



# In Partnership December 2008



The Partnership of West Swindon and the Lydiards  
Baptist • Church of England • Methodist • United Reformed Church



Dear Friends

I'm rejoicing in the fact that it is a year since I arrived in Swindon, and advent this year will not be quite such a mystery as it was last, when I was trying to work out where I should be when, and make sure I took the right kind of service at the correct time and place.

So this year it's not quite such a mystery.... And since I love Christmas time and all that it means, I am really looking forward to it. But despite the fun and excitement, Christmas brings its own pressures too. In today's economic climate with many unsure about future employment, and others with general money worries and facing debt or the threat of houses being repossessed, how as Christians can we help our families to engage in helpful, hopeful celebrations, without feeling panicked by the beginning of January as a result of overspending and busyness?

Toothill's Christmas posters for this year declare 'Jesus adds colour to Christmas'. He is the reason for the season as we have heard before. So how in these grey winter days can he add colour to our celebrations, in a way that will not wilt and fade by the beginning of the New Year? What kind of pattern does that first Christmas set us for giving and receiving? It seems to me that all those involved in the story used what they had, and used it creatively.

Mary was able to accept a radical change in lifestyle that would not have been her first choice but which God was able to use for the blessing of many. Joseph, gave up his dream of a model wife and marriage, and instead was there to help and support Mary and Jesus and use his creative carpentry skills to improvise a crib and much more. The shepherds came as they were, and were welcomed just as they were, strangers welcomed into the mystery and hope of this birth. Wise men came later, bearing precious gifts that would be long remembered. Rich folk sharing their abundance to bless and meet the needs of others.

### Prayer points

- Goals for 2009
- Praying together in church and Partnership
- Remix and after school club
- Our church ministers

### Contact information

The Partnership office is open on Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30am-11:30am and on Friday from 1:30 pm until 3:30 pm. The office number is 01793 874221. The office e-mail is:

[partnershipoffice@btopenworld.com](mailto:partnershipoffice@btopenworld.com)

The address for correspondence is:

The Partnership Office, Holy Trinity Church, Shaw Village Centre, SWINDON, SN5 5PY.

**For items for the next edition of Partnership news please send them to the office or to Dick Gray no later than 21<sup>st</sup> December.**

The editor's e-mail address is [dick643@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dick643@yahoo.co.uk)

The Partnership web site is <http://www.wswinlyd.org.uk>

## The Ten Commandments of Blogging

Ten cyberspace commandments have been posted online to give bloggers a moral edge in a virtual age.

1. You shall not put your blog before your integrity.
2. You shall not make an idol of your blog.
3. You shall not misuse your screen name by using your anonymity to do wrong.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by taking one day off a week from your blog.
5. Honour your fellow-bloggers above yourself, and do not give undue significance to their mistakes.
6. You shall not murder someone else's honour, reputation or feelings.
7. You shall not use the web to commit adultery in your mind.
8. You shall not steal another person's content.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your fellow-blogger.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's blog ranking. Be content with your own content.

*The Ten Commandments of Blogging come from a 'Godblogs' event by the Evangelical Alliance. The Alliance is inviting feedback on the commandments, which are on the Alliance website, at [www.eauk.org](http://www.eauk.org).*

Can we too can find a way of giving that reflects who we are and what we can reasonably afford, rather than being caught in the trap of consumerism that robs us of our integrity and leaves us the poorer in the long run? Can we even dare to break with some family traditions, and change the patterns so that what is important to us is the focus of our celebrations: people rather than presents; time rather than tinsel trappings and a spirit of gratefulness rather than a yearning for gadgetry. As we consider this, maybe we can simplify Christmas. Maybe we can do a little less, give a little less in financial terms, and so give ourselves, our families and our friends a little more of our time and attention. Give ourselves a little more of our time and attention you ask? Well maybe! In that when we have time just to 'be' then we discover more of who we are, more of who God made us and so increase our relationship with him. So that Jesus himself can add colour to our Christmas as we make way for time for ourselves and time for him, amongst the rest of what we need to do.

