



Prayer points

- Those who might be lonely at Christmas
- Our ministers
- Young people
- The homeless

Contact information

The Partnership office is open on Monday through Friday mornings or afternoons. Please call to find out when it is open. The office number is 01793 874221. The office e-mail is:

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For items for the next edition of Partnership news please send them to the office or to Dick Gray no later than 31st December.

The editor's e-mail address is dick643@yahoo.co.uk

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

Snow

Knock knock!

Who's there?

Snow.

Snow who?

Snow use – I've forgotten my name again!

In Partnership December 2009



Dear Friends

As we begin this Advent season, I am reminded of Graham Kendrick's carol entitled 'Rumours of Angels'. It continues:

Rumours of Angels, visions of light
New star appearing piercing the night
Town full of strangers sleeps in the gloom
God comes among us, there is no room

Today as Christmas approaches it's far from being a scenario where towns sleep in the gloom. Instead we are surrounded by lights and music, adverts and alcohol; calling us to shop, shop, shop till we are ready to drop. All this frenzied activity focussed on a day we call Christmas, but that has little real connection with the original birthday of Christ. So yet again, as Christ comes among us there is 'no room'.

So how do we live authentically as Christians, whilst connecting with the lives of family and friends and their activities? Maybe there are simple changes we can make. Some of our churches or individuals are trying the following

- Each family to send one card to the church – to be displayed on a board. The saving in money given to a children's charity. (Eco friendly too with saving of paper)
- For those who already have everything they need, ask for, or send, a Tearfund 'Living Gift' instead – you buy the voucher.. they choose what gift to exchange it for – go to www.livinggifts.org.uk
- Have fun making simple gifts instead of buying them
- Use this advent season to spend 5 minutes a day reading a part of the Nativity story, and praying for those you know and love – preferably together with the others who live in your house.

The song continues

*And the years of our sorrow have rolled on and on
And the wars of our pride never cease
We have ravaged the earth with our envy and greed
Tell me when will we welcome His peace*

Christmas traditions – which ones do you still keep?

What traditions are becoming the ghosts of Christmas past, and what does the Christmas of the future seem to hold? One survey has found the following:

- 1 - Putting a penny in the Christmas pudding? Only 3 per cent of us still put them in.
- 2 - Tangerines in Christmas stockings? 69 per cent of us have not even heard of this old custom
- 3 - Toasting the Queen? 18 per cent of us still do this at Christmas lunch.
- 4 - Dousing the Christmas pudding in brandy and setting it alight? 29 per cent of us still like this.
- 5 - Home-made Christmas cake? Well, 46 per cent of us still enjoy this.
- 6 - Or German stollen instead? 25 per cent of us prefer this, or Italian panettone (14 per cent of us)
- 7 - Roasting some chestnuts? Only about 5 per cent of us will be doing this.
- 8 - Chocolates? 64 per cent of us will indulge over Christmas.
- 9 - Champagne for Christmas breakfast? 65 per cent of us now think this is a great idea.
- 10 - Watch the Queen's speech? 26 per cent of us still do this.
- 11 - Play charades? 28 per cent of us will have a go.
- 12 - Watch a DVD/play a computer game instead? 42 per cent of us will do this.
- 13 - Sing carols? Amazingly, only 16 per cent of us will bother.
- 14 - Pick mistletoe? A paltry 9 per cent of us will go out searching for some.
- 15 - Make a holly wreath? Only 6 per cent of us will tackle any holly this year.
- 16 - Any pre-prepared shop food? 24 per cent of us will be 'cheating' this Christmas...

reading there is a short comment which is worth spending some time meditating on and praying about.

The book also includes time lines, descriptions of each book and brief comments.

This is something that you may wish to do individually or could be a challenge to a home group or even a whole congregation. Why not give it a go in 2010. If we know our Bible better we will be less afraid to talk about our faith.

Janet Gray

Silent night...?

