeting of the Community Care Group in May 1974. We wanted somewhere for young mothers to meet together informally and have a chat with others in similar circumstances, while their children were happily occupied. Many young mothers do feel so isolated and tied to the home, especially if they have been used to working before they had any children; some feel bored, others overworked - for various reasons very many can do with a place to go where they know they meet others who will understand them: others, who know from firsthand experience what you are talking about when you just have to complain to somebody about your youngster's not wanting to go to sleep in the evening. Or when you are happy about some new skill. And you might of course be lucky to find a person with whom you can share a wider field of interests, or somebody with whom you can really become friends.

I said earlier that Toddlers' Club was to be a place where this could happen, while the children were happily occupied. Although they might not actually play together, even very young children usually do enjoy being in the company of others. For very shy ones it is a lovely opportunity gradually to gain confidence in the safe knowledge that Mummy is always within easy reach. This experience is useful for all youngsters, and many mothers will welcome the chance the Toddlers' Club offers them of guiding their children through this stage in their development. For the slightly older ones we organise various creative abilities. We have found that some mums get great fun out of helping their children in their rather messy artistic endeavours.

The most striking point about the Toddlers' Club is the enjoyment we all get out of making it succeed. Some of us put in really a lot of work, but everybody helps in some way. Bigger operations like the fireworks party in November and the Christmas party for about fifty children each, ran smoothly thanks to many energetic helpers, and we are confident that our new plans for the coming months will be just as successful.

In the present gloomy general conditions it is particularly welcome to be engaged in something so positive and cheerful. If you feel like coming along, or if you know anybody who you think would like to share in our enjoyment, here are the details:

We meet every Tuesday, 2.30 to 4.00 p.m. in the United Reformed Church Hall, by the Community Care Office. The Hampton Club is at present meeting on Wednesdays, at the same time, in the Pavilion at Carlisle Park.

H.B.

RECENT EXPERIENCES OF HEALING POWER

These notes have been written as I am spending the week-end with my cousin, Mrs. Joan Hall, of Uxbridge Road. I appreciate being able to worship with the congregation at St. James's church each year I visit.

A healing mission has just been held in two Anglican parishes in Cheshire and the sick have been visited in hospital, or in their homes. A healing service was held in the evening at the larger of the two churches and sixty

people availed themselves of the laying-on of hands at the altar rail. A young lady called Sue received an immediate healing and was able to remove a brace. Sue telephoned a friend called Tony who had a spinal injury caused by an accident and I was asked to pray for him. The visit took place on New Year's Eve and the next morning I was in fellowship with a Christian family and learned that at midnight Tony had telephoned the daughter Anne to say he was touching his toes. A letter from the vicar has confirmed the healing.

Three days were spent going around the parishes, counselling, praying and laying hands on the sick. There are many forms of healing and it was good to hear from a lady who had multiple sclerosis that she was moving her legs more easily than a year before. Two other ladies had very positive attitudes compared with the self-pity found a year earlier, and these visits were very happy.

I was invited to the home of a Christian doctor in Yorkshire for a bible study and to give a few comments on the healing ministry.

A lady aged about sixty who had been hit on the neck with a cricket bat at the age of four asked for prayer. We prayed with her and a leg which was half an inch shorter grew in front of our eyes and as the lengths of the legs became even, she called out "the pain has gone". My nephew, who was a nominal Christian had such a profound experience when he witnessed a similar healing that he is taking steps to become confirmed.

In an eastern Devon town, I attended an ecumenical meeting at the Anglican rectory and the Roman Catholic priest who was present asked me to lay hands on him, as he suffered from stomach ulcers. Truly the healing ministry causes denominational barriers to fall.

The only true healing comes to us through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of the Lord Jesus. Those who work in the healing ministry can only claim to be pieces of rusty old pipes, but through such pipes God's healing power can flow and there is enough room in the pipes for the Holy Spirit to alight in all His grace.

Leslie Withell
Singing Waters
R.R.I.
Orangeville
Ontario, L9W 2Y8

NEW NEIGHBOURS

Twice a year the Stewardship Committee tries to contact newcomers to the Parish, in order to greet them, introduce them to each other and to add to their interest in the area by showing them Mrs. Orton's slides on the history of Hampton Hill. It is however, very difficult to find these people while they are still new to the district and a friendly approach from us would be helpful and timely. We sometimes find we are inviting people to Newcomers' Parties who have been here two or more years. Can you help?

If one person in each road would notify me of the arrival of anyone new in the road, we could make a far better job of this. Can You help? If so, perhaps you would contact me at Evensong, or at 81 Park Road, or by 'phone 979 1983.

Kathleen Brooks.

Y.P.F. ANNUAL DINNER

On December 20 I was one of the guests who attended the Y.P.F.'s annual dinner held at Wayside.

