

THE PORCH

DECEMBER 2020 JANUARY 2021

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

HOPE IS BORN

80p

ST EDWARD'S CHURCH
DRINGHOUSES, YORK

Who's Who in St. Edward's

Vicar: Reverend Richard Carew
The Vicarage, Tadcaster Rd,
Dringhouses,
YORK YO24 1QG

Email: : vicar@stedsdringhouses.org

Tel: 07776683254

Assistant Curate:

Reverend Ruthi Gibbons
curate@stedsdringhouses.org

Tel: 07776 686129

Parish Secretary: Wendy Hewitt

parishoffice@stedsdringhouses.org

who will be in the office Monday - Friday

Hours: 9.00am—4.30pm (closed for lunch 1.30—2.00pm)

Children, Youth and Families Minister: Katie Hobson

Email: families@stedsdringhouses.org

Tel: 07921 458723

Youth Worker: Helen Cross

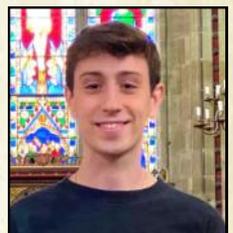
Email: youth@stedsdringhouses.org

Tel: 07436 405578

Assistant Youth Worker: Jacob Thomson

assistantyouth@stedsdringhouses.org

Tel: 07436 405586





The Parish Church of
St Edward the Confessor

Dringhouses, York

December 2020

Dear Subscriber

Thank you for your support and your patience in what has been a year of ongoing change and uncertainty. It is the time of year when you normally receive a note from me asking if you wish to continue your subscription to The Porch and telling you the cost.

In these difficult times, we are having to do things differently to avoid putting our Distributors at risk. The Communications Committee feels it necessary to continue putting The Porch "on line", but will also make available a printed copy for those who do not have internet access, or who would prefer to have a physical magazine.

In line with current Government and Church of England guidance to minimise risks of transmission of Covid-19, any printed copies will need to be posted to subscribers, and so I regret that the subscription rate will rise to £13.00 to cover the extra postage costs.

As mentioned above, The Porch will be available free of charge on the Church website, but should you wish to continue your Subscription to receive a magazine in the post, please pay either by cheque posted to the Parish Office, or by BACs to Sort Code 30-99-99, Acc. No. 00138800 indicating that the payment is your Porch subscription.

Wishing you all a Peaceful and Joyous Christmas and hoping that the New Year brings a happier time.

Charles Croft
Distribution Manager

Vicar: Reverend Richard Carew

Parish Office, Tadcaster Road, York. YO24 1QG

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Light in the Darkness

At the end of what has been a difficult and anxious year for so many, news in the last few weeks that there has been significant progress towards developing a vaccine for coronavirus was a welcome piece of good news in a weary world.

Whilst there is clearly still some way to go until life returns to any form of normality, it does at least feel that there is some light at the end of this particular tunnel.



When I was a curate in Beverley, my next door neighbour gave me his old bike, and so I took it around to the local bike shop to get it checked over and to buy some lights. The person in the shop asked me 'What do you want the lights for?'. This initially seemed like a very strange question to me, but apparently there are two types of bike lights- the cheaper ones that aren't very powerful but will enable you to be seen by others, and the more expensive ones that are powerful enough to light up the road ahead as well. Being a cheapskate I went for the 'be seen' variety. I only discovered my error when I was cycling down a lane at night which was only partially lit, and when the street lights ran out, the only way that I could tell where the road was, was to assume that the darkest shadows on either side of the road were hedges and ride half way between them!

In talking about God, the Bible will often use the imagery of light and darkness, daytime and night. In the darkness we feel disorientated and anxious, unable to see what comes next or what is around us. In the light, suddenly we are able to take stock of our surroundings and pick our way through what lies ahead.

At the start of His Gospel, John describes the birth of Jesus using the words "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

The birth of Jesus changed everything! No longer was humanity stumbling around in the dark wondering what life was all about, but rather in Jesus there was the illumination of what life looks like lived well with God and with others.

Lights can have different uses, and so when we talk about Jesus being a light, we are meaning that He can help us to see clearly the way ahead, but also about warning of dangers on our path.

As we decide to walk with Jesus, he can provide that warning of dangers in the way, such as our own selfishness, or making bad decisions, but He can also provide us with that reassurance of His presence when times feel dark and we don't quite know which way to turn. Just as a decent set of bike lights can make the road clearer, with Jesus at our side, we don't have to worry about what comes next, but that we can relax and enjoy His company along the way enabling us to face whatever the future may hold.

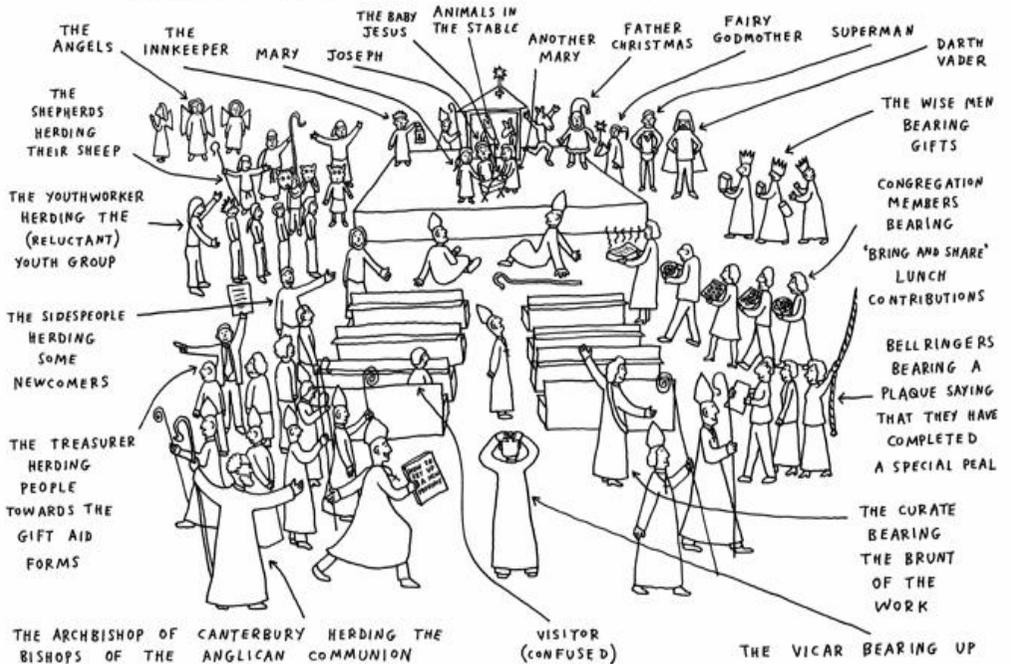
It has been a difficult year, but in the midst of the uncertainty and the challenges I pray that there have also been times when the light has broken in. As we look to a very different Christmas this year may we know the truth that, in the person of Jesus, the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. And in that light may we step boldly into a New Year with renewed faith and hope, knowing that Jesus is with us every step of the way.

