

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

What is your Christmas Greeting?



Dear Friends,

There is such a variety of Christmas cards, ranging from nuns skating on thin ice to snowmen, from sparkling stars to nativity scenes.

Choosing the picture on the outside is difficult enough. We may well have stood in the charity shop wondering which pictures were the most suitable for our friends. Did we want to show artistic taste, humour, fun, or were we looking for something that would be suitable for the majority of our friends?

We may have wondered whether, we, as Christians, should choose the more biblical looking scenes. When we look at all the cards landing on our doormats then we can't help but be aware that the religious cards seem to be in the minority, even those sent to clergy!

And what about the message inside? Most Christmas cards that we send have a printed message in them already, but if you could choose one what would you say? "A *pleasant winterval*" (perhaps this might denote a very bland political correctness and the person receiving it might not feel that warmly greeted).

What about "A *very happy Christmas*"? This greeting may be fine for those who have few problems but is it not rather crass for anyone feeling very alone or experiencing major difficulties.

"A *peaceful Christmas*", now this sounds more promising, as when Jesus was born, the greeting in the Bible was; "Peace on earth". The promise is that there will be peace,

something that everyone of goodwill can agree with and hope for, but here's the catch; we all have to play our part in achieving this peace, so we need to try not to fall out with others, even down to having that family row over what happens at Christmas!

There is the more religious greeting; "A *joyful and blessed Christmas*", this reminds us that the Christ child was born to bring hope and salvation for a world which is not always so great, where things go wrong, where there is suffering but he came to show that God is with us which is the meaning of Emmanuel, "God with us". This enables us to say truly, "a joyful and blessed Christmas" as the joy comes from knowing that God is with us in every situation that we find ourselves in, good or bad, it is the deepest joy in the world and we are blessed as this is our greatest gift, of God himself, to us.

So a joyful and blessed Christmas to you all, and, don't worry too much about your greeting cards; surely the point is, that you send your love and really best wishes.

Yours in Christ,
Jo

A prayer for Christmastide

O God of Peace,
You fill our hearts with hope
At every Christmastide,
For we remember again
that this is the world that you have loved.
May that hope, peace and joy fill our hearts
at this time. Amen

Wesley Aranjah

Finding out more about Christianity and Confirmation Classes

I am hoping to run two courses, one for adults and one for young people on Christianity. These would be open courses for all who would like to know more, or brush up and ask those questions that may have been puzzling you for some time.

If you have not been confirmed and would like to consider being confirmed or even if you have been confirmed but just want to know more, this may be the course for you. I envisage that it will be a ten-week course, each session being an hour for young people, and an hour and a half for the adult course.

If you are interested please let me know and we will try to arrange the courses to fit with those taking part. Jo

Other things to do on Sunday?

It's amazing how many things happen on a Sunday. Not only can you shop till you drop, redecorate your house, clean the car, watch the children play football, but also make those important visits to relatives and friends. This can mean that worshipping at the main service is difficult.

One of the (many) brilliant things about All Saints is that there is so much choice when it comes to opportunities to worship!

If you have to get away for the Sunday then the 8a.m service means that you can get back home by 8.45 just in time to get on the roads while they are still clear! The service is a simple traditional language (Book of Common Prayer) Communion service and includes two lectionary Bible readings and a short reflection. This means that you don't miss out parts of the gospel readings, which this Church Year (since Advent 1) is that of St Matthew.

Back on Sunday evening, after a weekend away with relatives? What better way to wind down and enter the peace of God's presence than through the choir singing Evensong? What a great way to start the week, through the music and words of the Bible and a brief reflection and time of prayer? You'll even be home in time to watch your favourite TV programmes!

If Sundays are impossible, then the candlelit midweek Choral Evensong or Compline on Wednesday Evenings at 7.30 will transport you out of the humdrum world into the joy of the mystery of God.

Still busy? Why not slip out on Thursday morning at 11.00am to enjoy the intimacy of said communion with reflection and prayers in the comfort and warmth of the Lady/Memorial chapel? Who can't make it now?

You'll receive a warm welcome at all our services.....

Perhaps we haven't tried any service other than the one we normally attend. But they have different styles, and we can find ourselves enriched by a new perspective.

(But don't forget the main service at 10:00 am or the Family Service at 11:30 on the first Sunday of the month!!!!)

Jo

Services for Epiphany

There will be two special services for Epiphany.

Firstly, instead of a Family Service we hold our **Christingle Service** at 10:00 am on Sunday 6th January.

Secondly, we will complete our annual cycle of carol services with a **Carol Service for Epiphany** on Sunday 13th January at 6.30 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you!