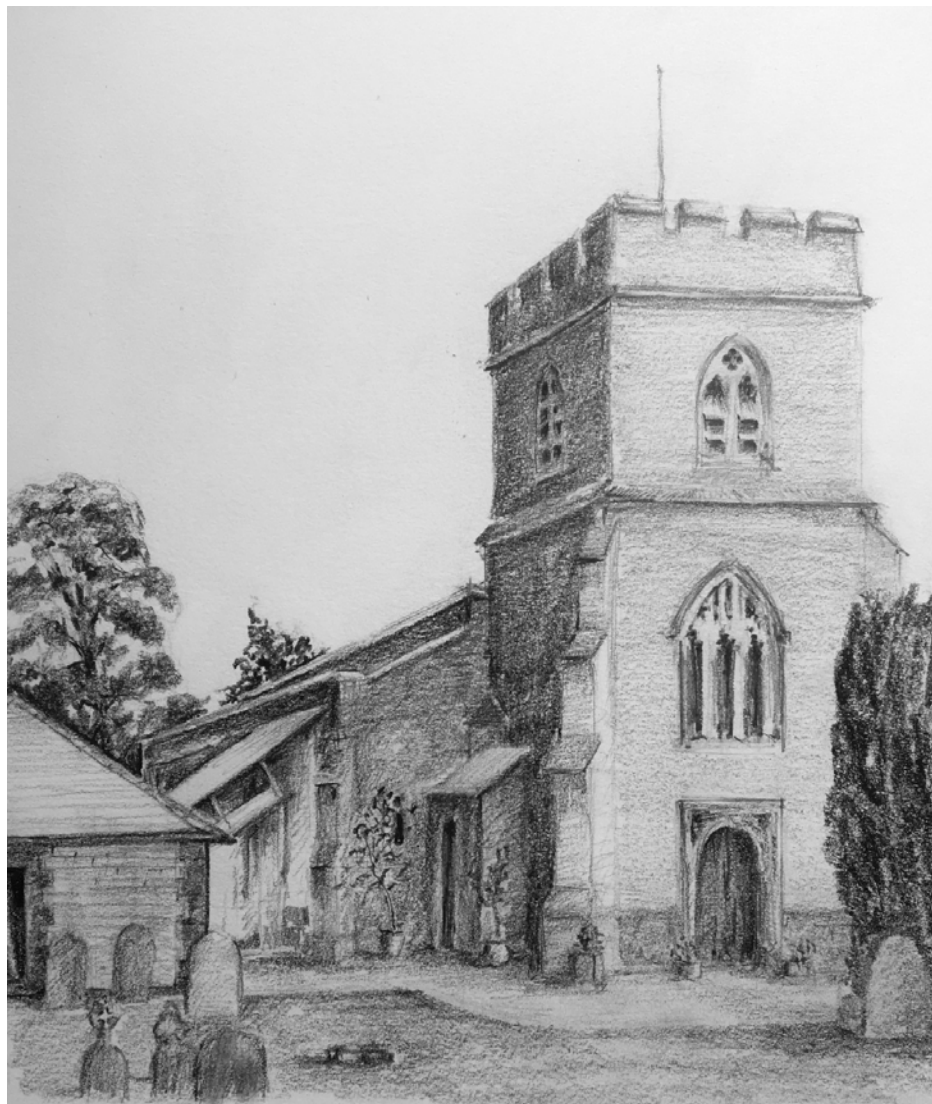


Parish News

St Peter and St Paul, Little Gaddesden

£ 1.00

February 2024



St Peter and St Paul, Little Gaddesden HP4 1NZ

Berkhamsted Team

Revd John Russell, Team Rector

St John's Vicarage, Pipers Hill, Great Gaddesden, HP1 3BY

Tel: 01442 214898, 07950 105802

vicar@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

www.littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

We are in the Berkhamsted Team Ministry with Great Berkhamsted, Great Gaddesden and Nettleden with Potten End. Enquiries regarding Baptisms, Banns, Weddings, Funerals and Memorials in the Churchyard should be made to the above-mentioned email address. Messages can also be left with the Churchwardens. If the Vicarage telephone is on the answering service, please leave a message. It will be attended to as soon as possible.

All are welcome to our House of God. All have their place in His Kingdom and their part to play in His work

Phone numbers preceded by code 01442 those noted.