May you have a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Richard

THE NATIVITY PLAY

THE CHILDREN, DRESSED AS CHARACTERS FROM THE NATIVITY STORY, ARE JOINED BY A SUPPORTING CAST



The Return of the Curate

In November, Revd. Ruthi Gibbons returned from maternity leave. The Porch Team devised some questions for her - and here Ruthi gives her reflection on a rather unusual year.



Welcome back! In your honour, we have posted The Porch for September 2018 when you were our 5-minute interview and revealed your love of Jane Austen, Yorkshire Tea and Beauty and the Beast (animated version)! When asked, 'What's next for you?' Your reply was, 'I don't know, but I am excited to find out...'

Q. Could you tell us a bit about what you have 'found out' over 2 years later?

Gosh 2 years ago feels like a very long time. So much has changed! I re-read that article and cringed a little at some of my answers. As to what I've found out, well I have: discovered how to do weddings, learnt many more action songs for holiday club, found out that having a dog can often help strangers open up to you more in conversation, enjoyed working with an amazing staff team, worked out how to deal with more of the highs and lows of church life, how to juggle the diaries as a married clergy couple, and well most importantly I have discovered how to take on the new role of 'Mama'.

Q. When you left for maternity leave in December, the world looked a bit different. How have you found this odd year? The joys and challenges?

It has been a mixed old year with many joys and challenges. I think like many people, my depression and anxiety have been elevated and so I've had to go back to the doctors to sort that out. It has been hard not having the support of family and friends with a new baby (I know Ben's grandparents have found it very hard being so far away). But there have also been great joys: we've spent more time as a family together, Toby has been there for lots of Benjamin's firsts because he's been working from home. I think Maggie the dog has especially enjoyed having people home more.

You left the church when we still had services and have joined us online. Do you think there have been any benefits of online? Ongoing challenges for the clergy?

Oh there have been massive benefits to going online. Those who haven't been able to go to church for ages due to being housebound or other circumstances have been able to join us for worship. On a more personal note, I have been able to "go to church" with my parents and in-laws. Also I have participated in worship services with friends who I trained with. It's been wonderful to experience this new way of being church. Yes there have been downsides, I have missed seeing people's faces and being able to interact in person, but I think the Church as a whole cannot go back to "we've always done it this way" from now on we are going to need to do church that works for a digital age.



What would you hope to see over the next few months?

Well it would be nice if we could meet up with folks again. But I think the reality is that we are going to have to wait much longer before we can hold our loved ones close. I am looking forward to Christmas and the challenge of doing things a bit differently this year. Perhaps this year we can shake things up a bit, create new traditions or just do things as a one-off.

Are you able to say anything about your future plans?

Who knows?! Watch this space...

Revd. Ruthi Gibbons

Front cover by Liz Powderley one of several winners of the Christmas picture competition.

Thank You Liz



Welcome to The Porch Editorial Team

You may be aware that Mark Russell-Smith stepped down from The Porch Editorial Team in April. Following adverts in the Pew Sheet and The Porch for new editors, I'm glad to say that we now have three members of the Editorial Team, as well as June Fawcett who continues as Proof Reader.



Linda Sykes



Helen Wren



Ian Addyman

We have agreed to use one email address for submissions. Which is:
porch@stedsdringhouses.org

At this time, we would like to thank everyone for your submissions. We will continue to produce a Church Magazine that records the daily life and experience of the church family at St Edward's, in order to remind us that we are part of God's wider world and reflect our local community.

Thank you and God Bless. Helen, Linda and Ian.

Another lockdown activity

One of the encouragements at St Edward's over the last eight months have been the various ways of keeping in touch, especially the pastoral phone calls. As we go to press, Zoom compline and a Zoom book group have enriched the lives of those able to join in. If you don't have access to Zoom, or indeed, don't have the internet at all, you may well value an extra way of keeping in touch. One suggestion is to chat on the phone about a 'This is me' topic - favourites, first memories, opinions etc and I would be happy to facilitate this. I also have quizzes and puzzles which I am happy to deliver if you don't have email. Do get in touch if I can help or you have further suggestions.

7 Gill Stamp, 707516, gill@gillmyers.plus.com

Christmas Socks!!

Don't you just love it, when you get a new pair of socks for Christmas? All of my grown-up nephews and nieces get a pair of socks from me (Fairtrade of course, Helen!) every year, - and they appear delighted!



So, here's a chance to do some sock gifting in York! This year our Carecent Winter Appeal is earlier than usual and will run throughout December.



Carecent are appealing for small items, that is: socks, hats, gloves and new underwear. These items can be easily handed out with the packed lunches and hot drinks Carecent are presently providing for vulnerable people in York. They do not want larger items this year, like coats, trousers, jumpers.

Living and sleeping rough or in hostels is tough, especially in the cold winter months ahead. Therefore, any donations of socks, hats, gloves, underpants, would be really appreciated by the Carecent Team, who are continuing to care for the marginalised in our city.

The blue tubs will be in the café area throughout December for any donations. Thank you very, very much.

Faith, Max, Michael.

November at York Foodbank

My article in last month's "Porch" reported that there was to be a more welcoming way of running the Foodbank at the Gateway Centre in Acomb. Unfortunately, a "Stop Press" had to be inserted as York was put into Tier 2 and subsequently into Lockdown and this was no longer possible. In fact there was only one week when clients were offered refreshments and a little conversation before the more tightly controlled, less welcoming restrictions were re-introduced.



We are all hopeful that it won't be long before the volunteers are again able to offer the more relaxed experience for our clients.

We did have some good news recently when we were told that Adam, who has been the Foodbank Manager for nearly two years on a part-time basis, will now be working full time. Adam is proving to be an excellent manager working well promoting Foodbank in the community and creating a happy working environment for the volunteers.

