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**To publicise any News or Events in the next edition of  
In Partnership covering December, please send them to  
the office no later than 19 November.**

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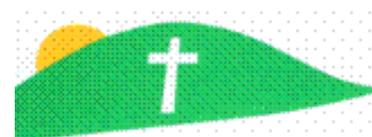
The Partnership web site is <http://www.wswinlyd.org.uk>

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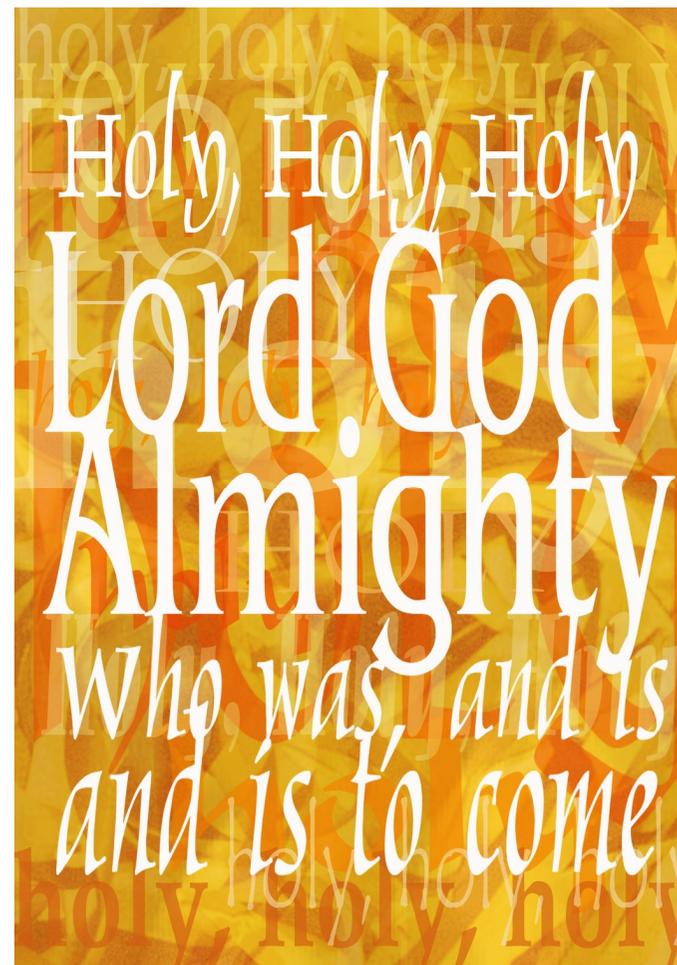
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# In Partnership November 2015



## Stewards of the Kingdom

A Personal Reflection

October has been a very busy and special month. It has been quite strange for me to listen to three different people lead services at Shaw using the Worship Materials that I pulled together but it has been both inspiring and humbling.

This morning (19/10/15) I have sat and listened to an assembly about the Jewish Festival of Hanukkah in Oliver Tomkins School, led by Carol Ennis a member of the Jewish Community here in Swindon. The story behind Hanukkah is about a hero who stands up for his Jewish faith and a miracle that occurs in the temple. As she lit the candles of the Menorah all of the children's eyes were keenly focussed on the light given out. The children beautifully and quietly sang 'Shalom', which means "be safe, be complete, be whole and at peace my friends until we meet again." After the assembly I was talking to Carol and she was saying how important it is today for Jewish people to be heroes of faith, so their faith is kept alive and the stories are told to the next generation.

Talking with Carol made me think again about what Christian Stewardship means and that perhaps in its simplest terms it is about being 'complete and whole' in how we live our lives for the service of God.

At the beginning of the term I was asked to lead an assembly on Creation and Creativity. Creation, easy enough to tell the story, but creativity what would I do? I hit google, looked in all the books I had and found....very little!! The opening of the Bible clearly states 'In the beginning God **created**' and then when he came to make people it clearly says 'God **created** people in his own image.' So why does it appear that we have forgotten that we are a created and creative people made in the image of God?