ASSOCIATE PRIEST: Miranda Seldon 07761 165871

CHURCHWARDENS: Terri Adams 842746

Jane Dickson 843220

READERS: Anthony Archer 842397

Heather Tisbury 01582 842807

PCC OFFICERS: Treasurer: Allan Webster 843157

Secretary: Barbara Sheard 843591

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER: Heather Tisbury 01582 842807

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR: Helene Hockings on a_dmin-church@outlook.com or 01442 842493

SUNDAY SERVICES: 9am Eucharist Service or Café Church (2nd Sunday)

6pm Evensong at Nettleden on the 1st and 3rd Sunday
of the month

6pm Occasional Iona or Taizé services

5th Sunday – Joint Eucharist at one of our three churches

Please do check the website for up-to-date details

THOMAS FIELD HALL: email: tfh.bookings@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

WEEKDAY SERVICE: Thursday 10am Said Eucharist

BELL RINGING: Sunday 8.30am Practice: Tuesday 8.00pm

Tower Captain – Virginia Westmacott 842428

CHOIR PRACTICE: Friday 7.00pm – John Leonhardt 843550

LG CofE PRIMARY We welcome all children aged 4 – 11. Contact the Head Teacher
SCHOOL: for more information on 01442 842464 or

admin@littlegaddesden.herts.sch.uk

PARISH NEWS EDITORS: Helene Hockings, Nick Murray, Mike Walsham.

See inside back page for contact details.

PITSTOP CAFÉ: Gayle Storey 01582 662132

WEEKLY UPDATES: PEW SHEET distributed each Sunday. Items for inclusion should
be sent to Helene Hockings, a_dmin-church@outlook.com by
9am on Thursday

Vol 47 No.02

Dear Friends,

This is part of my Christmas Day sermon which I hope conveys a message we can carry into this New Year of 2024.

In a world which at present doesn't appear to offer a lot of hope, St Luke's account of the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 2: 1-20) has, above all, a sense of hope running through it, even though the word hope is never actually used. Hope is oxygen for life, it is the lifeblood for a life of faith and our spiritual well-being, in fact, for every part of our existence. Hope can enable us to stand in bleak places with resilience, it can suddenly break out in joy and add layers of meaning and nuance to life, even in the darkest moments we all inevitably face, and hope will carry us through the days and months that lie ahead with a promise of a life beyond the horizons of the here and now.

This profound hope can be found if we look reasonably hard, in the humblest places of the world, even in the war-torn places of the world. So, whatever has to be faced this coming year, never give up hope because that is where our faith lies and through it, God, brings light to the dark places; His love pierces any veil of tears.

As the prophet Isaiah says,

'he breaks the rod of the oppressor; he gives us hope in his son who is named: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'

Don't be fooled into thinking it's all ethereal out of this world stuff. Christian hope is earthed in flesh and bone, in human life. It's found in the vulnerability of a child born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago and, quite unexpectedly, in places that the powerful might overlook. God lifts up the lowly and raises up the humble - look at Mary, the mother of his Son. It rather comes into focus when a group of shabby shepherds receive a visit beyond their wildest dreams. Amidst the normal, humdrum round of shepherding, suddenly, the familiar is blown away, angels light up the sky. The angel of the Lord stands before them, shining; and these rough lads, these shepherds, are terrified.

As is so often the case, the first words spoken, as to Mary is '*Do not be afraid*'. The angel says he brings good news of great joy for all the people, in other words, hope to a darkened world. This is not hope for the favoured few, for the elite, this is radical hope for all, the Saviour, the Messiah and Lord, no less, is to be born and this hope, this good news is communicated to outcasts to the downtrodden and poor, and is to be found in lowly places:

'You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.'

Here is God planting his hope in the ordinary, in everyday lives; the sacred wriggles its way into the secular.

So Jesus is born amid the everyday - then as now and therefore, God - is to be found in the unexpected as well as the expected places; over the washing-up, perhaps, or over a coffee, in a conversation, in a flower, in a beautiful landscape, or in a mud hut, on a bus, on the train; perhaps even, in a homeless hostel.

The backdrop of 2000 odd years ago is oddly familiar, politics are involved, so nothing is new or above the sacred. A census for taxation purposes ordered by the Emperor Augustus has everyone heading back to their place of birth to be registered. A sense of uncertainty and fear was bound to be prevalent, but huge spiritual and political hopes often co-exist with our own smaller, more personal hopes.

So this year, we no doubt hope for the resolution of political conflicts, we may hope for peace in the world, we may hope for life beyond the life we know, we may hope for, well, anything. Hope - profound hopes, trivial hopes - they coexist. This coming year, look in the ordinary places, I'm sure you'll be surprised. and in the words of the Angel Gabriel, '*Do not be afraid...*'.

Have faith and live in God's hope...

Happy New Year!

I am yours in Christ, John.



CAFÉ CHURCH!

A different type of service for everyone and especially families.

A much more relaxed and informal Café format with tables in the nave or the Thomas Field Hall.

Coffee, tea and pastries on arrival.

No sermon, more of a chat!

Please join us on Sunday 11th February at 9am

Fairtrade Fortnight

9th September – 22nd September 2024

Fairtrade Fortnight is usually at the end of February/early March but this year, to coincide with their 30th birthday, the fortnight is being moved to September as part of their year-long milestone celebrations.