The small gift bags I've been making were well received and have already been used so it's time for me to start making some for Christmas. They may only be small and contain only small bottles of toiletries but they give the clients a treat. And talking of treats, Christmas is fast approaching! The volunteers like to be able to give Christmas produce to the clients and welcome donations of mince pies, puddings etc. However, these donations often arrive the week before Christmas which is too late - donations have to be taken to the warehouse to be "weighed in" before they can be delivered to the distribution centres. This can take 2 or 3 weeks so, in effect, Christmas donations need to be given at the beginning of December at the very latest.

As expected, the number of referrals to the Foodbank is steadily increasing as more people find themselves in food poverty due to the Covid pandemic. Foodbank volunteers continue to enable food to be given to those in need and use your valuable donations to good effect. We are aware that other outlets where people can obtain food are operating - the ones being opened by individuals from their homes are not regulated as Trussell Trust is - and it is heart-warming to know that the pandemic is bringing the community together in this way.

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NEED FOR
FOODBANKS
INCREASING?



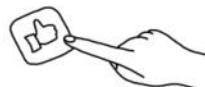
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QUESTIONS



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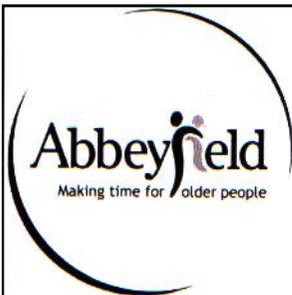


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Business in a Time of Covid

Whilst many of us in lockdown found ourselves less busy than usual, businesses that were deemed 'essential', were working very long hours. Linda Sykes went to meet Lee Bell to discuss how his business, Ged Bell Butchers, had managed.



Lee is the owner of Ged Bell Butchers and Pie Makers, "Home of the Growler", on Middlethorpe Grove, Dringhouses. Lee and his family have a longstanding relationship with St Edward's, through family services, holiday club and particularly Christmas celebrations. Lee has hosted the annual Community Carol Service outside the shop for many years, providing hot drinks and tasty snacks, one of the highlights of St Edward's calendar. He also supplies and supports Louise's numerous and much appreciated catering ventures, which raise funds for local charities. Whilst they currently attend St Barnabas Church, where best friend Matt Woodcock is vicar, they continue to support St Edward's in many ways.

I see from the logo that this year, you are celebrating 40 years of business. Can you tell me how the business started, and your own involvement?

My father was a butcher by trade and after working for various other people, decided to start up on his own. This shop and business came up for sale in 1979. Dad worked with the previous butcher for a few weeks to get to know the customers, and then in January 1980, took over as Ged Bell, the Butcher.

When I was at school, I worked in the shop at the weekend and during holidays. I wasn't quite sure if I wanted to join Dad in the business, so went off travelling around Europe for a while. When I returned, I decided to give it a go, and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. We worked together for 12 years.

So, what have been the big changes for you since March?

Firstly, the business isn't just the shop here on Middlethorpe Grove. We supply several pubs and delis in York. We also have a unit at the racecourse which is very busy on race days. Since March, the demand from the pubs and delis has reduced and of course, there have been no spectators at the races.

On the other hand, footfall through the shop has increased significantly and we have been extremely busy with home deliveries. At the start of lockdown there was a great community atmosphere. The shop window was full of rainbows, drawn by local children.

We put leaflets through doors in the local areas offering a delivery service for people who were shielding or self-isolating. This business has been supported by local families from day one. It was important to us to be able to repay some of this support, particularly to those who are now elderly. Also, my son is at school in Askham Richard, which has no butcher, so we suddenly found another community in need of our delivery service, which then extended to Copmanthorpe.

What were the main challenges for you?

Initially there was a problem with supply. All of our produce is sourced from local farmers, who were struggling to keep up with demand. Every weekend we had sold out of everything. Then we found we had to close the shop two days a week, just to process all the orders and then get them out to local customers and the villages.



The other problem was with people trying to stockpile. Most of our customers are local, but we were finding people turning up who we had never seen before, wanting to buy in large quantities. We ended up having to limit sales, in order to be fair to everybody, particularly our regular customers.

A lot of small business have had to lay off staff. I imagine that has not been the case for you.

No. Initially we did lose a couple of people, who were unable to work during lockdown, for personal reasons.

But we were able to take on extra staff to help with deliveries.

Going forward, what are your concerns?

The current concern is about Christmas, which is, of course, our really busy period. We don't know if we will see bumper sales or if it will be a damp squib. No-one knows if families will be able to meet up, which influences the size and quantity of food orders. This has a knock-on effect, not just for us but for our suppliers, particularly the turkey farmers.

Other than that, we will carry on being as flexible as we can to keep our customers supplied.

Thank you, Lee for 40 years of outstanding service and top-quality pies. We wish you continued success.

Interview with Linda Sykes

Ed Web News: Where am I?

As our worship life continues to remain principally online, one of the concerns has been the speed of the broadband connection. The church's own internet speed proved too weak to support online services, and so a 'dongle' was purchased. This gives a 4G (like a phone) connection and, when placed on a ledge under St Matthew, works pretty well.

However, in the background the quest for fibre broadband has continued. The Openreach website has been resolute that it was not available at our address - but they had an online enquiry form which we could complete to see if there was any future possibility.

The ensuing correspondence with the Parish Office led us to the question, 'where am I?' as it appears, we could not be located at the address we provided. Below is an extract from an email:

'I've looked into this for you but I'm having some trouble finding your address on our system.'

So, we sent a map of our location and an explanation that we had been there since 1849 and hadn't moved much.

However, the next curious feature of our non-existence was to do with our street address, which the Parish Office had as 304 Tadcaster Road. It appears this address was also supported by Google, Trip Advisor and others. However, now that our existence was being challenged, it occurred to the sharp-witted Parish Secretary that all the properties on the church side of Tadcaster Road were indeed *odd* numbers, and so it was decidedly odd that we had an even number.

So, who determines a street address? The Royal Mail? The Council? The Church of England? Our conundrum was the fact that we were pretty certain that we had been present on Tadcaster Road since 1849, and this was perhaps the first time our existence was being questioned.