In the assembly I had no shortage of hands flying up to offer me help with the various creative activities. When I asked the children how they were creative I discovered I was in the company of dancers, singers, writers, scientists, artists, sports stars, everything imaginable and much more.

I wonder though if I asked the same questions in a service full of adults, would I be knocked over by the same degree of enthusiasm? Perhaps as adults we are less likely to view ourselves as creative in an artistic sense but something deep inside of us needs beauty and creativity just as much as the children. I found this quote which really made me think about what it means to be a created and creative person.



## Trevor's Welcome

25 October 2015 at Holy Trinity Church, Shaw

At a very enjoyable and cheerful service Trevor was welcomed as an Associate priest under Bishop's License within the Partnership. Mark Dowling invited representatives from each Church, in the Partnership, the Deanery, Circuit and the Sponsoring body representing the other Denominations to come forward one by one and greet our new Partnership Minister. Silent Prayers were said for Trevor, his family and his health along with Prayers for the Partnership and all those who Minister, the community and world around us.

After the Service all were invited to tea, coffee, cake and a chat with new and old friends.

Thank you to Holy Trinity for providing the facilities and to all who provided the refreshments.

**Welcome Trevor**

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### Baptisms

11 October 2015                  Grace Olivia STONHAM

### Weddings

24 October 2015                  Jonathan Victor Cooke and Sophie Jane Louise Dodman

24 October 2015                  Daniel Paul Norman and Elizabeth Mary Angela Cresswell

## PRAYERS

Please pray for:-

The Thomas family after the deaths of David & Stephen when their whale watching boat capsized in Canada.

Central African Republic to change from a country divided and destroyed by war and violence, to a nation of peace where God's presence reigns.

Emerge

Schools Work

# Friends of **FLAME**

Autumn Edition **FM**

1<sup>st</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> May 2016

 Are you part of a drama group? Do you write plays? Do you want an opportunity to broadcast your talents to the people of Swindon and beyond? We are looking for an original drama/play to broadcast on Flame FM in May 2016. Send in a sample of your work to the contact details below.



Also wanted for broadcast: local poems and prose.  
Don't be shy. Get in touch!

**HELP WANTED!**



Anyone wishing to get involved will be given training. So you don't have to come with the skills but you do need to come with enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the project.

**LAUNCH PARTY**  
**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016**  
**3pm**  
**Bath Road Methodist Church**

*Book it in your diary and come and join us.*

**Funds needed: £10,000. Can you help?**

 Wilkes Academy and Science Boffins have already come on board to sponsor programmes. Don't miss out - if you have a business you want to tell Swindon about do get in touch. Great rates with discounts for block bookings.



*Flame Friends  
We ask for your prayers for the planning and preparation of Flame FM no. 8. That it may shine with the love of Christ across our Borough.*



Website: [www.flamefm.co.uk](http://www.flamefm.co.uk) Facebook & twitter links on website.  
Info: [barbara@flamefm.co.uk](mailto:barbara@flamefm.co.uk), 01793 536815, 80 Okus Road, SN1 4JP



## Stewards of the Kingdom (continued)

“Creativity is like a bucket in a well, drawing out that worship within us, but also pouring back into us the living waters from a God who loves us and gives us such things to experience Him. When we are hit by the chorus of a song, engaged by a dance that we see or are captured by a painting we are looking at God. In that moment God is pouring into us that we might overflow with worship and joy to Him”.

I have been given great hope to learn that we are creative people and I look forward with great enthusiasm to the journey ahead of us as a Partnership discovering more of our God given creativity in the coming months and years. I hope God can stir up our creative juices and awaken our hearts that we can truly be human beings who desire to steward creatively.

In Peatmoor Primary on 28/9/15 I was leading a value based assembly about ‘Being me in my world and being Generous’. It meant I had the privilege of telling the children they were all special to God and he could spot them, just like ‘Where’s Wally?’ anytime, anyplace, anywhere because he knows everything about them. To explore being generous the Feeding of the 5000 story came to life with the aid of a picnic blanket and a lunch box! A group of Year 6’s did the ‘Jelly Bean Challenge’ for me (which I know those of you at Westlea did as part of your service). When asking the children how it felt to be generous giving the jelly beans away, one young lad said “It made me feel really good, I liked being generous but I learnt you also have to make sacrifices”. Wow, that was not quite the profound response I expected from a Year 6 but I think he got it just right and it certainly made me stop and think.