As the stressful Christmas season gets underway, try and get enough sleep. Research in the US has found that seven hours a night is needed if you want your immune system to stay strong. Less than seven hours a night, and you are five and a half time more likely to catch a cold. (How do they work these figures out?!) In any case, for some good tips on how to get a good night's sleep, visit www.sleepcouncil.com.

Preventing dementia

Have three to five cups of coffee a day, and you could cut your risk of Alzheimer's, according to recent research in Sweden and Finland. It also found that people who stay calm are much less likely to develop dementia than their stressed-out friends. And while you having that coffee and staying calm, do it with someone else... for having a good social life is vital, too.

How do we change it? Let us spread the rumour that Christ is coming, with a smile on our faces and excitement in our eyes... Let us help to make room for Jesus, Emmanuel, to actually be 'God with us', as we think about him and reflect Him in our conversations and attitudes to those we come into contact with. Then maybe we can make the difference and allow Christ to bring some of His peace into this world. We will indeed help to make room for Him.

Wishing you God's peace in your hearts, homes and churches the Christmastide

Anne Carter

LUNCH BUNCH



Join us again for a good lunch,
friendship and fellowship
Second TUESDAY of the month
December 8th

Mince pie

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?
A mince spy!

Dates for your diary

THE REMIX CHRISTMAS CABARET

... is coming to Shaw Church on Tuesday 15th December, 7 pm - 9 pm

....

A mixture of music, dance and Christmas fun,
all in aid of Helen & Douglas House
(local childrens' hospice)

The ncounter band, "Hero next door" will be our host band and a buffet
will be served from
7.45 - 8.30pm.

Put the date in your diaries and reserve your tickets now
Tickets: £3.00 Adults; £2.00 children (under 16); £8.50 Families to
include buffet and drinks.
See Claire for more details

Calling all Men for Breakfast

December 5th 8:00am Toothill Church

The All Saints Men's Group meets monthly at the wonderfully
equipped Toothill Church.

Good advice

If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on
the aspirin bottle: 'Take two aspirin' and 'Keep away from children!'

Wise men?

I was telling my three boys the story of the Nativity and how the Wise
Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus.

Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six-year-old observed, "Mum, a
Wise Woman would have brought nappies."

Online for Advent: Mary and Joseph – the Road Movie

If you think local nativity plays are charming/hilarious, give yourself a
treat and visit a website called: www.paperlesschristmas.org.uk. You
won't regret it!

Those clever people at Jerusalem Productions and the Bible Reading
Fellowship have brought the story of Mary and Joseph up to date – and
how. This online Advent production certainly gives the Christmas
story a fresh and original makeover.

The Adventures of Mary and Joseph: The Road Movie will run
throughout Advent, and will soon have you hooked. Tell your friends
about it, and spread the poignancy of the old Christmas story in a fun,
funny and thought-provoking way.

A WAY TO GET TO KNOW THE BIBLE BETTER

For a number of year now I have been trying to read my Bible
completely during each year. This has proved an interesting exercise
and I definitely know it better than I did. (Although I still get some of
the Bible Quiz answers wrong!)

This year I decided to try reading it in a new way. I used the "Cover to
Cover Complete" edition. This can be bought through
www.amazon.co.uk and any other on line book shop or I'm sure
Waterstones would order it for you.

Cover to Cover Complete takes you through the Bible in the order in
which events happened (or at least the editor's understanding of them).
This really helps you to get a better perspective on how the events of
scripture fit together and to see something of the way that God has
been at work throughout history. I found the interspersing of the
prophets with the history particularly helpful. It takes about ten minutes
a day to do the actual reading, depending how fast you read. However
you will get more out of the experience if you start with a prayer,
asking God to speak to you through His word. At the end of each

Deanery Synod

The last meeting of Deanery Synod discussed:

