

PARISH NEWS

St Cuthberts, Wells and St Mary Magdalene, Wookey Hole

January 2014



This year is the newest year there is

by the Rt Revd Peter Maurice, Bishop of Taunton

'This year is the newest year there is', writes the preacher, 'but it won't be new always, and that's worth thinking about. So pay attention to what's going on this newest year, no matter how humdrum and unimportant it may seem. Keep your eyes and ears open, because new as today always seems while you're living it, in a few years from now it will exist only in your memories of it, and in a few centuries it will have vanished like a dream.'

It does seem as if we struggle to live, and I mean REALLY live, in the present. I am reminded of that truth when I listen to a particular take on the Innkeeper in the stories around the birth of Jesus. 'Later that night, says the Innkeeper, 'when the baby came, I was not there. I was lost in the forest of a million trees, pre-occupied with this and that, so that when he came, I missed him.'

At the year's end, we are naturally inclined to look back. As someone has remarked, 'we do the past rather well' (perhaps rather too well!), so as I sing Auld Lang Syne on New Year's Eve, I always remember some of the major events of

my year, both the good and the not so good. I hope that under God I might have the grace to acknowledge with a degree of honesty where I might have fallen short, but I also look forward in hope to what God might have in store for me, because our God is a God of promise. You will have your own memories too of how last year was, some of them sad and some joyful, but, as the preacher says, this year is the newest year there is, so I must not dwell too much on the past but rather turn my attention as I hope you will turn yours to how we will live this year in such a way that when God comes, we will not miss Him.

This year will be marked by continuing economic pressure, particularly on the poor, so for a significant number of people in this country and county the prospects of the New Year will be bleak. In different parts of the world conflict and poverty will continue to blight the lives of millions of people. It is easy to lose hope, but we are invited, dare I say obliged, to be people who both live by hope and also partner others in building communities of hope in our families, our communities, our churches and our world.

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In the Diocese we will look forward to the arrival of our new Bishop, another Peter! He is not a Messiah Bishop, but he is a bishop with a deep concern to grow the faith, to engage with community, to encourage the young and to have a special concern for those on the edge as I saw first hand as I travelled with him around the Diocese on the day of his announcement. Please pray for him and for Jane as they prepare to come to live and minister among us.

This year is the newest year there is. May the God who calls time into being be upon us at this time of New Year and empower us to live our time in faithfulness to the Gospel now and always.

+ Peter Taunton

St Cuthbert's Ladies' Group

Happy New Year to all our members!

Our first meeting is on Tuesday January 20th, and it will be our AGM. 7.30 as usual, at the St Lawrence Centre, for a short time of worship, meeting and then a short activity, for which it would be good if you could bring along something to lean on and a writing implement. (The "something to lean on" is of the decent hard undersurface to write on paper variety, not a walking stick!!!)

We had an enjoyable coffee morning at the Vicarage in December, raising more funds for our charity, whilst having a good chat at the same time. The total raised for the year will be available at the AGM. If anyone has a suggestion of a charity we could consider supporting as a group for this coming year, it would be good if they could have a word with me so that I can obtain information about it prior to the meeting.

Bid



"That's two t's in Matthew", said Osric

HOPE is launched at Lambeth Palace...

Late last year 100 Christian leaders gathered with the Archbishop of Canterbury to launch HOPE, a nationwide initiative to put Christian faith into words and action. Justin Welby said: "What we do today has an impact tomorrow as God breathes his life into our villages, towns and cities. It is so exciting to see people stepping out in faith and it is great to see so many churches working together in mission across the country."

Random acts of fun, niceness and entertainment

Food for thought from one of our fictional columnists in Connect

Chav. Credit crunch. Omnishambles. Selfie. All these words have been a new addition to the dictionary in the last few years. Along with **flashmob**. A load of people get together to do something visible and interesting and then disappear into the crowd.

I'd never seen one live before. Then, the other day, I was shopping in town when there was a bit of a fuss and about 100 people wandered into the centre of the square and started singing a carol at the top of their voices and with animated actions. Hark the Herald Angels Sing it was. It must have been rehearsed because the singing was top notch. As it finished they just faded back into the Christmas shoppers. Gone, as quickly as it arrived. There were some people quick enough to take photos. No-one is far from a camera these days. But otherwise the moment came and went.

If it was a church bunch then it was a well kept secret because I never got so much as a sniff about it. I wonder what complete outsiders made of it. At minimum I should imagine it got them talking about the how, why and what. Hope so.

Flashmobs may be a short-lived phenomenon. I saw the YouTube footage of one at a wedding and the Curate tells me they even had one at the clergy gathering this year. Well if the clergy are doing it then surely it's on the way out. (That was a joke, Vicar).