So may this Advent and Christmas season be for each of us a time of moving beyond reason to wonder, beyond grasping to letting go, and beyond competition to cooperation, in the power of the babe of Bethlehem. Amen

Anne Carter

Christ became what we are that He might make us what he is. –  
*Athanasius*

He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find Christmas under a tree. - *Sunshine Magazine*.

## REMIX YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS SHOW

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 7.30 – 9.30 pm at Shaw church.  
This will include performances of music, dance and drama from the young people, plus special Toybox video & interview.  
Special guest musician will be Benjamin Horta from Brazil.

Refreshments and craft stalls in the interval.

Tickets: £5 per family; £2 per adult £1 under 18's (includes refreshments and Christmas Quiz) All proceeds to Toybox charity giving life back to street children in Latin America

Contact Claire for more details.

## A prayer from Papyri - Helper of Men

*This prayer, found during an archaeological excavation, is very early, probably between second and fourth century.*

Helper of men who turn to you,  
Light of men in the dark,  
Creator of all that grows from seed,  
Promoter of all spiritual growth,  
Have mercy, Lord, on me.  
And make me a temple fit for you.  
Do not look too closely at my sins,  
For if you are quick to notice my faults  
I shall not dare to appear before you.  
In your great mercy,  
In your boundless love,  
Wash away my sins  
By the hands of Jesus Christ,  
Your only child, the chief healer of souls.

## ArcAngel Christian Bookshop 45 Victoria Road

Did you Know that your local Christian bookshop sells far more than just books? Check out the colourful and attractive range of gifts for all ages, including music, cards, jewellery, T-shirts and soon a café too. ArcAngel was launched just over a year ago in Victoria Road. With competition from internet sales and a general decline in reading, your local Christian bookshop needs your support. So, why not buy your Christmas gifts there? If budgets are tight, check out their range of second hand books at your leisure, relaxing in a comfortable chair with a cup of tea!

Open Monday-Friday (except Wednesday) 10am-5pm & Saturday 10am-4pm. 01793 520528. There is free parking in Hunt Street.  
Visit their web site: <http://www.arcangelbookshop.com/>

## Do you dread weekends?

There's a new syndrome out there, and you might have it. Millions of us do, it seems.

It is WAS - Weekend Anxiety Syndrome. It can take many forms, but basically, it means that you are repeatedly failing to do everything you want to do, or feel you need to do, between each Friday evening and Sunday evening.

Now you know WAS is out there, you will know instantly if you've got it, or not. Here are some symptoms: your long list of things to do ...never quite gets done; your compulsion to go out for Saturday night enjoyment... is always a disappointment. You'd have more fun at home.

Sufferers find that WAS peaks late on Sunday afternoon, by which time you have to admit failure one more time... depression and flatness follows - until on Monday, you are free again... for another week!

## **Christmas Care**

**24<sup>th</sup> December 2pm until 28<sup>th</sup> December**

**Queens Drive Methodist Church**

Are you able to help as a volunteer or can you donate money or needed items?

Meeting for volunteers 13<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm.

Donations of money, food, sleeping bags, blankets, towels, toiletries, good warm clothing, shoes are welcome.

Donations received Sat 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> 10am-3pm or 17<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9:30pm.

**More details** [www.christmascare.co.uk](http://www.christmascare.co.uk)

## **Baptist Assembly 2009**

**Bournemouth International Centre, 1-4<sup>th</sup> May**

The theme for 2009 will be 'Who do we think we are?' celebrating and reflecting on 400 years of Baptist life. The publicity material states, 'The Baptists in 1609 were very clear who they were and what they stood for. The fires of persecution made sure of that! Four hundred years later the world is a very different place and it's vital for us to reflect on who we are.'

'One thing is certain – we have always had mission at our heart! Assembly will give us the opportunity to examine what it means to live for Christ here in the UK and how we can share the good news with a broken and divided world. '

'Through inspirational teaching and worship, through seminars and fellowship we will explore the big question.'