‘Children cannot talk at school.’ Is that fair or unfair statement? I asked the children as an opener to an assembly on Justice at Hazlewood Academy. They were so good at discussing fairness that I will admit the adrenaline was pumping round my body as their voices were getting louder and louder. However, as I began to tell the story of Malala and what it means to stand up for what you believe is right you could have heard a pin drop. With the assistance of a child demonstrating shrugging of their shoulders, a child holding an ice cube and a child placed centrally holding a heart shaped hand the warmer the following reflection had a marked impact on me, let alone the children.

People call for justice  
But are given just –  
a shrug of the shoulders,  
Just words, just excuses.

## Stewards of the Kingdom (continued)

People call for justice  
But are given just ice.  
The icy stare of the unconcerned  
The icy hearts of the uncaring  
Just ice instead of justice.

People call for Justice  
Give us a warm heart  
That beats with courage  
So that we can stand up  
And make our world a fair place.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said “we have responsibilities to speak, even when it might be easier to stay quiet, to point to injustice and to challenge others to join us in righting it.” Malala, a child from a country far away spoke out for what she believed to be fair and made a difference to the world. Now when I stand at the front of a hall full of children, I feel inspired to know that in the faces looking up at me there is the potential for every child to change the world. Our responsibility as adults is to give them the information, the skills and the passion so they so they can stand up for justice.

I returned to Hazlewood Academy for their Christian RE Day on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, with a very busy and exciting timetable. What absolutely amazed me about the day was the children’s 100% engagement in every session and the teacher’s dedication to providing fantastic learning experiences. Deep questions and faith stories flowed freely in all year groups, the teachers with or without knowing it acted as stewards of the Christian faith. Janet Clarke shared at Shaw that it is imperative that a teacher starts each lesson with a positive attitude, an expectation of success and an overwhelming enthusiasm for the subject. Wise words I feel but not just for teachers, wise words for us all.

On Wednesday (14/10/15) I had a very happy morning. Brook Field Year 3 put their RE into action by visiting George Tweed Gardens and learned how to serve their community. It was wonderful to witness true companionship of young and old in community together. The children did gardening, singing, serving cakes, sharing booklets and giving gifts. The interaction between the young and old was amazing and very spiritual.

They finished the morning with the song ‘As One’ which had a great impact on the residents of George Tweed. The message of the song is simple and clear, and it was the perfect end to a beautiful morning which had been a very special experience for the children, teachers and residents of George Tweed.



# Secrets & Signs

## Nativity Workshop

at Holy Trinity Church, Shaw  
Sunday 20th December  
10.00am – 4pm

A fun day for all children of our local community to use their acting, dancing, singing, and artist skills to create a fabulous Nativity Service.

For further information email:  
[gayleschoolswork@gmail.com](mailto:gayleschoolswork@gmail.com)

### Secrets & Signs Nativity Service 4pm

Please bring your family and friends to share in this special celebration.

# A day for Elders



All elders are invited to a day out, designed to refresh eldership and resource you for the vital role you play in the life of the church, through workshops, discussion, etc.

Topics will include worship matters, working as a team, the pastoral care of all ages, developing a vision for the local church.

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015, 10am-4pm**

**at Hannah's @ Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot TQ12 6NQ**

**£36 includes all materials, lunch & refreshments**

*B&B accommodation is available, from £20 (information on request)*

.....  
A Day for Elders      Please reserve me a place.

I enclose £36 (cheque payable to URC SW Synod)

I would like overnight accommodation on Fri 20<sup>th</sup>/Sat 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. *(delete as required)*

Name .....

Church .....

Address .....

Email .....

Dietary or other needs .....