But while it is a thing, a phenomenon, it is good that churchgoers should join in. Mobs have had a bad reputation down the ages. The word conjures up the wrong image and the shouts of 'Crucify him'. Let's be part of redeeming the mob. A bunch of people get together for a random act of fun, niceness and entertainment.

Now that can't be bad. Can it?

I wonder what next year's new word will be.

Merry Christmas to you.

Barbara, North Somerset, December 2013

Wookey Hole WI, December meeting 2013

As we arrived at the meeting to the sound of seasonal music, Jill collected the Christmas tree decorations which we had started making last month and completed at home. They became a very attractive display, and will be even better on the tree that Jill will be decorating in St Cuthbert's Church for the Tree Festival which starts on Reindeer Parade day. Anne has organised a coffee morning in the church so that we can inspect the result and the other trees.

President Sue H led us swiftly through a round up of our activities since the last meeting. Lesley H had represented us at the County Annual Meeting, which she had found very interesting, especially as she had won the competition for a

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contribution towards the cost of her next course at the WI's Denman College. Anne had organised a lunch at Shepton Mallet, which had been much enjoyed. Coming up will be the carol services, both county at the Cathedral and group at Glastonbury. Sue asked us to check our copies of WI Life for information on next year's resolutions for the National Annual Meeting, she would like to collect in our votes next month. Subscriptions for 2014 will also be due in January.

And then it was party time, the committee had pulled out all the stops to entertain and feed us. Elizabeth had compiled a quiz on the place names of Somerset that had some of us scratching our heads and wondering if we really know where we live. And familiar objects are considerably more difficult to identify when tied up in a pillow case, kitchen gadgets were never before so mysterious, or caused quite so much hilarity. Our creativity was thoroughly tested by a limerick contest, the results appreciated with applause and laughter. At teatime there was a wonderful buffet spread of cakes and savouries, to which we were called back for seconds as we weren't eating enough to clear the plates.

The Flower of the month, won by Jan, with Jill second and Sue H third, was judged by Alice, who was a guest last month and who has decided to join us for next year.

Mrs R Docherty

On how to run your Diary for 2014



The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, you have just attended a course on 'Diary Management', to get you prepared for another year. If you had visited me, I could have told you all you need to know in half the time. Allow me to provide you with useful information which was probably not provided in your conference hand-outs.

First: buy the smallest diary you can find: large blank pages only encourage you to fill them with too many appointments; the smaller the page, the easier it can be made to appear that your days are fully booked.

Second: make sure that it is of a size that will conveniently fit into any pocket. When dates are being arranged for subsequent meetings, you can theatrically start going through jacket, trouser and overcoat pockets. By the time you discover it was in your briefcase all along, all the dates will have been fixed and no one will notice you never got any of them.

Third: adopt your own private code for bookings. This means that any parishioner looking over your shoulder and seeing "1.30pm PLS" or "7.30pm WTD" will assume you are attending important church meetings. The fact that they mean "Post Lunch Sleep" and "Walk The Dog" will be known to you alone – although do have alternative possibilities for your acronyms should you ever be challenged. My congregation know I am assiduous in attending the "Pauline Letters Seminars" and my membership of the "World Theology Directorate" is of many years standing.

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Fourth: Record everything in pencil so that once you return home, you can rub most of it out and can then deny you knew anything about those meetings you were supposed to attend – and to prove it, you can show the blank page in your diary.

Fifth: Put someone else's address inside your diary. Should you ever have to resort to the ultimate act and need to lose it, you do not want some Good Samaritan returning it to you from the churchyard compost heap.

So you see, your day of flip charts and group discussions were quite wasted – and I would gladly have presented my course for half their price.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

PS Remember the church jumble sale. We have a gents three-speed bicycle, also two ladies for sale, in good running order.

(I couldn't resist adding this – Ed.)

The next Bishop of Bath and Wells

The announcement from Downing Street was made on 10th December, and confirms that the next Bishop of Bath and Wells will be the Rt Revd Peter Hancock. His current role is Bishop of Basingstoke in the Diocese of Winchester, which he has held since September 2010.

Bishop Peter says he is "delighted" at the prospect of becoming the 79th Bishop of Bath and Wells. He will be formally enthroned at Wells Cathedral in 2014, and he will work at the Bishop's Palace alongside the Bishop of Taunton.



The Rt Revd Peter Hancock with his wife, Jane.

The Church Commissioners have decreed that Bishop Peter will be living not in the Bishop's Palace but in 'an alternative residence near to Wells'.

What are your views on this break with tradition? Write in and let me know (that includes Bishop Peter, if he reads this!). Editor.

What will you do with 2014?