So, more investigation was undertaken to answer the vexed question and with it, the happy discovery that York Council have a department called Naming and Numbering York. So, Wendy emailed them, and whilst waiting we mused what the reply may look like:



Dear Mrs Hewitt



Thank you for your email with regard to a number for St Edward's Church. We are actually having some difficulty locating you. Could you please reconfirm your postcode and road name? Some indication of a nearby road would be helpful. Are you a recent Wimpy new build?

We have posted a map to your non-existent address, and should you receive it, it would be helpful if you could mark your location with an X.

Meanwhile, if you really don't know where you are, or your place in society, we can send you the name of a local vicar for support. We suggest Rev Richard Carew....

Kind regards

However, within a day, the Council sent us this helpful reply: 'I am not sure where Trip Advisor get their address information from, but I can confirm that it is incorrect. 304 Tadcaster Road is a residential property and is some distance from the Church. I can confirm that both the Royal Mail and the Council have the address as St Edward the Confessor Church Tadcaster Road York YO24 1QG. There is no property number connected to the Church.'

So, there we have it. We do exist - but not where we thought.... We are now in the process of asking Google to remove 304 from their directions.

Oh - and the fibre? Yes, we can have it, especially if we could pop across the road to number 304 - but if not, don't worry, it can be sorted. Believing a move to be somewhat tricky, Openreach obliged by coming out, and have already wired the church for fibre in hopeful anticipation of finding somewhere to plug in the other end of the cable.

Watch this space (unless it moves).

Ed Web Team

Promise Page

"Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps means a little bit more!" - How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Reading the Christmas story again, what struck me is that although it takes place in a busy town, much happens in isolation. Mary and Joseph, had to stay somewhere that wasn't comfortable, and were not being able to have family around when bringing a new life into the world. Shepherds, looking after their sheep far away from anywhere, were shocked at a miraculous group of angels appearing to them. Would you have believed them if you'd met them later? Or wondered if they had imagined it? It gets lonely when you're on your own for long periods of time, and the mind can play tricks on you. The Wise Men coming from far away, trusting but not knowing that they would find who they were looking for. These weren't big celebrations for everyone, but small ones for individuals. Jesus came to save us all, but his birth was a very quiet affair in comparison to the rest of his life. Perhaps this year we can reflect on the simplicity and wonder of the Christmas Story.

Christmas will look different this year, how can we use this to reflect on the simplicity of that first Christmas? Below are a few ideas

Simple Celebrations:

Have a Bethlehem tea. On Christmas Eve eat a simple tea of houmous, flatbread, olives, and other appropriate fare by candlelight. Perhaps read the Christmas Story to yourself or your household afterwards.

Create a star out of paper, card, by colouring in a pre-drawn star or perhaps getting more creative by knitting something. Hang it in your window or by your door.

Bake a batch of biscuits and leave them on your neighbour's doorsteps. Blessing people at this time is especially important this year. Ask God to bless those that live nearby.

[Follow our shoe box advent](#)

A Prayer:

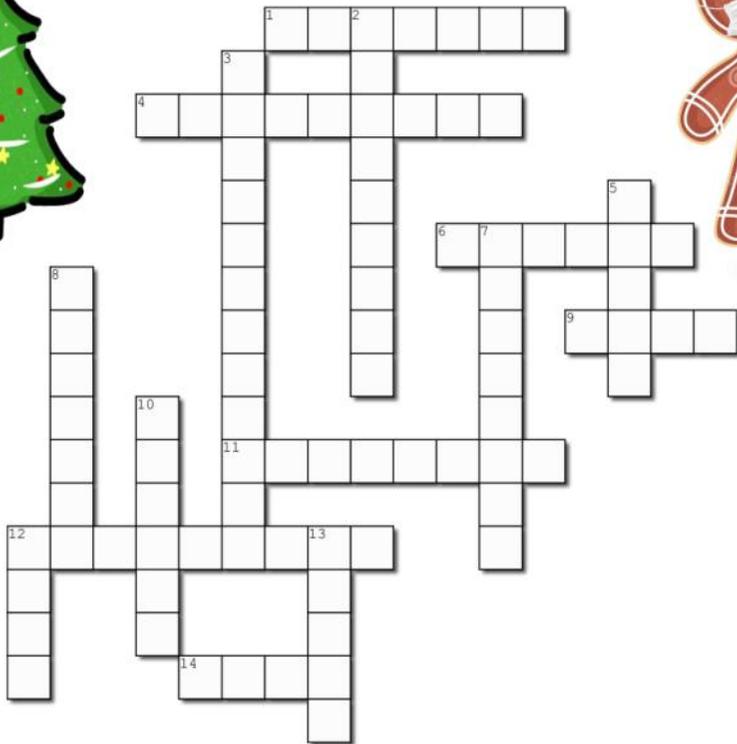
Father, this year we may not feel like celebrating. There has been loss and sadness for so many. Help us to see your joy and hope. Help us to see you working. Thank you for the gift of Jesus.

Amen

Katie

Christmas Crossword

Complete the crossword puzzle below



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner

Across

1. The angel who appeared to Mary
4. Festival of Jesus' birth
6. Where Jesus slept in the stable
9. The son of Zechariah and Elizabeth
11. Joseph and Mary's hometown
12. The first visitors to the stable
14. Another name for the wise men

Down

2. The town of Jesus' birth
3. One of the wise men's gifts
5. The Jewish King at the time of Jesus' birth
7. The Caesar who issued a census decree
8. The anointed one - another title for Jesus
10. Where Mary and Joseph made an offering of two birds
12. Wise men followed this to Jesus
13. An important king who made Jerusalem his capital



Christmas Crossword answers

Across: 1. Gabriel 4. Christmas 6. Manger 9. John 11. Nazareth 12. Shepherds 14. Magi

Down: 2. Bethlehem 3. Frankincense 5. Herod 7. Augustus 8. Messiah 10. Temple 12. Star 13. David



BEATITUDES

FOR A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAY INDOORS



FOR THEY HAVE PROTECTED OTHERS

BLESSED ARE THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED



FOR THEIR NEED OF GOD IS GREAT

BLESSED ARE THE CORNER SHOPKEEPERS



FOR THEY ARE THE PURVEYORS OF SCARCE THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE DELIVERY DRIVERS AND THE POSTAL WORKERS