- Climate change, its effects, how Christian aid is campaigning on behalf of people already affected and what churches can do to reduce their own carbon footprint. There were a number of suggestions, keeping heating costs down was a high priority!
- Creating a Deanery Leadership team to help the Rural Dean, Rob Burles develop the new Diocesan strategy. Churches are asked to nominate people with gifts and skills who could join this team.
- Nominations for Diocesan Synod were made. The parish has one co-opted member, David Ratnam
- Buses and trains will leave Swindon on 5th December to take people to the blue wave demonstration in London, this will give ministers a mandate to campaign for cutting carbon emissions in Copenhagen. Alternatively you could join the Bishop of Swindon and cycle. Info is at www.swindonbluewave.org.uk

Mary Poole

Time for us to act locally as well as nationally, says Dr Williams

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged national leaders to take bold decisions at the Copenhagen summit this month (December). He said that the Bible offers “an ethical perspective based on reverence for the whole of life”.

Dr Williams called for effective collaborative local action to reduce carbon emissions. He also encouraged the small actions which mark a break with destructive patterns of consumption and waste and help “to make us more aware of the diversity of life around us”.

“The Christian story,” he went on, “tells us of a material human life inhabited by God and raised transfigured from death; of a sharing of material food which makes us sharers in eternal life...” Quoting Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, he said: “I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death... choose life”.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BIBLE BIBLE QUIZ NUMBER 5

How did you get on with knowing the books of the Bible? If you had trouble here are the answers.

1. All is vanity—**Ecclesiastes 1:2**
2. But avoid stupid controversies—**Titus 3:9**
3. Where, O death, is your victory?—**1 Corinthians 15:55**
4. Finally, beloved, whatever is true—**Philippians 4:8,9**
5. Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared—**Daniel 5:5**
6. God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”.—**Exodus 3:14**
7. Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked—**Psalms 1:1**
8. I am not ashamed of the gospel—**Romans 1:16**
9. I hate, I despise your festivals—**Amos 5:21**
10. I went away full—**Ruth 1:21**
11. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you—**Philemon vv 15,16a**
12. I must turn aside and look at this great sight—**Exodus 3:3**
13. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend—**Ephesians 3:18,19**
14. ...we are more than conquerors—**Romans 8:37**
15. Have you not known?—**Isaiah 40:28**

COMPETITION

This month, being the Christmas issue there will be two quizzes, one for those under 12 and one for those who are older, and being Christmas there will be a small **PRIZE** for the winner of each age group! Please email your answers to Janet Gray with your name and contact details by Sunday 20th December. The winners will be drawn from all the correct entries. Even if you haven't tried the quiz before, try this one and encourage your children to have a go too.

UNDER 12 QUIZ

1. Where was Jesus born?
Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho
2. Who was the mother of Jesus?
Martha, Elizabeth, Mary Salome
3. What did Jesus sleep in after he was born?
Manger, Cot, Bed, Straw
4. How many wise men does the Bible say came to visit Jesus?

- Two, Three, Four, It doesn't say
5. How did the wise men know that the King of the Jews had been born?
They saw a star in the East, They had a vision, Angels told them, They guessed
 6. Which of the following is not a gift that the wise men brought for Jesus?
Gold, Silver, Myrrh, Frankincense
 7. Who else came to visit Jesus?
Carpenters, Farmers, Shepherds, Merchants
 8. Who said "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to all men"?
Mary, Angels, Wise men, Elizabeth
 9. Who wanted to kill Jesus?
Herod, Caesar Augustus, Wise men, Cyrenius
 10. Who was the father of Jesus?
Simeon, Zacharias, Joseph, God
 11. What ritual did Jesus undergo when he was eight days old?
Circumcision, Birthday party, Baptism, Christening
 12. What was Jesus wrapped in when he was born?
A small robe, A donkey's blanket, Swaddling clothes, A sheet
 13. What was special about Jesus' mother?
She was beautiful, A prophetess, Loved God, A virgin
 14. How were the family warned that someone wanted to kill Jesus?
By a messenger, In a dream, A star appeared, An angel visited them
 15. To what country did the family escape to after they were warned of the death threat to Jesus?
Edom, Phoenicia, Egypt, Syria
 16. In Which city did King Herod live?
Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho
 17. Children in the region of what age were to be killed in the hope of killing Jesus?
6 months and under, 1 year and under, 2 years and under, 3 years and under
 18. What was the name of the man Mary was engaged to at the time she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit?
Simeon, Zacharias, Joseph, James
 19. Who was Jesus descended from?
King Saul, King David, Jeremiah, Moses
 20. In what city was Jesus brought up as a child?
Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jericho