How will you spend 2014? All those hours, days and weeks that lie ahead of you...

The Bible says 'make the most of the time' (Ephesians 5:16) That *doesn't* mean speed up your life. It doesn't mean more rush. In fact, rush is a hazard to this process.

It means that as this brand new year of 2014 begins, we are called to take time to plug into God's plan for us – NOW. It means becoming obedient to his revealed will for our personal life, our work, our marriage, our priorities... – NOW. It means prayerfully discerning the divine and eternal opportunities before each of us – NOW. Yes, now. 'For Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of Salvation.' (2 Corinthians 6.2) So, today, let us hear his voice, let us harden not our hearts.

1 January - The naming of Jesus

It is Matthew and Luke who tell the story of how the angel instructed that Mary's baby was to be named Jesus - a common name meaning 'saviour'. The Church recalls the naming of Jesus on 1 January - eight days after 25 December (by the Jewish way of reckoning days). For in Jewish tradition, the male babies were circumcised and named on their eighth day of life.

For early Christians, the *name* of Jesus held a special significance. In Jewish tradition, names expressed aspects of personality. Jesus' name permeated his ministry, and it does so today: we are baptised in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), we are justified through the name of Jesus (1 Cor 6:11); and God the Father has given Jesus a name above all others (Phil 2:9). All Christian prayer is through 'Jesus Christ our Lord', and it is 'at the name of Jesus' that one day every knee shall bow.



St WULFSTAN 19th January

St Wulfstan was Bishop of Worcester from 1062-95. He lived during the Norman Conquest of England and was the only Saxon bishop to remain under William the Conqueror.

Wulfstan was a caring and hard-working monk. He rebuilt the cathedral at Worcester, cared for the poor, and struggled to ease the harsh conditions imposed by the Normans on the Saxons. Unlike some priests, he baptised children of the poor without charge. It is said that he never turned away people asking for help.

Wulfstan fought the slave trade in Bristol (slave trading didn't just start with slaves from Africa but had been going on for centuries with slaves from England being sold to Ireland and North Africa).

Wulfstan died whilst washing the feet of 12 poor men during a service in the cathedral. He died as he had lived, serving God and caring for others.

CATHEDRAL SAINTS

Some cathedrals are associated with or dedicated to particular saints. Can you link the saint with the cathedral?

St Giles	Lichfield
St Mungo	Ely
St Chad	Durham
St Etheldreda	Edinburgh
St Cuthbert	Winchester
St Swithin	Glasgow

Did you hear about the man who took his car in for a service?

It got stuck in the church doors.

What's green, curly & religious?

Lettuce pray.



What lives in a paper bag and hangs around in French cathedrals?

The lunch-pack of Notre Dame.

Answers: St Giles at Lichfield, St Mungo at Glasgow, St Chad at Lichfield, St Etheldreda at Ely, St Cuthbert at Durham, St Swithin at Winchester.

Hospitality

Fünf sind geladen

Five were invited

Zehn sind gekommen

Ten have turned up

Gieß Wasser zur Suppe

Add water to the soup

Heiß alle willkommen!

Bid everyone welcome!



When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced.

**Live your life so that when you die,
the world cries and you rejoice.**

Lobscouse

First mentioned in 1706, and probably Baltic in origin (*labs kausis* in Latvia), nineteenth century sailors made lobscouse by boiling salt meat, onions and pepper, with crumbled ship's biscuit added to thicken the dish.

Modern English scouse, strongly associated with Liverpool, is a stew, similar to Lancashire hotpot, usually of mutton, lamb (my mother used best end of neck when she could get it*) or beef with potatoes, carrots and onions. *She had four hungry boys to feed, with meat rationed.

Ingredients for Liverpool Scouse:

A cheap cut of lamb, or in earlier days mutton breast or forequarter

A little oil

Chopped onions

Carrots

Water or meat stock

Potatoes

Season to taste, depending on ingredients

For quantities, use the mantra *TeeLAR (That Looks About Right)*

Remove the meat from the bone, if needed, and dice it

Warm a little oil in a large saucepan

Add the meat and brown it

Add the chopped onions, carrots, water or stock, and as many potatoes as possible

No extra thickening is needed; if there is a lot of liquid left on the plate, 'fill up on bread'

Serve with preserved beetroot or red cabbage and white bread and butter

A North Wales variant, made for farmers and working class people, uses braising or stewing steak; if made with mutton it is known as *cawl*. Another version, called 'blind scouse', is made without meat.

In Leigh, near Wigan, locals are sometimes referred to as 'Lobbygobblers'!

Warm up those cold winter days – Ed..



"It's worth getting to church an hour early to grab a pew by the electric socket."

