

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



### ***"Are we nearly there?"***

Dear Friends,

Were you ever asked that question as a parent or perhaps you remember asking that question as a child on a journey? It could often happen at the end of your own road! After a lot of preparation, everyone is finally in the car, the packing done, picnic made, games to play and tapes to listen to, all carefully thought through!

A little voice pipes up from the back seat,

*"Are we there yet?"*

*"No,"* comes the reply, *"we're not there yet as we've only just left home!"*

Every five or so minutes the voice asks again,

*"Are we nearly there yet?"*

The parents patiently, at first, reply, *"No, now how about reading your book or playing that game?"*

And then after a few times a firmer voice from the front says, *"We'll tell you when we get there".*

The final timid voice asks, *"Will I still be five years old when I get there?"*

We are now in a season of waiting and of journeys. Sometimes waiting patiently and sometimes not. What are we waiting for? There's the secular side of Christmas, with all the preparations to do, things to buy, wrapping and cooking. Some of us may be going on a trip to visit relatives or friends or getting ready for others to come and stay.

And, somehow, we also have to find room for the real meaning of Christmas as well.

It's such a busy time we think impatiently, how can I? Then we can even find ourselves wishing it was all over so we could just get on with our lives!

During this season the Church also waits and encourages patience; "Christ will come again" we proclaim at every Eucharist.

God creates the world and is still actively creative. God in Christ is with the world and through the Holy Spirit is very much with us today, tomorrow and for ever. Life with all its brokenness; terrorism, war, poverty, pain and suffering may well make our souls grow cold or numb as we find ourselves slogging through.

So we wait, for the Christ child, the long expected Jesus, the dawn of light in the world's darkness; we wait for the renewal of hope in our lives. As we wait, we look for signs, not of doom and destruction but of love, joy and peace.

We are called to look for signs of the light of God's love, and actively participate with Him in changing the world. We are called to be part of the struggle for peace and justice in the world. Jesus calls us not so much to look for signs of his coming but to be signs of his coming, to reflect his light.

So when little voices ask,

*"Are we nearly there yet?"*

We can answer,

*"Yes, we're almost there - for God has come to meet us!"*

Love, Jo

## Welcoming

During Advent we will be exploring aspects of welcoming in our sermons.

One strand of this, which has been attracting considerable attention recently, is how we might make our building more welcoming by being open to visitors. There's probably no more effective way of engaging with the "Hertford" that is beyond our regular congregation than by throwing open the doors of the church and keeping them open. Welcoming people in makes the church a living space and creates a completely new set of opportunities for engaging with the local community. It is the best way of turning passers-by into friends and worshippers.

The people who visit churches and their reasons for doing so vary widely. They range from local residents – longstanding ones and those new to the area alike – to tourists from far-flung destinations; from enthusiasts who already know about the church and its history to members of the wider public who came across it by chance; from busy people snatching a quiet moment during their lunch hour to the unemployed.

When a church opens its doors one of the most common responses from visitors is, *"Oh I've gone past this place on so many occasions and always wanted to see inside but it's never open."* Most of the audience at the recent showing of 'Ghostbusters' made exactly this comment, followed by surprise at how beautiful a building we are lucky to have.

Clearly, there are many practical issues, but much help is at hand. Please think and pray about how we might extend our welcome further in this way.

Diocesan team:  
<http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/welcome-tourism/>

Toolkit (London diocese)  
<http://www.london.anglican.org/support/buildings-and-property/open-churches-toolkit/>

Church Visitors & Tourism Association:  
<http://cvta.org.uk/>

## Future Services

All Saints Church • Hertford

# St NICHOLAS

— The Gift Bringer —

## FAMILY SERVICE

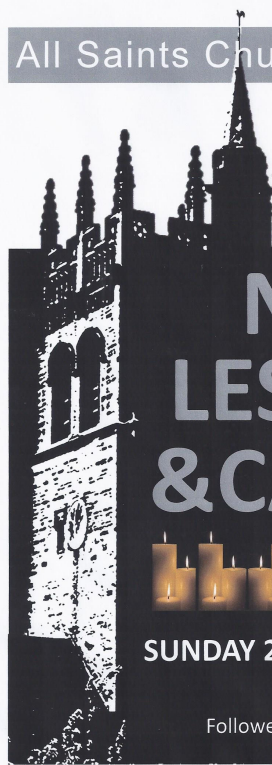


**Sunday 6 December 2015**  
**10.00am**

Followed by Activities & Refreshments


For Full List of Services, Please Visit [www.allsaintshertford.org](http://www.allsaintshertford.org)

All Saints Church • Hertford



A Service of Light,  
 Music and Readings  
 to Welcome the Birth  
 of Christ.

# NINE LESSONS & CAROLS



**SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2015**  
**6.30pm**

Followed by Wine Reception

For Full List of Services Please Visit: [www.allsaintshertford.org](http://www.allsaintshertford.org)