Make waves for climate change

Thousands of eco-minded Brits are expected to flow through the streets of London on Saturday 5 December. They will be taking part in a 'human wave' of support for action on climate change. The event comes just ahead of crunch talks at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen.

The Wave, a carnival-style street procession, will begin at 1pm from the Embankment in London. It is being organised by the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition.

The family friendly event is encouraging people to wear blue clothing and bring blue fabric and banners to create a 'human wave' that will flow along the Thames Embankment towards Westminster. A finale will take place at 3pm as *The Wave* encircles the Houses of Parliament.

The Wave... is coming to London on 5 December

On Saturday 5 December, the UK's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change is planned to flood the streets of central London, ahead of the crucial UN climate talks in Copenhagen.

The Wave, a carnival-style street procession beginning at 12pm from Grosvenor Square in London, is being organised by the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition. A finale will take place at 3pm as *The Wave* encircles the Houses of Parliament.

The Stop Climate Chaos Coalition represents 11 million members across 100 UK organisations, from the Women's Institute and RSPB to Christian Aid and Unison.

For further information on *The Wave*, including the procession route and importantly how to get to the event from across the UK, visit www.stopclimatechaos.org

OVER 12 QUIZ

Radio Advertising – Have a listen to the radio ads that will be played on Heart FM during the 3 weeks up to Christmas. These ads have been paid for by you – out of the finances of Swindon Churches Together. <http://www.swindonchurches.ik.com/news/home.ikml>
Why shouldn't we advertise Christmas – locally?

We are also advertising on bus stops during the Christmas period. Look out for the adverts.

<http://www.churchads.org.uk/2009/index.html>

Christmas conversations

The monks at a remote monastery deep in the woods followed a rigid vow of silence. Their vow could only be broken once a year—on Christmas—by one monk. That monk could speak only one sentence. One Christmas, Brother Thomas had his turn to speak and said, "I love the delightful mashed potatoes we have every year with the Christmas roast!" Then he sat down. Silence ensued for 365 days.

The next Christmas, Brother Michael got his turn and said, "I think the mashed potatoes are lumpy, and I truly despise them!" Once again, silence ensued for 365 days.

The following Christmas, Brother Paul rose and said, "I am fed up with this constant bickering!"

As for giving generously over Christmas:

Let us give according to our incomes lest God make our incomes to match our gifts. – *Anon*

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. - Duane Hulse.

1. Which prophet said, "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son?"
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel
2. What does the name Emmanuel mean?
God is for us, God is with us, God loves us, God saves us
3. What did the prophet Micah say about Jesus birth?
He would be born in Bethlehem, He would be laid in a manger, He would be visited by shepherds, He would be raised in Nazareth
4. In which month of Elizabeth's pregnancy did the angel appear to Mary?
Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh
5. What is the name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
Uriel, Raphael, Michael, Gabriel
6. Who sang, "My soul doth magnify the Lord"?
Elizabeth, Mary, Angels, Joseph
7. The angel said to Mary that Jesus would reign over the house of whom?
David, Solomon, Jacob, Abraham
8. What was the name of the old prophetess who saw Jesus when he was presented in the temple?
Huldah, Deborah, Hannah, Anna
9. Which Caesar decreed that all the world should take part in a census?
Augustus, Julius, Nero, Claudius
10. Who said, "A light to lighten the Gentiles" when he saw Jesus?
Joseph, Simeon, Zacharias, Angels
11. When the angels left the shepherds, what did the shepherds do?
Ushered the sheep into their pen, Went home, Went quickly to Bethlehem, Went to tell the news to Herod
12. What did Joseph want to do when he heard that Mary was pregnant?
Keep it a secret, Quietly divorce her, Send her back to her parents, Have the child given away
13. Which prophet said "Out of Egypt I have called my son"?
Hosea, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Malachi
14. Who told Joseph that Jesus would save his people from their sins?
Shepherds, Mary, Simeon, Angel of the Lord
15. What was the sign that the angels gave to the shepherds, so that they would recognise Jesus?