Send to: Dinah Firmin, URC SW Synod Office, The Manse, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton TA2 6BU, to arrive before Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

## Stewards of the Kingdom (continued)

We've got to get on together, think of each other,

Look at ways to help us to get along.

If we can learn how to listen, where there's division, we can live as one.

We've got to trust one another, stand with each other,

Fix our eyes on all that's right not wrong.

If we can learn to be sorry, love everybody, we can live as one.

This week I have a new challenge, one that may surprise and even shock some of you. I am leading an assembly about Islam in Oliver Tomkins. Some of you may be thinking why is our Christian Partnership Schools Worker leading an Assembly on Islam? But it is precisely for that reason that I have agreed to lead the assembly after some considerable thought and prayer. If we are to be Companions in Community we must truly walk with all our brothers and sisters. I have a wonderful young Muslim who is a pupil at Royal Wootton Bassett Academy joining me in the assembly so she can talk about what her faith means to her. I have learnt a lot about Islam and from Islam in my preparations and that is exactly what children are asked to do within the RE curriculum today. We can only live as one in peace if we learn to be tolerant and to listen to each other. The assembly will finish with a time of reflection using light, where we will think about Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Our prayers will focus on peace, respect, justice, looking after each other and doing all the good we can.

My final thought is about being 'completely and wholly' an Ambassador for Christ. What I have discovered is that being an ambassador is a full time job, a huge responsibility but an amazing blessing. I hate shopping at the best of times, and I would often like to shout at my husband when he is slowly browsing the shelves in the supermarket but now everywhere I go I hear a little voice saying "Hello Mrs Bryon". My faith can no longer be hidden away, I cannot assume a different personality when out with my family. I am Mrs Bryon, that middle aged, pretty weird but passionate lady who tells stories about Jesus, sings and generally absentmindedly leaves something behind at every school she visits!

I hope like me you have discovered something new about Stewardship, and possibly not what you expected!

As I have reflected and shared with you, please freely do the same on the Feedback forms you will be given about the Stewards of the Kingdom Partnership Services.

Kindest regards

Gayle

## Regular activities

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month

**Messy Church**                      **08 November**  
**4-5:30pm @ Shaw**

### Every Monday

**After School Youth Group**    **3:30 – 6:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**  
Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

### Every Tuesday

**Coffee Stop**                        **1:30 – 3:00pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**

**Bell Ringing**                      **7-9pm St Mary's Bell Tower**

**Remix Youth Group**              **6:30 – 8:45pm @ Holy Trinity Shaw**

Contact Claire Camm 07981951381

### 4th Tuesday each month

**Lunch Bunch**                      **24 November**  
**Noon @Toothill**

### 2nd Wednesday of each month

**Mothers Union**                    **11 November**  
Contact Doreen Henderson 07434377587    **2pm @ St Mary's Stable Room**

### Every Thursday

**Toothill Tinies**                    **10-11:30am @ Toothill**

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#### Life and death

The vicar was preaching a powerful sermon concerning death and judgment. In the course of the sermon, he said: "Just think – all of you living in this parish will one day die." At this, a man in the front pew began to laugh quietly.

After the service the vicar demanded sternly why he had found such a serious subject so funny? The man explained: "I was just happy, because I don't live in this parish."

## Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer

**Monday 2 November**

On this Day of Prayer, Baptist women from around the world will come together to study God's word, pray and give so that our world will be impacted for Christ.

The 2015 Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer programme begins a new five year series of studies based on the theme 'Arise, Shine'. Over the next five years we will learn that when we rise up he shines through – community, unity, justice and service.

## Youth Worker Vacancy

There is a vacancy for a part-time Youth Worker in Shrivenham with effect from January 2016.

The successful candidate will be employed for 20 hours per week, working with the church and community to develop activities for the 10+ (secondary) age group.