FOR THEY ARE THE BRINGERS OF ESSENTIAL THINGS

BLESSED ARE THE HOSPITAL WORKERS, THE AMBULANCE CREWS, THE DOCTORS, THE NURSES, THE CARE ASSISTANTS, AND THE CLEANERS



FOR THEY STAND BETWEEN US AND THE GRAVE, AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS SURELY THEIRS

BLESSED ARE THE CHECKOUT WORKERS



FOR THEY HAVE PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE IN THE FACE OF OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION

BLESSED ARE THE REFUSE COLLECTORS



FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD DESPITE THE MOUNTAINS OF WASTE

BLESSED ARE THE TEACHERS



FOR THEY REMAIN STEADFAST AND CONSTANT IN DISTURBING TIMES

BLESSED ARE THE CHURCH WORKERS; THE DEACONS, PRIESTS AND BISHOPS



FOR THEY ARE A COMFORTING PRESENCE IN A HURTING WORLD AS THEY CONTINUE TO SIGNPOST TOWARDS GOD

BLESSED ARE THE SINGLE PARENTS.



FOR THEY ARE COPING ALONE WITH THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND THERE IS NO RESPITE

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ALONE.



FOR THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD AND WITH HIM THEY WILL NEVER BE LONELY

BLESSED ARE THE BEREAVED.



FOR WHOM THE WORST HAS ALREADY HAPPENED. THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE ISOLATED WITH THEIR ABUSERS



FOR ONE DAY - WE PRAY - THEY WILL KNOW SAFETY

BLESSED ARE ALL DURING THIS TIME WHO HAVE PURE HEARTS; ALL WHO STILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE; ALL WHO WORK FOR PEACE AND WHO MODEL MERCY



MAY YOU KNOW COMFORT. MAY YOU KNOW CALM. AND MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, BE WITH US ALL. AMEN

Lunches in Lockdown

We have been cooking and delivering Sunday lunches once a month for the last 4 months and they have been very well received. We have given the profits to YoYo and to the York Minster fund and both have been extremely grateful. Our next lunches will be to benefit the Joseph Rowntree Theatre, where many of us from St Edward's have been regular attenders of their shows and look forward to returning one day. The theatre celebrates its 85th birthday on 18 November 2020.



The profits so far have been:

July £112.00; August £212.00 to YoYo Trust
September £125.00; October £175.00 to York Minster Trust
November 1st £135.00 to Joseph Rowntree Theatre plus upcoming lunches on
November 22nd and December 25th if required.

Many thanks to you all for participating and to our delivery drivers, Heather and Marion. I think it's a great job - as everyone is happy to see you!

Our next lunches are: Nov 22: choice of 2 roasts

Dec 20: will be a turkey dinner

If anyone would really like one on Christmas Day, we will provide.

Thank you.

Love and Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year.

Louise and Roy

New Logo, updated mission

The Trustees of Accomplish having celebrated its tenth year in operation took the opportunity to have a period of reflection, renewal and regrowth. The new logo is part of this, and there is also a new mission statement:

Our mission is to transform the lives of children with disabilities in Africa, usually in poor remote regions. We believe every child should be loved, respected and encouraged to reach their full potential.



ACCOMPLISH
CHILDREN'S TRUST

Coronavirus

Lockdown had an immediate impact on Accomplish's fundraising activities. An emergency coronavirus appeal raised over £17,000. This incredible response means we have been able to pay grants allowing our life-changing projects in Africa to continue.

Buckets of Love

Many children with disabilities suffer from malnutrition even in normal circumstances. The impact of lock-down had the potential to be devastating

Our partners in Uganda distributed emergency food packages to over 400 vulnerable children. The food came in colourful "buckets of love", along with information about hygiene and activities for children. One little girl called Jackline and her grandmother were starving, surviving on one meal a day. But after three weeks, Jackline had made good progress and gained 2.5kgs in weight.



Pioneering education for blind students

The primary and secondary schools run by the Rwensori Association of Parents and Children with Disabilities (RAPCD) at Kasese has earned recognition as one of the best special needs schools in Western Uganda. Both schools are funded by Accomplish Children's Trust.

Medical Missionary News (MMN) has provided a generous grant to supply both schools with Braille textbooks and the equipment to produce Braille transcripts. This has transformed the quality of teaching for blind students.

Bringing Warmth - thanks to St Edward's knitters

It is strange to us to think of African children being cold. However, the wind can howl, and temperatures can plummet, especially in high altitude regions. Rural African life is lived outdoors so everyone is exposed to the elements. Children with disabilities often spend their time sitting in the open air so they get very cold. People at St Edward's and elsewhere have risen to this challenge and been busy knitting.



Cerebral palsy in Africa

Accomplish works with young people who have a wide range of disabilities, including cerebral palsy: a condition caused by a brain injury sustained before, during or shortly after birth. Children have difficulties controlling the movements of their arms, legs, or both. Many also have learning difficulties.

In rural Uganda and Malawi, there is so little knowledge about cerebral palsy and parents are often told that their child is cursed or contagious. Other families avoid them for fear of catching this affliction. Some parents hide their children away.

Accomplish supports a physiotherapist and occupational therapist at Kyaninga Child Development Centre (KCDC) in Fort Portal, Uganda and partners with the Heart of Mercy Project in the Zomba region of Malawi. They work with children and their families and teach them exercises and provides devices that help children adapt to their disability.



Christmas Appeal

This year's Christmas appeal is for seeds, tools and pigs to give to families so they can start farming enabling them to earn an income by growing crops to eat and sell, or through pig keeping. Most of the children in Uganda, with whom Accomplish work live in remote villages in conditions of extreme poverty. The money their families will earn from farming will make a colossal difference to their quality of life.



Please support this appeal if you can <http://bit.ly/ChristmasPigs>

Thank you, St Edward's, for your support

For more information visit <https://www.accomplishtrust.org.uk/>, where you can read more and sign up for the Newsletter.

Nigel Pells

Christmas 2020 is on!