- Found in a stable lying in a manger, Wrapped in swaddling clothes lying among donkeys, Wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger, Found in a stable with a star above it
16. What did the shepherds do after they had visited Jesus?
Spread the news about Jesus' birth, Went home, Went back to their sheep, Went to buy Jesus presents
 17. How long did Jesus remain in Egypt?
Until the barley harvest, The death of Herod, He was 5 yrs old, The rising of the first full moon of the year
 18. What sacrifice did Mary and Joseph offer when the days of purification were complete after Jesus' birth?
A Lamb and two pigeons, A goat, A lamb, Two turtledoves or pigeons
 19. What was the name of Jesus' cousin?
James, John, Peter, Joseph
 20. Who succeeded Herod after his death?
Archelaus, Caesar Augustus, Herod Antipas, Alphaeus

Good luck and a very happy Christmas.

Biblequizzes.org.uk

Christmas: Why does it begin at midnight with Holy Communion?

The hour was first chosen at Rome in the fifth century to symbolise the idea that Christ was born at midnight – a mystical idea in no way hindered by historical evidence! No one knows the hour of his birth.

Certainly in recent times, Holy Communion at midnight on Christmas morning has proved popular with modern families. One British writer pointed out its "domestic convenience" in 1947: "for where there are children and no servants, husband and wife may be unable to communicate at any other time." (So things don't change, then!)

Ham

We had cured ham for Boxing Day dinner. We all wondered what illness it was cured of.

O come all Ye faithful
Come & sing carols
Help put the Christ back into Christmas
Thursday 10th December
6.30pm-7.30pm
Brunel Centre (well lit and warm!)
 Refreshments afterwards in the Roundabout Coffee House
 Arranged by Swindon Churches Together Further details: Fred Moss 01793 695522

Healing and Wholeness Service
Highworth Methodist Church
Wednesday 16th December
Starting at 7.45pm
Preacher: John Wiltshire
Refreshments will be served afterwards.

School play

A little boy, excited about his part in the Christmas play at school, came home and shouted, "I got a part in the Christmas play! I got a part in the Christmas play!"
 "What part did you get?" asked his mother excitedly.
 "I'm one of the three wise guys!"

CHRISTMAS CARE SHELTER 09.

Venue QUEENS DRIVE METHODIST CHURCH HALL

From 2pm CHRISTMAS EVE to MON 28th DEC

PROVIDING SHELTER FOR HOMELESS & LONELY PEOPLE OVER
THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD.

**ONCE AGAIN WE ARE APPEALING FOR
VOLUNTEERS TO HELP PREPARE & RUN THE
SHELTER**

VOLUNTEERS ARE ASKED TO WORK 4hr SHIFTS

7am-11am – 11am-3pm – 3pm-7pm – 7pm-11pm

11pm-7am. 6 volunteers per shift plus a shift leader.