To obtain an application form (Appendix 5.8 of Lay Employment Advisory information on Methodist Church Web Site) or further information please contact: Bob Mawer, Circuit Administration Assistant, Highworth Methodist Church, Vicarage Lane, Highworth, Swindon, Wilts SN6 7AD. Email: [upperthamescircuit@gmail.com](mailto:upperthamescircuit@gmail.com) Tel: (01793) 764544 (Wednesday and Friday mornings) [www.upperthamescircuit.org.uk](http://www.upperthamescircuit.org.uk)

## Highworth Methodist Church - Anniversary Weekend

On the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November, we are celebrating our church anniversary. Rev Paul Ashby and his wife Carmel are coming to lead the weekend.

Paul is a former minister at Highworth Methodist Church, from about 1988 to 1995. Paul then went on to be the Old Testament tutor at Cliff College. Carmel is a local preacher.

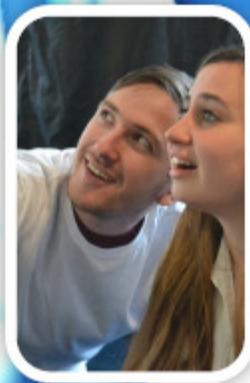
The overall theme for the study day on Saturday is: **'God encounter'**.

Two teaching / practical sessions led by Paul and Carmel, 10.30 -12.30, then a session after lunch, along with a time of worship. Please do come along. Refreshments will be provided, but do bring your own packed lunch.

They will also lead and take both services at the church on Sunday (10.30am and 6pm).

**ODDMENTS  
THEATRE CO**

**St Mary's Church, Purton  
10.30am  
Sunday 1st November 2015**



**All welcome!**

**Come for music, drama,  
coffee and a croissant**

**All age drama based around  
the life of Jesus and his miracles**

## **The RBL Field of Remembrance returns to Lydiard Park**

We will be doing our usual 2 minutes at 2 with a reading from "Hear my Cry" and then Last Post, Silence and Reveille each day from the 7th to the 14th of November.

"Hear my Cry" is the RBL joint venture with the Bible Society. On Remembrance Sunday, the Congregation of St Mary's will have a Parade Service at 10.00am in the Church followed by Act of Remembrance in the Walled Garden at 10.50am and we will be closing the Field at 3.30pm on Sunday the 15th with prayers for the Legion and the Park..

### **Time for Remembrance**

If you would like to pay your own personal tribute to the soldiers who died during the First World War, then why not consider participating in a very easy project being run by the British Legion? Not only is it commemorative, but it is one which will yield big results for your garden next year!



It is the Centenary Poppy Campaign, in which the Royal British Legion has joined forces with B&Q to encourage the public and local authorities to plant Flanders poppy seeds on their own land. The Flanders poppy seeds can be purchased from B&Q, where a donation of £1 will go towards the work of the Legion. Just visit your B&Q for more details.

### **Prayer at Remembrance Time**

*Loving Father,  
When we watch the news or read the papers, we can feel overwhelmed by the tragedy of lives lost or affected by war or terrorism. And our Remembrance Day Services and anniversaries just seem to emphasize that continuing suffering.*

*Help us Lord, to switch our focus from what self-centred people do in their pursuit of power, to what you have done in Jesus, who gave his life so that the brokenness of creation might be restored to wholeness - and that we might have your peace in our hearts, even while the world rages about us. Help us to remember the important thing - to put our trust in Jesus, your Son.*

*In his name, we pray. Amen.  
By Daphne Kitching*

## Messy thoughts

Are you a planner or a tidying upper? I'm someone who is much happier planning new things like a craft activity at Messy church than clearing up the glue, glitter and sticky plates afterwards. A Messy church visitor noticed that we have some people who come and help us tidy up and what an important part of the team they are. They miss some of the fun and excitement of craft activities but are happy to ensure Shaw is left ready for the next group to arrive.

Those of us involved in the cooking also face the challenge of providing food that everyone can enjoy, some are vegetarian, maybe someone will come with an allergy, some children will like the meal others refuse to eat fruit and vegetables. We get it right most of the time.

Messy Church is a Church in its own right, we have faithful worshippers who come month by month and others who we only see occasionally. And we share values that every Church aspires to. We are all one body and those who ensure that things are put away after a service have just as much to offer as those who make a visible presence at the start. As Jesus says in God's kingdom 'the last shall be first'. And we seek to ensure that everyone is fed; not everyone will be able to enjoy all that is on offer but no one should go away feeling hungry.