Not for the first time, but hopefully the only time during a pandemic, some seasonal gift ideas for your delectation...or not. Perhaps just a few readers might appreciate the following outpourings. Just so long as it doesn't 'go viral'. The last thing we need!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS



- Stay-at-Home vouchers to cover your period of house-arrest. These electronically-tagged cards emit a loud buzz if you attempt to cross your threshold.
- For family fascination during lockdown, some low-maintenance mini-pets: house-trained ant...marvel at its antics; matching pair of ladybirds, can also double as earrings; wrestling snails - high-octane stuff; soccer-supporting earwigs primed to chant 'Earwigo, Earwigo, Earwigo', available in your favourite team's strip; dancing daddy longlegs - gaze enthralled as these elegant, long-limbed arachnids gracefully pirouette their way through a classic ballet routine on your kitchen table; shield bugs for self-isolaters and 'pets against pests' - domesticated house-spiders to keep down the real nasties.
- Christmas iPud for your festive on-line dessert.
- Monotony, the new bored game craze.
- Self-assembling Christmas tree. Just add water and see it rise. Magical.
- Calming, no-surprise-factor springless Jack-in-the-box for those of a nervous disposition.
- Virus swatter by Lakeland. Supplied with electron microscope.
- Christmas crab for seasonal seafood lovers.
- 'Your-own-face' face mask. Enables wearer to be recognised by friends. Available in different moods with a range of smiles, grimaces and expressions.
- Approved by the Royal College of Silent Music; 'The Singer's Manual of Mime & Actions', ideal for church, class and community use. Non-vocalising singing offers a solution to current restrictions on actual singing. The actions, if energetically performed, also contribute to physical fitness.

- A range of indoor table sports during lockdown, now on the market for Christmas...including table hockey, table rugby, table golf, table tennis, table table-tennis, table cricket, table freestyle swimming ('Ouch!'), table mountaineering (you don't have to be in South Africa to do this), table figure-skating and most exciting of all, table archery.
- An instructive read for a lockdown Christmas is 'The Knitters' Bible' though it's a bit woolly on theology.
- Still on the literary theme, one positive spin-off from the ill wind that is Coronavirus is the number of books published. Here are some tempting titles for Yuletide from the plethora recently issued: 'Teach Yourself Metric Measurement', 'Social-distancing without Appearing Stand-offish', 'The Visitor's Guide to Marske', 'Self-insulation for Electricians', 'The Observer's Book of Viruses', 'Draw Your Own Carpet', 'The Wonder Book of Covid Rules, Restrictions and Regulations' often abbreviated as 'The Wonder Book of the Three Rs' and from three centuries ago, that manual of social-distancing, 'Robinson Crusoe'...and Defoe's other masterpiece with a contemporary ring, 'A Journal of the Plague Year'.

We live in the 'Two-Metres Era'. The 'market' has hopped onto that bandwagon with 2-metre long giant Christmas crackers offering more bang for your buck. Always fancied using that phrase though I've no idea what it means. Everyone wants a two-metre ruler! Incidentally, the extremely tall Peter the Great of Russia was a two-metre ruler. All Christmas trees for the home are now standardised at two-metres tall and paper chains come in two-metre lengths. We've even got two meters in our house: one for gas and one for electricity. I think we're getting the 2-metre message.

To conclude on a positive note, there's been gloomy talk in the media about the cancellation of Christmas this year. Wrong! The good news is that for Christians, Christmas is not cancelled thanks to 'the glad tidings of great joy' in Luke 2:10. In closing, an 'all-year-round Christmas message'. It's another humdinger from St Paul in Romans 8 vv. 38-39, 'For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'. Bear that in mind.

Merry Christmas.

Derek Reed

News from Tariro

Tariro ,which we support through our Charitable giving, supports young people in Zimbabwe.

A recent e mail states that it appears that Covid 19 does not seem to have had the same devastating impact as in other countries, although recording is not accurate. There seems to be a low incidence of sickness and death but this doesn't mean that all is well. The Lock down has been implemented brutally by the Military ,which of course means that any political dissent has also been prevented.



There has been a recent drop in the inflation rate...which is now 600% and so the economy continues to be on its knees ,with few opportunities for people to earn any money through informal trading. The Health Service is collapsed and many teachers are on strike ,even though the schools have just re-opened after a six-month shut down.

But there are also positives. Tariro continues to support 53 young people in Harare and the rural areas in Manicaland. Most of the young people are orphans whose parents have died of HIV/Aids ,or are disadvantaged children living with one parent. All have been referred to the project through the Anglican church, as being young people who would benefit from the support that Tariro can offer.



Tariro aims to be a family project. Each young person is supported for as long as it is needed for them to grow to maturity; to experience a good education ,which will open up opportunities for them in the future and to feel loved and valued . It has never been about large numbers. The first cohort are now married with their own families. All have

appropriate jobs ,ranging from Finance to Pharmacy ,and act as excellent role models.

Currently the main concern is the fact that the schools and universities have been closed since the Spring. We have to help the young people to catch up on the missed opportunities by not only paying the regular school fees but also for extra tuition and IT where needed. Laptops cost more in Zimbabwe than here.

Imagine being Samantha trying to revise for her OL's which she sat in November but only having a pay as you go mobile phone and poor Wifi connection.

Form One places for Secondary schools are about to be allocated and this is always an anxious time. Places at the better schools depend on good grades at the end of Primary education and of course the children haven't been in school for many months. Public exams such as OL and AL are sat now and again many won't have completed the syllabus.

We are so grateful for both the prayer and financial support which makes it possible for the slogan for Tariro HOPE FOR YOUTH IN ZIMBABWE to come true.....even in these hard times.

Helen Dawe (Tariro volunteer in 2012)



YOU MAY CHOOSE TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY ,BUT YOU MAY NEVER AGAIN SAY YOU DID NOT KNOW.... words of William Wilberforce about slavery ..

Bonded labour is a form of slavery that still exists and is especially prevalent in Asia. After the transatlantic slave trade was abolished, debt bondage was used as a means of trapping people into a new form of slavery on plantations in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia. Money borrowed was deducted from wages.



Today over 8 Million people are trapped in debt bondage across the world and the pandemic has made it worse.

This is because the lockdowns have meant that many vulnerable people who rely on what they can earn each day were unable to leave their houses to travel to markets or work on others' land. For them borrowing money was the only option to feed their families. Many who were beginning to leave debt bondage behind were forced to borrow more at very high rates. Many people lack basic paperwork or a bank account, leaving them unable to access what little government help is available.

Traidcraft Exchange, alongside other Mission agencies such as USPG are seeking to help in a variety of ways. Food parcels with hygiene kits have been distributed through local churches and community groups.

Longer term help comes by bringing people together to form groups so they can access knowledge about their employment rights, establish small micro finance schemes and learn new skills which will bring more lucrative work.

