The LINK 30p

December 2018

The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Peace on earth

Dear Friends,

I don't know how you feel about Christmas. Are you someone who loves Christmas or someone who finds Christmas hard? Perhaps you love it because of the opportunity to eat good food, spend time with family, have a break, to give and receive presents.

Or perhaps you find Christmas hard. Christmas may bring back bad memories of sad times, or maybe it's just all the preparation that is required – the shopping and cooking and all that you have to do. I am very conscious that the past year has been a hard one for a number of people at St Michael's Church. Christmas can be both the best of times and the hardest of times.

The very first Christmas was a time of both joy and hardship. It's the story of a helpless baby being born in poverty – a family who had to flee from a ruthless and murderous king.

Yet it's a story of great joy. At our Christmas services, we will be hearing again some familiar readings, for example, the words of Isaiah the prophet:

"For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6)

We will also hear about angels appeared to some shepherds and saying, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.*" It's the story of a baby whom we believe was the Son of God. A baby who grew to become the most amazing person who ever lived. Jesus, by his death and resurrection, came to offer us peace with God himself – to hold out for us the opportunity to have a right relationship with the living God.
If you don't usually go to church, may I encourage you to come along to one of our Christmas services. Please join us to enjoy some lovely Christmas carols, to hear about that first Christmas and God's offer of peace.

If you are a church member, please think about whether there is someone you could invite to a Christmas service. Perhaps a member of your family, a friend or neighbour, that they might hear the message of peace.

May I wish you a joyful and peaceful Christmas.

Nigel

Christmas services at

St Michael's Church, Braintree

Sunday 16 December
6.30pm Carol Service *

Saturday 22 December
4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service *

Christmas Eve
11pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
8.00am Holy Communion
10.00am Family Celebration *

* Refreshments served afterwards

LIGHT PARTY 2018

Another very lovely time in church house. A mix of ages with plenty to do and plenty of fun.

Plenty of mouths and sugary lips. But where's Jennifer's doughnut?

Not much of a splat on Remy the rat!

Cover the coins. Not as easy as you think!

Still no Remy the rat!

Feel your way. What did you say?

More people, more coin, came result

I'm not quite sure where these go?

No Jo, you can't do that! Follow the rules please!

Go Jennifer in tin-can alley!

What's wrong with these big people? So much easier using your hands!

Go Hope!

Plenty of sand. But no sandcastles, but colourful sand filled crosses instead!

BIG THANK YOU to the organising team and helping team on the activities, refreshments and sound system on the night. It was fun and quite laid back and Emma, Ed, June and myself hope everyone enjoyed our evening together.
When we had finished clearing away, there was just one thing to say,

"Has anyone seen Remy the rat?"

Andy Carter

OUR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

BARNABAS runs a petition to the UK Government: Bring in a new law to protect religious freedoms.

In the light of the British tradition of fair play, tolerance, diversity and equality, and in line with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), we call upon the British government to introduce a new law to enshrine fully and

permanently the hard-fought-for religious freedoms we have gained over the last five centuries in the UK.

There are seven important aspects of freedom of religion which have become central to our national identity and values, but they need to be protected by a specific law.

1. Freedom of worship (achieved 1689).
2. Freedom to read Scriptures in public (achieved 1547).
3. Freedom to interpret Scriptures without government interference (achieved 1559).
4. Freedom to choose or change your faith or belief (achieved 1689).
5. Freedom to preach and try to convince others of the truth of your beliefs (achieved 1812).
6. Freedom to build places of worship (achieved 1812).
7. Freedom from being required to affirm a particular worldview or set of beliefs in order to attend university, hold a public sector job or stand for election (except where the is a genuine occupational requirement such as chaplaincy posts) (achieved 1888).

There is a petition form on one of the tables in the middle of the Church. I would like you to pray and urge member of the congregation who haven't signed this petition before, to sign it now. There are a number of cases where these aspects have been ignored. We do NEED them to become law.