As we provide spiritually for those who come to our Churches I pray that everyone may leave feeling fed within their soul by music, prayers, the eucharist or perhaps even the sermon.

Messy churches value creativity, hospitality and celebration and as we approach Advent I trust these will be part of our church life for everyone.

Mary Poole

## Messy Church

A day with Lucy Moore who has written books on Messy Church and leads a Messy Church in her own Church.

**25 February 2016**

**Bishops Hull House, Bishops Hull, Taunton, TA1 5EP**

Cost of £5 for bookings prior to 09 November, thereafter it will be £10. For anyone not part of URC or an LEP fee will be £25.

Booking and information via Dinah Firmin on 01823 275470 or [secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk](mailto:secretary@urcsouthwest.org.uk)

## An Alternative Remembrance Service

**Sunday 1st November, 2.30 pm, at the Friends Meeting House, 79 Eastcott Hill**

Swindon Quakers welcome all who would like to join them in a commemoration of the victims of war, those who minister to them and all peacemakers, in an hour's quiet music and readings, wrapped in silence. We hope you will add a leaf of remembrance, prayer or dedication to our Peace Tree.

Tea and time to talk afterwards.

Contact Elspeth Wollen, 01793 845625, for more information

## Call to Support Persecuted Syrian and Iraqi Christians

Many Christians in the Middle East face a threat to their survival at least as great as last century when millions were killed in the Armenian and Assyrian genocides.

Syrian and Iraqi Christians are desperately fleeing Islamic State territory, where they face being driven from their homes, robbed, enslaved or murdered. The Barnabas Fund is organising rescue operations to enable endangered Christians to escape and re-settle outside of the region and is calling on Western political leaders, who generally are reluctant, to grant visas.

First signatories include Lord Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, and Canon Andrew White, former Vicar of Baghdad. Julian and Susan White at St Mary's have a copy of the 'Operation Safe Havens' petition. Contact them on tel 878334 to arrange to sign it.

For further copies of the petition and information, contact the Barnabas Fund at [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org), tel 024 7623 1923.

## Working with Children with Additional Needs

(in particular those on the Autistic Spectrum)

**Saturday 14th November 10am-2pm**

**Church of Christ the Servant, Abbey Meads, SN25 4YX**

Bring a packed lunch

Please register your interest asap, and put the date in your diary. Email [secretary@christtheservant.org.uk](mailto:secretary@christtheservant.org.uk)

## Faith before the firing squad

This year is the centenary of Edith Cavell's death. Many remember her patriotism. But for Edith, patriotism was not enough. Many saw her as a hero and a martyr; some even think she was a spy. But Edith asked to be remembered '... only as a nurse who tried to do her duty'.

Dozens of books have been written about Edith Cavell, but none answered the question: 'How could she be so calm and confident before the firing squad?' My new book, *Edith Cavell - Faith before the firing squad* (Monarch, £8.99) tells Edith's story. It traces the roots of her calm confidence, her love for others expressed in practical, selfless service to friend and foe alike, as well as her courage helping fugitives from war find freedom.

Self-sacrifice was the hallmark of Nurse Edith Cavell's life. She was executed on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1915 for enabling at least 200 Allied soldiers to escape occupied Belgium into neutral territory, but her care had extended to German and Allied soldiers.

On the night before her execution she told the chaplain who came to give her Holy Communion that she was grateful for the weeks of quiet she had spent in solitary confinement after such a busy life. She said, 'I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me ... This I would say, standing as I do in view of God and eternity, I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.'

She knew that the patriotism her fellow prisoners had used in their defence was not enough to enable her to stand in God's presence. Throughout her life she had used the *Book of Common Prayer*, repeating the Lord's Prayer morning and evening, 'forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us'. She knew that she couldn't hold on to hatred or bitterness. She needed to forgive others, just as she had been forgiven.