Baptist Assembly is open to all, and has a parallel programme for children and young people. if you would like to know more or consider going then please talk to Anne Carter asap, as cheaper hotel accommodation sells out fast. Cost for the conference is £86 for adults, with accommodation booked independently. Further info online at [www.baptistassembly.org.uk](http://www.baptistassembly.org.uk)

## **Partnership Quiet Day Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> November**

Thirteen members of the partnership churches met in Aldbourne Methodist Church for a quiet day of reflection expertly led by Rev Derek Collins, Methodist Superintendent Minister of Swindon and Marlborough Circuit.

As the account of God's call to Jeremiah was read [Jeremiah 1 vv6-9a] we were asked to hold on to a word, phrase or picture that the reading highlighted in our mind.

After sharing our images, we considered what God might be calling us to do through the images that were revealed.

Following a break, for coffee, our artistic skills, or lack of them, were called into action to express in pictorial form our life journey at the present moment.

We continued to explore the impact of God in giving our lives direction and purpose, and how this might affect the life of our church and that of the partnership.

It was good to spend time together with members of our partnership churches and to be open with each other in our discussions as we journeyed through the events of the day.

It has been difficult to get across in words the special time we spent together last Sat but we felt it was a great blessing.

The leadership, fellowship and venue were superb and the Blue Boar Pub on the Green had an excellent lunch menu.

Nigel and Jean Margetts

## Dates for your diary

# LUNCH

# BUNCH

Enjoy a time of meeting friends over lunch at Toothill church from  
12 noon  
EVERY SECOND TUESDAY  
December 9th



### Christmas Dinner for One?

Not the way most of us would choose to eat a festive meal. So, Dave and Anne, Jan and Gordon are hosting a traditional Christmas dinner on Christmas Day at Toothill Church, for any who will be on their own. Places limited to 20. Please ring Anne asap to book a place. No charge, but opportunity to make a donation towards costs.

## Mayor's Christmas message

Christmas is a great Christian Festival. It is the time when Christians celebrate that, when things seemed at their darkest, hope and new life came quietly into the world to change how people lived.

It also allows a period in the year when people of all faiths and beliefs can reflect on their lives and spend time with their friends and families, a chance to relax and have some enjoyment.

In this world there is much happening at the moment, war, famine and the presence of terrorism. Financial uncertainty will be with us all in 2009, but we must not be daunted by any of this. There will be people who are separated this Christmas from their loved ones, whether in hospital, care homes or because they are in places of war, but some will be separated by the domestic demands of the festive period; these include shop workers, emergency services workers and health staff.

I hope Christmas is a good time for you all. If it is, be thankful, if not; be hopeful! Please do all you can to make Christmas different and if possible make a difference this Christmas for other people.

Please give, contribute or support in any way that you can; those that are particularly vulnerable at this special time of year, such as the homeless, and other vulnerable people who are aged or ill and live alone. Those outside these shores who are subjected to famine, war or natural disasters also need our help.

I have learnt during this year that there is much valuable work being done by people of all faiths and from all walks of life, and I am especially grateful to all those in our community who all year round volunteer and give time to run local groups, social activities and raise funds for charities. I wish that you all will share in the goodwill of this time of year.

Steve Wakefield Mayor of Swindon  
Cllr Toothill and Westlea

## Other Local Events

## Is it YOU??

### Healing and Wholeness service

#### Highworth Methodist Church

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December

Starting at 7.45pm

Led by Rev John Wiltshire

All are very welcome

Refreshments will be served afterwards.

#### Mayor's Carol service

You are welcome to join us for the Annual Mayor's Carol service on Tuesday 02 December at 6pm in Swindon Moravian Church, Dixon Street (Eastcott Hill end).

#### Christmas Tree Festival

##### Friday 5<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December:

St Sampson's Church Cricklade

Our first Christmas Tree Festival. Trees donated and decorated by schools, clubs and organisations in Cricklade. Each tree will represent a carol. Entertainment by local groups and musicians. Memory tree to add the name of a loved one. Children's corner including storytelling. Guess the carol quiz. Refreshments.

