



The Good Shepherd Church
Park Road Loughborough
December 2017 & January 2018 Focus



In a few weeks the newspapers will have supplements summarising 2017 and there will be programmes on the television that help us to look back over the year - we know that some of this will be difficult to watch again. Looking back can be tough and unsettle us; looking forward can have a similar effect if we aren't sure what we are looking forward to, that's why Advent is such an important season.

Positioned at the end of the calendar year and the beginning of the church's year, the season of Advent reminds us of the hope that we have for the future: it's a time of looking back to the story of how God came into the world to rescue his people as a helpless child and a time when we look forward to the annual celebration of this world-changing event remembered at Christmas. But Advent hope extends far beyond the celebrations of Christmas, Advent is also a time of looking forward to the realisation of the promise and challenge we find in scripture that Jesus, the helpless child who grew up and gave his life to restore the broken relationships between God and all his people -including us- will one day return: more than any other time of year, Advent is the time when we stop to ask how ready will we be, how ready are we, for Jesus to return? Advent reminds us of the eternal promise we have in Christ, as we reflect again on the truth and wonder of the incarnation - God made flesh - and the promise (and challenge!) of present and future resurrection hope.

This year, in our worship through Advent and Christmas we will be using a booklet called **#God with us**. In social media, on Twitter, the hash tag symbol # has come to be a way of searching for and 'following' themes/people/events. Let us pray, as we journey through Advent to Christmas and through all the Christmas season, that **#God with us** will help us to search for and follow the story of the *#incarnation* in a new way and that it will prompt us to deepen our *#discipleship* as we take time to pray and reflect on scripture and on the meaning of Christ's coming, for ourselves and for the world.

So that's Advent and Christmas in less than 400 words, but what about beyond these? (This is a double issue of Focus for Dec 17 and Jan18!)

After the Christmas season comes the season of Epiphany when we remember how the significance of Christ's birth was revealed to different people, on various occasions throughout his life. We begin these four weeks of revelations and encounters by recalling the journey of some Gentiles from the East -the far-travelled Magi - and their encounter with Jesus, an encounter which reminds us that Jesus came to save *all*, Jews and Gentiles alike: Jesus' coming was, and still is, good news for *everyone*.

But some will find it hard to enter into this good news. For those who are bereaved, the remembrance of Christmases-past makes the pain of physical loss so much more acute; we know too that there are always other challenges to be overcome: poor health, problems at work or family breakdown can make the festivities at this time of year seem like an unwanted burden, so it's good that we have an opportunity to acknowledge these losses and struggles and to ask for a new filling of God's strength and awareness of his presence at a service of remembering and light on Sunday 10th December, 4pm. Who might you invite to this? Could this service be a necessary time of prayer, praise and inner healing that might ease your own journey towards Christmas and beyond?

At this time of year, as I wonder what is 'around the corner', I often think of Minnie Louise Haskins' poem, 'God knows' which has come to be known as 'The gate of the year' and begins:

'And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East...'

I love the way this poem reminds us that God goes before us and with us into all things: he is waiting for us, reaching out to us; he knows what we need.

As you journey through Advent, celebrate Christmas and step into 2018 I pray that you will discover new ways to experience - and share with others - the hope we find in Jesus who is **#Godwithus**

With prayers and all good wishes for a blessed Christmas and a Happy, hope-full 2018,
Elizabeth York, Curate

Christmas Services and Events

December 10th 4pm Light and Remembrance. (A time for remembering and thankfulness)
December 16th 4.30pm Messy Christingle Fun for everyone
December 18th 6.45pm (for 7pm start). Sing Christmas with BBC Radio Leicester. In the Church Hall with minced pies, mulled wine, tea and coffee

Christmas Eve

December 24th 8am Holy Communion (BCP)
December 24th 10am Morning Worship (A service for everyone)
December 24th 6pm Carols and Lessons (A short Communion will follow)
December 24th 11.30pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day

December 25th 10am Christmas Communion for everyone



For Further Information please contact our Vicar

Rev Sue Willetts

The Vicarage 21, Parklands Drive

Loughborough

LE11 2SZ

Phone: 01509 215042 Email: revsuewilletts@btinternet.com

www.goodshepherdloughborough.org.uk

December 2017 & January 2018 News, Views and Calendar

Church Services in December Every Sunday Morning

8am

Holy Communion Traditional Prayer Book
(BCP)

10am Services

Dec 3rd Holy Communion & Sunday Club

Dec 10th Morning Worship

Dec 17th Holy Communion & Sunday Club

Dec 24th Christmas Eve

Dec 25th Christmas Day

Dec 31st Holy Communion for the New Year

**Please see additional information for
Christmas Services**

A Service of Evening Prayer
December 10th 4pm.

Every Wednesday Morning
9.30am
Holy Communion (said)



Church Services in January Every Sunday Morning

8am

Holy Communion Traditional Prayer Book
(BCP)

10am Services

Jan 7th Holy Communion & Sunday Club

Jan 14th Morning Worship

Jan 21st Holy Communion & Sunday Club

Jan 28th Morning Worship

A Service of Evening Prayer
January 14th 4pm.

Every Wednesday Morning
9.30am
Holy Communion (said)



Home Groups

Thursday Ladies' study group

2-3.30pm Please
contact Jackie for
details 01509
212207. New
members Welcome.

Christian Aid Lunch

At Baxtergate
Baptist Church
Loughborough on
Dec. 17th
at 12.30pm.



Parish Breakfast December & January

Dec. 31st Jan 28th
8.45am.

Please do try to
come along



**The next
Messy Church
will be on
Dec 16th at 4.30pm
and
Jan 20th at 4.30**

**Stage Group
Rehearsals every
Wednesday 7.30pm**

Toddler Group
Meets every Friday
Morning 10am –
11.30am. Term time
only

**Wednesday Friendly
Meets 2.30pm in the
Church Hall**

Dec 6th Christmas
Lunch
Dec 13th Carol Service

Restart January 10th



Resolve is a four-week course designed to help you make life-long positive changes. Each week, explore what experts have to say, talk to others and engage in some activities to achieve your goals. Running on the four Tuesdays in January - what 'Resolutions' will you resolve to make?

See the flyers in Church – share them with your friends – join the conversation!

**The Good Shepherd Church wishes you all
A very Happy Christmas and A Happy New
Year**

May you feel the love of Jesus in your hearts,
your lives and in your homes at this festive
season and always