Peter Schaad (Barnabas Fund representative)

DECEMBER DIARY

2 Sunday	**Advent**
8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Church Family Worship – Fishermen's Mission
6.30pm	Evening Worship – New birth
7.30pm	Focus
3 Monday	
12.15pm	Spotlight
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm	Bell Ringing
8.00pm	Badminton
4 Tuesday	
1.15pm	Tiddlywinks
7.30pm	PCC meeting
5 Wednesday	
9.45am	Meeting Point Bible Study
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
7.45pm	Bible Reading Group – Church House
8.00pm	Lifebuilder Bible Study
8.30pm	Men@StMichael's beer and chat – Wetherspoons, Fairfield Rd
6 Thursday	
3.30pm	ASK
7.30pm	Rose Hill Bible Study
8.00pm	Carry on Exploring Bible Study
7 Friday	
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
9 Sunday	**2nd of Advent**
8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Morning Worship – Sent to serve
6.30pm	Holy Communion – My soul thirsts for God
7.30pm	Focus

10 Monday

5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm	Bell Ringing
8.00pm	Badminton

11 Tuesday **JANUARY LINK SUBMISSION DUE**

1.15pm	Tiddlywinks
8.00pm	First Priority – Church House

12 Wednesday

9.45am	Meeting Point Bible Study
10.00am	Holy Communion
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
7.45pm	Bible Reading Group – Church House
8.00pm	Lifebuilder Bible Study

13 Thursday

7.30pm	Rose Hill Bible Study
8.00pm	Carry on Exploring Bible Study

14 Friday

2.00pm	Bradbury House Service
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts

16 Sunday **3rd of Advent**

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Holy Communion – Left speechless
6.30pm	Carol Service
7.30pm	Focus

17 Monday

12.15pm	Spotlight
5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers
7.30pm	Bell Ringing
8.00pm	Badminton
8.00pm	White Horse Tavern – Church House

18 Tuesday

1.15pm	Tiddlywinks

19 Wednesday

5.30pm	4th Braintree Beavers, Cubs & Scouts
7.45pm	Bible Reading Group – Church House

8.00pm Lifebuilder Bible Study

20 Thursday

7.30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

8.00pm Carry on Exploring Bible Study

21 Friday

2.00pm Bradbury House Service

22 Saturday

4.00pm Crib and Christingle Service

23 Sunday 4th of Advent

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Family Service – Open wide!

6.30pm Evening Worship – Light for those who sit in darkness

7.30pm Focus

24 Monday

11.00pm Midnight Communion

25 Tuesday Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Family Celebration – The birth of Jesus

30 Sunday 1st after Christmas

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Morning Worship – Wisdom beyond his years

7.30pm Focus

FROM THE REGISTERS

No entries

Verse of the Year 2019

Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11.28

FOODBANK UP-DATE

We continue to be very busy at all our centres - since April we have fed 2,367 people (993 of them children) which is the equivalent of 21,303 meals - we saw 65% more clients during the first six months of our financial year compared to the same period in 2017. We have distributed over 26.5 tonnes of food against 27.5 tonnes donated - so we are just about keeping our heads above water

Over the Harvest Festival period, we have received almost 10 tonnes of food from Harvest Festivals at churches and schools. Our warehouse stocks are a lot healthier than they were in September with a stock of a little over 12 tonnes.

However, winter is with us and many people have to decide whether to 'heat or eat' and we always see more clients in the second half of our financial year. If need rises at the same rate as in previous years, I have calculated we could need up to 26 tonnes of food to take us through to our year end in March.

We are so very grateful for your ongoing support and for all the kind messages we have received since our break-in. We are slowly getting back to normal and are waiting for our insurance claim to be processed.
We wish you all a Blessed Christmas.

Vivian Salter
Braintree Area Foodbank

God bless

Helen Hopkins

WORLD WAR ONE POEM

Let me set the scene. It is the eve of the First World War in the Crown pub in Hartest, which is some five miles from Long Melford.

The young lads, some twenty five or so are having their last drink before going off to fight. Most have agricultural jobs and many have never been out of the county. This is going to be the biggest adventure of their lives. After much back slapping from their pub friends they decide that each will nail a florin to the old wooden beam in front of the fire. This will buy their first drink when they come back, after all the war will not last long, will it?

Well, we all know the answer to that one, it did, and not one came back to claim his pint. If you go to the pub you will still find the coins plus a horseshoe painted black, the same as the beam. They have a microbrewery and serve a very good pint as well as a sandwich and a bowl of soup for £5. It is worth the trip as it is a beautiful village. You will also be able to read the following poem which was written later and on the wall by the fire. A poignant reminder of those dreadful times.

The year was 1914 and the men were off to war,
To fight for king and country, for that's what men are for,
To be brave; to leave their loved ones; to kill, perhaps to die,
Their loved one's lot to stay behind, to wait and wonder why.

The bravado and the beer was flowing in the public bar,
And lovers swore to wait till lovers came back from afar;
Each nailed a florin to the beam that spanned the Crown,
And as each man returned home safe, a florin would come down.

The men took off on trains with farewell kiss and fond goodbye,
In trains that took them on to boats, more trains, and then to die;
A line of florins waited for the swift return of all,
And besides them hung a farthing, poor solitary and small.