What a pleasant evening we had! The guests and members were ceremoniously announced and received. The girls in their long dresses and the smartly dressed young men gave an immediate air of festivity to the occasion. After chatting for a while as we sipped our drinks, we were ushered into the dining room. The dinner table, illuminated by candlelight, looked very attractive and our excellent meal was served by most proficient and polite waiters.

I enjoyed the company - I enjoyed the dinner - I enjoyed the speeches. Thank you Y.P.F. for asking me to your dinner. If the Lord Mayor himself had invited me to his banquet I could not have felt more honoured.

M.L.

THE SCOUT GROUP

First let me say a word about the Christmas Bazaar, a great success financially - over £200 - and certainly very attractive this year with its numerous Christmas decorations.

Also this year our first combined Uniformed Group Carol Service was held in the Hall. It originated from the Troop and a well-planned programme ensued. In the unrehearsed Nativity Scene every one of the four organisations was represented. I hope this will become an annual event.

As we enter the New Year, Scouting in conjunction with every other aspect of life will be troubled by inflation, but this is a challenge to be met and overcome.

S.R.C.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Come and join us at our friendly **Whist Drive** on **Wednesday, February 19** at **8 p.m.** in Wayside. There are plenty of prizes and tickets are only 10p.

Book early for the half-day coach visit to **St. Paul's Cathedral** on **Saturday March 22**. Coach tickets at 50p are going fast (there will be an extra charge for those wishing to go into the whispering gallery, etc.).

If you appreciate fine **Organ Music**, come to hear **Mr. David Bell** on **Wednesday, April 23**. Those who heard Mr. Bell on his last visit to St. James's will need no prompting to buy their programmes - price 10p.

R.L.B.

DEANERY INTERCESSION LIST

February	16	All Saints, Hampton
	23	Schools and Colleges in the Deanery
March	2	St. Mary, Hampton
	9	All other Christian Groups and Denominations
	16	The Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace

SOME DATES TO NOTE

February

- 12 ASH WEDNESDAY: 08.50 Holy Communion (St. Anne's Chapel, LEHS); 10.00 Holy Communion (Laurel Dene); 19.45 Parish Communion; 20.30 Parochial Church Council (W)

- 13 14.30 Ladies of the parish entertain at Laurel Dene; 20.00 Prayer Meeting (69 St. James's Avenue)
 14 07.30 Holy Communion
 15 19.30 Community Care Group: Wine and Cheese Party and Farewell to the Reverend Dennis Green (Rectory School)
 18 20.00 Group for Welcome and Contact; 20.00 Tuesday Club: 'The River Police' (W)
 19 07.30 Holy Communion: 20.00 Whist Drive (W)
 21 07.30 Holy Communion
 24 SAINT MATTHIAS, APOSTLE : 07.30 Holy Communion
 26 07.30 Holy Communion ; 14.30 Bible Study in preparation for Day of Prayer. (Vicarage)
 27 20.00 Prayer Meeting (69 St. James's Avenue)
 28 07.30 Holy Communion

March

- 4 20.00 Group for Welcome and Contact; 20.00 Tuesday Club: Speaker - Miss Dines (W)
 5 07.30 Holy Communion; 14.30 Mothers' Union: Branch Meeting. Mrs. Campbell speaks on Prayer (W)
 7 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: 07.30 Holy Communion; SERVICES AT THE METHODIST CHURCH 14.30 and 20.00
 8 14.30 Y.P.F.: Jumble Sale (Hall)
 9 Sunday morning arrangements as usual, but instead of Evensong, at 16.30 a MOTHERING SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE, followed by Afternoon Tea in church.
 11 08.50 Holy Communion (St. Anne's Chapel, LEHS)
 12 07.30 Holy Communion
 14 20.00 Prayer Meeting (69 St. James's Avenue)

The Wayside Monday Centre opens at the usual times, and the second Training Course continues its weekly evening sessions, with additional all-day meetings on February 8 and March 8. The Confirmation Groups, and the Welcome Group in Longford Close, continue to meet at regular intervals as arranged. The ten ecumenical House Groups studying the theme of Unity in the Epistle to the Ephesians meet on various evenings every week in Lent as announced (further information from the Vicar or Miss Hannah Stanton 979 5821)

BAPTISM

- December 29 Matthew Charles Miller, Pretoria, South Africa and c/o
 63 Burton's Road

MARRIAGE

- January 25 Joseph Minuti to Amanda Maria Soleil

BURIALS AND CREMATION

- December 5 Louie May Peck, 2 Laurel Road, aged 69 years (South-West Middlesex Crematorium)
 31 Harry Mayo Dale, 53 St. James's Road, aged 95 years (at Teddington Cemetary)
 January 10 Doris May Coote, 17 Park Road, aged 64 years
 17 George Edward Tandy, 1 The Garth, Uxbridge Road, aged 64 years (at Teddington Cemetary)