After they had shared communion, they said together the words of the hymn 'Abide With Me', and they talked about heaven. As he left her cell, she took the chaplain's hand and said with confidence in her eternal future, 'We shall meet again.' She was executed by firing squad at dawn the next morning.

The Partnership of West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze; [www.wswinyd.org.uk](http://www.wswinyd.org.uk) invites you to :



***It's for children of all ages and their carers***

***A time for fun, food, worship and lots of things to make and do***

***At Holy Trinity Shaw Church SN5 5PY (next to Tesco Express)***

***Sunday November 8<sup>th</sup> 4pm – 5.30pm***

***Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> 4pm – 5.30pm***



[westswindonmessychurch@googlemail.com](mailto:westswindonmessychurch@googlemail.com)

## The message of Advent? - history is going somewhere!

*'And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger...'* (Luke 2:7)

*'They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.'* (Matthew 24:30)

What a contrast between the humble birth of Jesus in Bethlehem – and his eventual return! No one knows when that day will be, but it will be earth-shaking. In the meantime, Advent reminds us of the last of six great saving actions of God in Jesus Christ.

The Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem was to inaugurate our salvation. The Death of Jesus at Calvary established it – forever. The Resurrection of Jesus at Easter confirmed it. The Ascension of Jesus to heaven celebrated it. The Gift of the Spirit at Pentecost drove it worldwide. And sixthly will come the Return of Jesus at the world's end – to consummate and complete it.

The message of Advent reminds us that history is not circular or locked into an unending stalemate. Neither can we ever accept a notion of successive reincarnations, for the Bible is clear that *man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment* (Hebrews 9:27).

The Bible has had many pre-runs of that final 'Day of the Lord.' Noah's flood, the overthrow of wicked Babylon; these and other upheavals were but pointers to the final 'Day of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 1:8), when all wrongs will be stopped, and the Lord shall reign with justice.

For the Bible is clear that world history is leading to a *Conclusion*, to the new heaven and the new earth. That will be inaugurated when 'He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' Christ's return will usher in the final triumph, bringing about the dismantling of the whole apparatus of Evil that has so harassed us across the centuries.

The Cross and Resurrection secured the victory over evil. Christ's return will make it final! Believers echo Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - 'And so we will be with the Lord for ever.' If we have a *strong view of the future, we can be sure it will energise us in the present!*

In the meantime, Advent is coming round once again. It's time to celebrate the first of God's six mighty acts that secured our salvation – and look forward to the future.

What does qualify as a human right? Sometimes it feels as if what a political party promises today becomes a human right tomorrow! What criteria do we have for settling the question of which minority group has a greater claim to its rights, when those rights are in tension with others?

Most of the developed nations have signed up to the various human rights treaties and Europe has been at the centre of all that. The problem is that often, so-called 'strategic' or 'financial' factors can get in the way of compliance with what we have signed up for. Turning a blind eye to regimes that pay lip service to human rights on the basis that we need an airfield there, or there's money to be made if we trade with them, in the end, will make our commitment look very thin.

The basic idea of a Charter of Human Rights has to be a really good thing. Simply signing a charter and then colluding with regimes that ignore the bits of paper they have signed, needs to be called for what it is – hypocrisy. Politics has to be about compromise – I think we would all accept that – but there is a good deal of distance between compromise and blatant hypocrisy.

Right now there are too many seriously vulnerable people on the planet who require protection.

From the perspective of believers, there is a further point too. The message of many of the prophets of the Old Testament of the Bible, is that privilege (of being God's people) also brings responsibility (to act justly and mercifully). The privilege of power brings with it the responsibility to exercise that power for the common good.

Governments and all organisations, not least our global commercial institutions, need to be responsible in the exercise of their undoubted power and its effect upon others.

But there's yet another important point, that I fear we are losing sight of. This works from the other direction too. Rights based legal systems, can inhibit the concept of personal responsibility. Not everything that happens to me is 'my fault', but some things really are. Grown up people realise that there are people whose plight is not of their own making and that they need others to help them. Grown up societies encourage people to take responsibility for their actions.