WE REQUIRE

**FOOD, SLEEPING BAGS, BLANKETS, DUVETS, PILLOWS,
TOWELS, TOILETRIES, WARM CLOTHING, SHOES ECT,
DONATIONS OF MONEY TO COVER EXPENSES.**

VOLUNTEERS MEETINGS

THURS 12th NOV 8pm

WED 18th NOV 8pm

**THE CHURCH HALL WILL BE OPEN FOR
DONATIONS OF FOOD BEDDING ECT**

SAT 12th DEC 10am-3pm WED 16th DEC 7pm-9.30

FRI 18th DEC 7pm-9.30pm SAT 19th DEC 10am-3pm

**THE PILGRIM CENTRE, REGENT ST WILL BE OPEN FOR
DONATIONS FROM 10.30am-2pm MON to FRI.**

**CHEQUES MADE OUT TO CHRISTMAS CARE, SEND TO
18 HELSTON RD, PARK NORTH, SWINDON, SN3 2LA.**

CONTACT POINTS

Chairman Patsy Moloney 01793 642368

Volunteers to contact Betty Spence 01793 485483

12 Days of Christmas

When most people hear 'The 12 days of Christmas' they think of the song of the same name. It is believed by many that this song had its origins as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith. From 1558 to 1829 Roman Catholics in England were not able to practice their faith openly, so they had to find other ways to pass on their beliefs. The song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' is one example of how many people believe that they did it.

The song goes, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me..."

The 'true love' represents God and the 'me' who receives these presents is the Christian.

The 'partridge in a pear tree' was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.

The 'two turtle doves' were the Old and New Testaments - another gift from God.

The 'three French hens' were faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (1Corinthians 13).

The 'four calling birds' were the four Gospels, which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The 'five golden rings' were the first five books of the Bible, also called the 'Book of Moses'.

The 'six geese a-laying' were the six days of creation.

The 'seven swans a swimming' were 'seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.' (1Corinthians 12:9-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1Peter 4:10-11.)

The 'eight maids a milking' were the eight beatitudes.

The 'nine ladies dancing' were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

The 'ten lords a-leaping' were the Ten Commandments.

The 'eleven pipers piping' were the eleven faithful disciples.

The 'twelve drummers drumming' were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

So the next time you hear 'The 12 Days of Christmas' you can make up your own mind: could this non-religious sounding song really have had its origins in the Christian Faith, or not?

Church Services in the Partnership

All Saints, Lydiard Millicent

Date	Time	Form
6 th December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Morning worship
13 th December	8:00am	Communion Prayer Book
	10:30am	Christingle
20 th December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Communion
	6:30pm	Carol Service
24 th December	5:00pm	All Age Worship
	11:30pm	Midnight Communion
25 th December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Family service
31 st December	8:00am	Communion
	10:30am	Partnership Service

Morning prayers each weekday(except Tuesday) @ 9:00am

St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
6 th December	10:00am	Morning Service
9 th December	2:00pm	Mothers Union Advent Service
13 th December	10:00am	Communion
18 th December	7:30pm	Worship @ Hook
20 th December	10:00am	Family service & Nativity
	6:30pm	Carols by Candlelight
24 th December	4:00pm	Crib Service
	11:00pm	Midnight Communion
25 th December	10:00am	Family Communion
31 st December	10:30am	Partnership Service @ All Saints

Church Services in the Partnership

Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
6 th December	10:30am	Family Communion
13 th December	10:30am	Morning worship
20 th December	10:30am	Family Service
	7:00pm	Carols by Candlelight
24 th December	11:00pm	Midnight Communion
25 th December	10:30am	Family Service
31 st December	10:30am	Partnership Service @ All Saints

Toothill

Date	Time	Form
6 th December	10:30am	Communion
13 th December	10:30am	Family Service
20 th December	10:30am	Coffee & Meditation
	4:00pm	Carols by Candlelight
24 th December	11:30pm	Midnight Communion
25 th December	10:30am	Family worship
31 st December	10:30am	Coffee & Sharing

Westlea

Date	Time	Form
6 th December	10:00am	Communion
13 th December	10:00am	Nativity service
20 th December	10:00am	Morning service
	6:30pm	Carols by Candlelight
24 th December	3:00pm	Crib Service
25 th December	10:00am	Family Communion
31 st December	10:30am	Partnership Service @ All Saints