A decent income means choices about the future and freedom to earn enough to escape the bondage of debt for good.

We can play our part through **PRAYER and PURCHASE.**

Look for Christmas presents this year which have been made by artisans. Browse those charity catalogues carefully and see where your purchase might make a difference to someone so they can be rescued from slavery and bondage.

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PRAYER FOR THE NATION

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York and senior church leaders have called a month of Prayer for the Nation during the second lockdown.

The suggestion is that as many of us as possible unite to do this at 6pm each day.

These prayers and themes are offered as tools to enable all to participate and are intended simply as suggestions.

A Family Prayer

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing.

We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with all our fears and concerns, our difficulties and challenges.

Please draw close to each of us and those we remember before you now.

Bring to us your peace and comfort.

And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your grace and hope to others.

As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us.

In the name of your Son Jesus we pray. Amen.

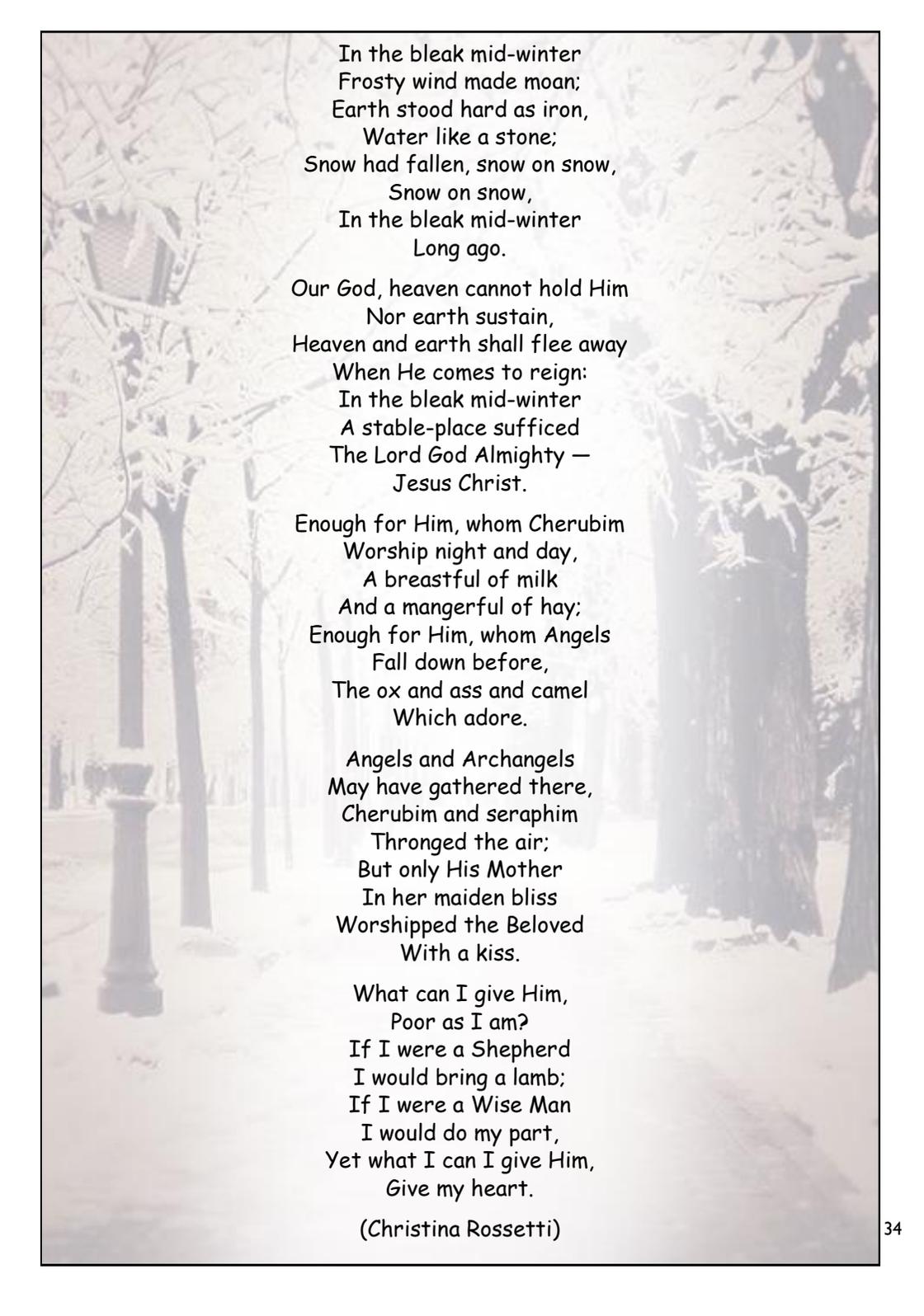
Prayers for the nation

Lord Jesus Christ,
In these dark and difficult days
we turn our hearts to you.
In ages past you have delivered
our nation from disaster.
Do it again we pray.

Give Wisdom beyond human
wisdom to our leaders.
Give strength beyond human
strength to the NHS and all our
frontline workers.
Give comfort beyond human
comfort to children and the
elderly and all who grieve.

Lord, Jesus Christ. In these
dark and difficult days, turn
your face towards us, have
mercy upon us, and heal our
land we pray. Amen

Loving God,
your Son Jesus Christ came
that we might have life and
have it abundantly;
pour out your blessing upon
our nation;
where there is illness,
bring your healing touch;
where there is fear,
strengthen us with the
knowledge of your presence;
where there is uncertainty,
build us up in faith;
where there is dishonesty,
lead us into truth;
where there is discord,
may we know the harmony of
your love;
this we ask in Jesus' name.
Amen.

A soft, hazy winter scene with snow-covered trees and a street lamp. The background is a light, misty landscape with snow on the ground and branches. A street lamp is visible on the left side. The overall tone is peaceful and serene.

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

Angels and Archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a Shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

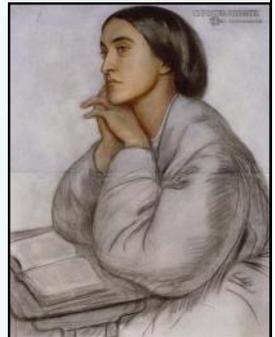
(Christina Rossetti)

In the Bleak Midwinter...