Was it all that he was worth, or was it all that she could spare?
Was the forfeit of a florin more than one poor purse could bear?
And as they nailed it to the beam, did she feel ashamed?
But a florin or a farthing, it is a symbol, just the same.

Symbols of the constancy of lovers left to wait,
Symbols of their hope, and maybe offerings of fate;
And as each soldier came home, as each couple reunite,
A florin was brought down for every man back from the fight.

A florin was brought down for every man back through the door,
But at the Crown in Hartest, you will still see twenty four;
Twenty four who never came back from the fields of France alive,
And a solitary farthing makes the number twenty five.

Supplied by Rod Davey

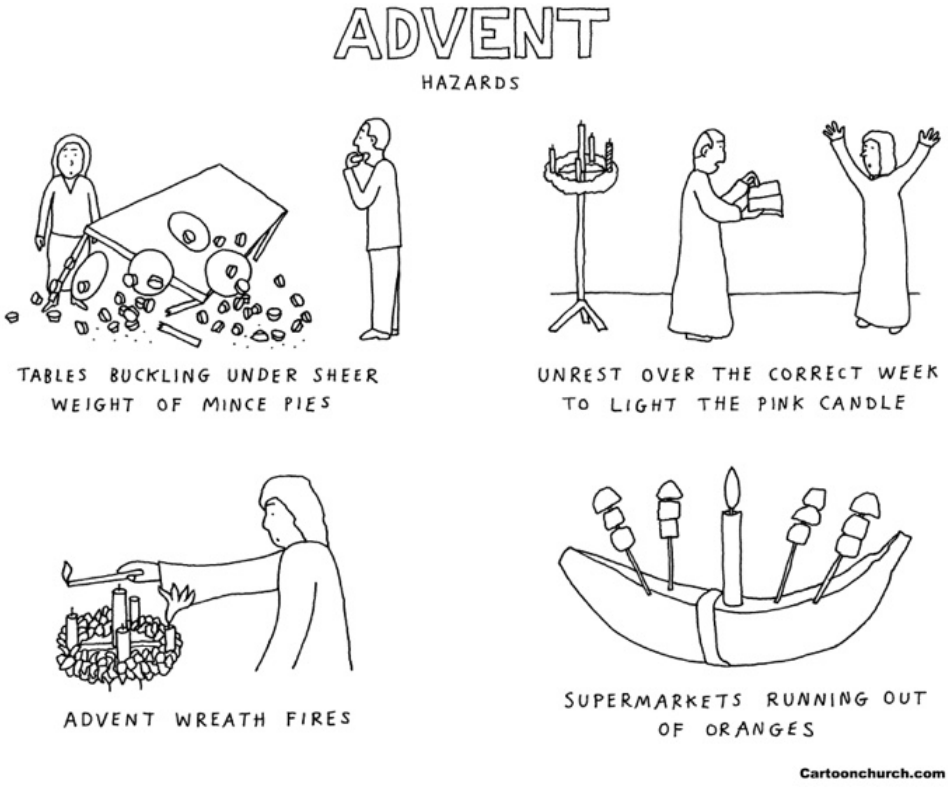
ALMOND MACAROON RECIPE

Whites of 2 eggs
200g Caster Sugar
150g Ground Almonds
1 teaspoon Almond Essence

1. Whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks.
2. Fold in the sugar, ground almonds & almond essence.
3. Put tablespoon size mounds of mixture well apart, onto a greased baking tray and scatter a few flaked almonds on top.
4. Bake at gas mark 3 / 170C until pale golden brown. (20-25 mins)

Joyce Plaistow

A LITTLE HUMOUR



DIARY OF A NEW CHURCH WARDEN

24th September
Lesley the other churchwarden and treasurer goes on holiday, little does she realise what I will be getting up to whilst she's gone.

19th October
Cyril deputised for me as we had a new roof alarm fitted to the church. This is to prevent anti-social behaviour and to protect our building. We now have to remember to turn it off before setting the flags on the top of the church.

20th October
This was the first work party since I went back to work. Despite only a small number of individuals we achieved a lot. Everything from fitting new clocks, tidying the car park to new signage and checking electrical items for safety. Next time I hope to see more people.

22nd October
Work started on the electrics in church house and the church. Over the two weeks, we had installed 6 new distribution boards, new lighting and electrics in church house outhouse, new external sockets fitted, new lights in the small hall and the Jesus chapel, emergency lighting throughout church house, and the church, and the electrics made resilient for the future.

23rd October
Lesley returns to new electrics, roof alarm, fire alarm, more tidying and a large bill to be paid. ☺

Dave Marriott