Contact: Carolyn Russell

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December** 7.30pm-9pm – hot drinks

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December** 10am-4.30pm – coffee, light lunches, afternoon teas

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December** 3pm-5pm – carols at 4pm

#### Dreaming of a Holy Night

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December** Graham Kendrick's 'Dreaming of a Holy Night Tour'. Evening performance fully booked. Tickets are still available for the matinee at 3.30pm. Phone the Wyvern on 01793 524481 to book.

\*Local Christian youth outreach charity ncounter\* are looking for a lively, outgoing person to head up our fund raising activities. If you have experience or an interest in fund raising or marketing, and are interested in joining the team part time (20h/week), please email [brian@ncounter.co.uk](mailto:brian@ncounter.co.uk) <<mailto:brian@ncounter.co.uk>> or phone Brian on 01793 849425 (office hours) for details. Salary £14,000 p.a. pro rata.

#### No excuse Sunday

In order to make it possible for everyone to attend church next week we are planning a special 'no excuse' Sunday.

1. Cots will be placed in the vestibule for those who say 'Sunday is my only day for sleeping in'.
2. Eye drops will be available for those whose eyes are tired from watching TV too late on Saturday night.
3. We will have steel helmets for those who believe the roof will come in if they turn up at a church service.
4. Blankets will be provided for those who say the church is too cold, and fans will be available for those who say it is too hot.
5. Score cards will be given to anyone who wishes to count the hypocrites.
6. We guarantee that some relatives will be present for those who like to go visiting on a Sunday
7. One section of the church will have some trees and grass for those who see God in nature, especially on the golf course.
8. The worship area will be decorated with Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the church without them.

Found in the church magazine in Aldbourne on our reflective prayer day. Which was also found in a church in Bradford on Avon.

## Church Services in the Partnership

### All Saints, Lydiard Millicent

Date	Time	Form
7 <sup>th</sup> December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Morning Service
	6:30pm	Evening Worship
14 <sup>th</sup> December	8:00am	Communion Prayer Book
	10:30am	All age Christingle
	6:30pm	Evening Worship
21 <sup>st</sup> December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Morning Service
	6:30pm	Candlelight Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>5:00pm</b>	All age Christmas service
	<b>11:30pm</b>	Midnight Service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	8:00am	Holy Communion
	10:30am	Christmas day family Service
28 <sup>th</sup> December	8:00am	Communion Prayer Book
	10:30am	Communion Service

### St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
7 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Morning service
	<b>3:00pm</b>	Oliver Tomkins
14 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Junior Church nativity
	6:30pm	<b>Partnership Communion</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>7:30pm</b>	<b>HOOK</b>
21 <sup>st</sup> December	10:00am	Christmas Miscellany
	6:30pm	Carols by Candlelight
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>3:00pm</b>	<b>Crib Service</b>
	<b>11:30pm</b>	Midnight service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Family Communion
28 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Communion

## Church Services in the Partnership

### Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
7 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Family Communion Service
14 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Morning Service & Nativity
21 <sup>st</sup> December	10:30am	Communion
	<b>6:30pm</b>	Carols by candlelight
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>11:00pm</b>	Midnight service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Family Service
28 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Family Service

### Toothill

Date	Time	Form
7 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Morning service
14 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Communion
	<b>4:00pm</b>	Carols by candlelight
21 <sup>st</sup> December	10:30am	Morning service with nativity
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>11:30pm</b>	Midnight service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>10:00am</b>	Morning Service
28 <sup>th</sup> December	10:30am	Morning service

Please note the changed time of services!!

### Westlea

Date	Time	Form
7 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Communion
14 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Family service
21 <sup>st</sup> December	10:00am	Morning Service
	<b>6:30pm</b>	Carols by candlelight
24 <sup>th</sup> December	<b>3:00pm</b>	Crib Service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Christmas family communion
28 <sup>th</sup> December	10:00am	Family service