Carols are one of the core elements of worship at Christmas, and everyone tends to have a favourite. Mine has always been 'In the Bleak Midwinter', a carol based on a poem by the English poet Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) and published in 1872. The two most famous settings were composed by the English composers, Gustav Holst and Edwin Darke.

Holst lived in the village of Cranham in Gloucestershire, in a house now called 'Midwinter Cottage'. Here he penned his tune which became known simply as 'Cranham'. Now, I have to confess this is my favourite setting, but Darke's tune has always been more favoured by choirs. However, Edwin Darke was apparently always disappointed that this work overshadowed all his others!

Rossetti herself came from a talented and creative family. Her father was a poet, born in Abruzzo in Italy, he became exiled in London as a political dissident. However, their home was regularly filled with Italian scholars and artists and thus all four siblings went on to become skilled writers and artists. Her brother, Dante Rossetti, was a celebrated painter and indeed it is thanks to him, that we have so many images of his younger sister.



So, what of the hymn? The observant will have noted that the carol shifts between this world and the heavenly realm. We start in the first verse with the earth standing 'hard as iron' covered with 'snow on snow'. Our hearts then soar heavenwards in the second verse with the profoundly moving line, 'Our God, heaven cannot hold him' and then returns to earth and ends up in a stable.

The third verse whips us back up to worship with the cherubim before returning us to a 'manger full of hay'. The next verse somehow lifts us higher up the heavenly ranks, as we encounter the angels and archangels who 'thronged the air', but despite their mighty presence, it was a young woman, a new mum, who planted a kiss on her new-born baby.

However, the poem ends on a more personal note - with Rossetti questioning what could a mere female writer, sitting at her desk in Bloomsbury offer a child born as 'Lord God incarnate'? And it is perhaps her own answer with which we most connect: 'Yet what I can I give Him - Give my heart.'

A beautiful poem filled with rich imagery and yet how many of us have pondered whether Jesus really was born 'in the bleak midwinter'? Indeed, has Bethlehem ever seen snow?



There is no doubt that snow was considered an important aspect to a Victorian Christmas - perhaps because of Charles Dickens or because the winters of the 1860's had seen some significant snowfalls - but Bethlehem?

Well, we know from the Bible that snow was not an unknown phenomenon. 2 Samuel tells us that Benaiah 'went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion.' Then there is the rather curious Proverbs 31 that states, 'when it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet' (A sartorial recommendation perhaps picked up by Santa?).

However, I have always thought it more likely that Rossetti was using snow and iron as a metaphor for the hardness and coldness of the human heart that makes our life 'bleak'. Indeed, CS Lewis equated a fallen world as one where there was 'always winter and never Christmas' (The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe). In fact, the human heart has become so hard it experiences 'snow on snow'. Yet this is a poem about hope: into this harsh, cold world Jesus is born as a human. His teaching on love melts the freezing of the human heart and thus Rossetti concludes this is what we can give him back - a heart restored by his presence and transformed by his love.

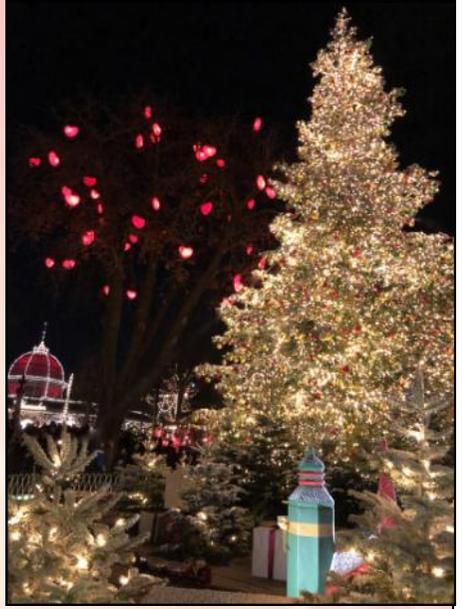
May we all know his peace, presence and transforming love in this midwinter season.

Helen Wren

Danish Julehygge

Jul is the Danish word for Christmas and is the same root as 'Yule'. *Hygge* is a hard-to-translate word for a special Scandinavian peaceful, relaxed contentedness.

In later years, the Scandinavian concept of 'hygge' has sparked an interest around the world. The Christmas season - and probably the darker seasons of autumn and winter - are closely related to this concept. Danes would add 'hygge' to words like Christmas or winter, talking about 'Christmas-hygge' or 'winter-hygge', describing some special form of relaxed contentedness around these seasons.



However, the underlying notion of Scandinavians having some exclusive access to this way of being, is probably mostly linked to the difficulty in making a one-to-one translation of the word, rather than 'hygge' being something other people cannot do.

Sure, there are differences between the ultimate Danish hygge-season of Christmas and an English Christmas: Danes celebrate Christmas on the 24th of December, typically kicking off the celebrations by attending a Christmas service in their local church. Most Danes have a real Christmas tree, which is only put up a few days prior to the day, and in some families decorated by a select few family members as a surprise to the rest of the family and any visitors.

Presents are put under the tree and opened following the Christmas meal as well as carolling and dancing around the tree. The Christmas meal lacks sprouts but includes sugar coated small potatoes, a dish of pickled red cabbage, and whether you are a family eating roast pork or roast duck, a delicious thick brown gravy is obligatory preferably served with warm crisps on the side! Instead of a coin in the Christmas cake, Danes have a whole almond hidden in the rice-almond pudding. The one who gets the almond receives the special 'almond-present'; a prize which traditionally would have been a chocolate covered marzipan pig.



These, however, are just the traditions: they are the familiar glue we gather around for Christmas. They are part of the traditions we sometimes fight over, and also the ways of doing things we cherish and want to pass on to our children. But they are - more than anything - ***things we do together.***

This year Christmas will be different for many of us. The pandemic will separate us from people we normally share this season with. For some it will be the first Christmas without a loved one, maybe a first Christmas spent alone, and experiencing Christmas-hygge may seem impossible. This year my family will most likely be missing our relatives in Denmark, who we usually visit, and our children are very keen to do all the things we usually do in Denmark. They want to have Danish food, the Danish Christmas decorations, the dancing around the tree. Doing the things we normally do, and knowing that we will be doing this with others - although apart - still creates a feeling of being together. For me that is the essence of 'hygge': It is the shared sense of joy and contentedness you get from the people you love, whether you are together or apart.

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