When people stop taking responsibility for what they need to take responsibility for, things become difficult, and sometimes justice can be the victim.

+Mike

## Bishop's November Letter Rights and Wrongs

The issue of human rights is ever before us. Rightly so. If we want a "newer kinder" mode of politics, then there must be some protections for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. You might think that this is an open and shut case, but there are those who believe that we in the UK should scrap the various commitments we have to the six (yes, six) treaties that there are on human rights.

It can be argued that the contemporary concept of human rights had its genesis in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was however in 1948 that the narrative began with serious intent, and with the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then the whole issue has taken off and most contemporary legislation, directly or indirectly, is to some extent intrinsically fashioned by our understanding of the concept of human rights.

Broadly, I think people recognize that Human Rights Conventions are a good thing. The problem is that human rights can often create a collision course between the rights of one group and the rights of another. The legislation can be utterly ambiguous.

At present, on grounds of their 'human rights', those who are imprisoned but don't smoke, (apparently a clear minority), are seeking to get Her Majesty's Prisons declared a complete no-smoking zone. Imprisoned smokers don't much like this and prison staff are nervous that any such ban could make their prisons unmanageable.

I think we all swallow hard when someone wanted for terrorist offences in another country can't be extradited from the UK, because to do so would be a breach of their human rights!

In an article in the Guardian back in 2014, Eric Posner made a very serious comment: *"The truth is that human rights law has failed to accomplish its objectives. There is little evidence that human rights treaties, on the whole have improved the well-being of people."*

Part of the problem Posner says, is a fundamental disagreement as to whether human rights are political rights – the right to vote, to free speech, to religious freedom, to not be arbitrarily detained etc., or as the Soviets argued, that human rights are social or economic rights – the right to work, to healthcare, education etc. These two streams seem to have run together in our European understanding. The outcome of this confusion has led to, well, further confusion.

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

## NATIVITY FESTIVAL

at

# St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze



Come and see the rest of the picture

in

**Nativity scenes from all over the World  
and from local Schools**

**10th – 15th December 2015**

**10.00am – 4.00pm**

Admission: Free

Kindly supported by



92 Ermin Street, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, SN3 4NN. 01793 832072

St Mary's is part of the West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

## Church Services in the Partnership

### St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze

Date	Time	Form
01 November	10:00am	Holy Communion
01 November	2:00pm	Memorial Service
08 November	10:00am	Family Service with Parade
15 November	10:00am	Family Service
15 November	3:30pm	Close Field of Remembrance
22 November	10:00am	Holy Communion followed by Baptism
29 November	10:30am	Partnership Service at HTS

### Holy Trinity Shaw

Date	Time	Form
01 November	10:30am	Holy Communion/God.com/SS
08 November	10:30am	Remembrance Day
08 November	4:00pm	Messy Church
15 November	10:30am	Morning Service
22 November	10:30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion
29 November	10:30am	Partnership Service at HTS
29 November	4:00pm	Partnership Prayer and Praise

### Toothill

Date	Time	Form
01 November	10:30am	All Age Service
08 November	10:30am	Remembrance Day
Wednesday 11 November	11:30am	Midweek Worship
15 November	10:30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion
22 November	10:30am	Morning Service with Holy Communion
Wednesday 25 November	11:30am	Midweek Worship
29 November	10:30am	Partnership Service at HTS

## Westlea

Date	Time	Form
01 November	10:00am	Morning Service
08 November	10:00am	Family Service
15 November	10:00am	Holy Communion
22 November	10:00am	Swap
29 November	10:30am	Partnership Service at HTS

### Memorial Service

Being held at

**St Mary's Church  
Lydiard Tregoze**

on

**Sunday 01 November**

at

**2.00pm**

A thanksgiving service which will give you the opportunity to remember a loved one.

Refreshments will be served afterwards.



### Partnership Prayer and Praise

**29 November 2015**

**4.00pm**

**Holy Trinity Shaw**

The theme will be

**“Taize and Iona Advent”**

**All Welcome**

**This is an opportunity to Pray and Praise together**