Church-speak

MAGI: The most famous trio to attend a baby shower.

PEW: A medieval torture device still found in Catholic churches.

AMEN: The only part of a prayer that everyone knows.

BULLETIN: Your receipt for attending a church service.

Poem for the New Year

Useful things, rubbish dumps; I could spend hours
Browsing there as in a second hand bookshop. Old chairs,
Broken toys, a one-wheeled pram, all precious
To their one-time owners, but now discarded. Someone
Has seen the adverts, fallen for the con that new
Is always better. A 'fridge that looks quite good,
Not too much knocked about but scrapped
In favour of the latest, newest model.

Do we treat people in that way I wonder? Wives, husbands.
Friends?

And look.

A Christmas tree shedding its needles like fine rain,
A piece of tinsel in the topmost branch, too hard to reach
When it stood upright, or slightly leaning, in the hall
Or living room. Christmas is over now.

The tree goes out, the cardboard crib is put away,
The tinsel and the trimmings back in the box under the
stairs.

No stars. An empty wine bottle
Holding once the fruit of the vine, work of human hands.
I find myself searching for bread.

Does every Christmas have to end like this? An interlude,
No more, of light in dull December which, like the tinsel,
tarnishes on exposure to the normal air? The messages
Of peace and love on cards of greeting, gone
With the cards themselves?

Is nothing left? Is all discarded, good and bad alike?
Tradition's sentiments – 'Do come again', 'It's been so long',
'Haven't they grown', 'Must keep in touch',
'Good bye, goodbye'.

That annual truce with cactus relatives, our homes
A no man's land where, for a week at most, we try
To make it work. Shall I find here among the flotsam
Of the festival the love, joy, peace he came to bring?

We are so careless of his gifts. Perhaps
We ought to keep remembrance of the birth but once
A lifetime – only once. But no.
For that is not the way it is with God, nor should be so
With us.

And look again.

Under the good and bad in life, which we with easy
conscience

Throw away, deep in the litter of our lives he comes again
And yet again to feed us, heal us,

Draw us to himself.

And through the little left of love once known,
Contentment warmly felt, he finds us, holds us, loves us
Through the love we give, however poorly, for one more
year.

PL

‘Come before winter’ (2 Timothy 4:21)

Your life is like the four seasons. Springtime speaks of youth, summer of the prime of life, autumn of old age, and winter of eventual death and entering eternity. Do you feel prepared for the winter of your life?

Mark Twain once said: “Some folks get bothered about the Scriptures they don’t understand, but it’s the ones I *do* understand that bother me.” And the Scriptures urge us constantly to take God seriously, to face up to our misdoings in life, and to take them to God to be dealt with. Jesus is not someone we can think about with vague respect over the years. We have to decide what we really think of him – and act accordingly. If what he says is true, we must respond. Why? Because no one’s life is going to go on forever. It is no good ignoring the major issues of life while we busy ourselves with our family and work and friends and interests.

A legend from the streets of Baghdad tells of a wealthy merchant who sent his servant to the market, but he returned empty handed, saying he had just met Death and she had made a threatening gesture toward him. The servant borrowed the fastest horse from the stable and left Baghdad to flee to Samarra, believing that Death would never find him there.

That afternoon the master himself met Death in the market place and said to her: “Why did you frighten my servant? Why did you make that threatening gesture toward him?”

Death answered: “Sir, you are mistaken: that was only an expression of surprise. I was amazed to see your servant was here in Baghdad, that is all.”

“But why?” demanded the master.

“Because I have an appointment with him this evening – in Samarra!”

All of us have an appointment in Samarra – some day.

The question is not, “Is it coming?” The question is: “Will you be ready when it arrives?”

From the Registers 2013

FUNERALS & MEMORIAL SERVICES

- 10th December May Lesley Gillespie
- 11th December Kenneth Henry Adams
- 18th December Lynsey Jan Pow
- 20th December Miranda Smith

Sheila Jenkins

New Year Prayer of Trust

Father of all time,

We release to you the old year, the year that has passed, with all the celebrations and all the crises; with all the things we did and organised and enjoyed - with all the things we couldn’t do or control, the things that caused us sadness or pain. We release them to you.

As another year begins Lord, help us to start by putting our trust in Jesus, right here in the newness of January. Thank you that he died to close the gap between us and you. Help us to renew our trust daily, so that when difficult days come, dark days when we can’t understand why, or see the way forward, we will know his presence and strength to carry on.

May his Holy Spirit, guide us; may he fill us with expectation and courage and confidence to know that we are your children; that you will love us not only right through this year, but always.

So thank you Lord, for the gift of this New Year, but most of all we thank you every day for Jesus who makes the difference. Amen

Daphne Kitching