For more details and to get involved, go to www.fairtrade.org.uk

Herts and Beds Historic Churches Trust Sponsored

Bike & Hike 2023 – A Big Thank You!

I am pleased to report that Little Gaddesden Church raised a whopping £783.00 for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust 2023! This is a fantastic achievement and higher than last year! 50% of this money will return to Little Gaddesden Church, the money being earmarked for use in the upkeep of our own beautiful historic church building. The three participants were Barbara Sheard (cycling), John Leonhardt (hiking) and me (cycling), and between us we visited over 100 churches. As always, a huge thank you to the participants, the helpers who volunteered their time to welcome cyclists and hikers, and our very generous sponsors! I hope this year in September we will have more bikers and hikers to participate in this very enjoyable event!

Peter Leonhardt

NO END TO SLAVERY

I have always been fascinated by John Newton, the anti-slavery campaigner. When he was curate in charge at Olney in north Buckinghamshire, he met the Berkhamsted born poet William Cowper, who had moved to the town following one of his many nervous breakdowns. The happy result was the Olney hymns, to which both contributed. Cowper wrote, among others, 'God Moves in A Mysterious Way', while Newton's most popular hymn, indeed the most performed hymn in the world, is 'Amazing Grace'.

Newton was a slave trader before his conversion to Christianity, and later became a passionate opponent.

I knew nothing about his life after Olney until a while ago, when I found myself with a couple of hours to spare in the City of London. I visited some of the wonderful Wren churches, including what many consider his masterpiece, St Stephens Walbrook, said to have "the most perfectly proportioned interior in the world". Looking inside it seemed to me not much of an exaggeration. The dome was a 'trial run' for St Paul's, and was the first ever in this country. In this part of the City, there seems to be a Wren church round every corner.

Christopher Wren's great contemporary, Nicholas Hawksmoor, built just one church in the area, St Mary Woolnoth, off Lombard Street, and I was keen to see inside. I was not disappointed, but, just as I was about to leave, I saw a memorial high up on the north wall. It says that in 1779 John Newton became Rector here until his death 28 years later.

During that time St Mary's became a key centre of the anti-slavery movement, and is where Newton led William Wilberforce through a spiritual crisis, and encouraged him in his abolitionist campaigns.

In 1788 Newton broke a long silence on his own involvement in slavery with the publication of a powerful pamphlet, 'Thoughts Upon the Slave Trade', in which he described the horrible conditions aboard the slave ships. He apologised for "a confession, which ... comes too late.... It will always be a subject of humiliating reflection to me, that I was once an active instrument in a business at which my heart now shudders".

He had copies sent to every MP and it was quickly reprinted. He also arranged for the printing of a graphic which showed how tightly packed were the slaves during their dreadful sea journeys, shackled to each other with no room to turn over. It was an immensely powerful, and successful, piece of propaganda.

(Newton and his wife were originally buried in the churchyard of St Mary Woolnoth, but at the end of the nineteenth century their bodies were moved back to Olney.)

St Mary's has maintained its link with the anti-slavery movement, which is still needed. As some powerful posters in the church point out, "Slavery Still Exists Today". It's on our streets. One poster says, "Antonia was just 19 years old when she was trafficked from Romania to London for sexual exploitation. She suffered eight months of brutal abuse", before she was brought to safety.

The International Justice Mission says, "The shocking truth is that -today - 12 million children are trapped in slavery around the world".

Slavery is built-in to some of our food supply chains.

The poster invites us to join the movement IJMUK.org/Act.

John Newton's work is not yet done.

ROGER BOLTON

From the Registers:

November 2023:

12th	Service of Peace & Reconciliation
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December 2023:

1st	Memorial Service	David Norman Roberts
7th	Burial of Ashes	Margery Rigby
11th	Funeral	Jennifer Waters
18th	Funeral	Bill Burrell
27th	Funeral and Burial	Susan McMorran
31st	Wedding	Joshua Renouf and Sophie Scott

January 2024:

13th	Funeral	George Peter Mills
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Evensong

Choral Evensong is one of the glories of the English musical tradition, which many people enjoy, whether or not they are regular church-goers. These days it is the cathedrals, along with some major churches, which are the guardians of this tradition. But as recently as the early 1960s, Sung Evensong on Sundays, together with its morning counterpart of Mattins, were services that figured more prominently than the Eucharist; they were the congregational services within the Church of England. In parish churches, the Eucharist was often said quite early on Sunday morning, with maybe a mid-morning Sung Eucharist once a month. Now, by contrast, the Eucharist is commonly the main Sunday service and Evensong has all but disappeared – though not in cathedrals.

The prominence given to the Eucharist and the near-loss of Evensong within a parish setting began in the 1960s, when modernised wording for the service was introduced. The speed and extent of the change was variable, but it was a marked trend, and it is now rare for the wording of the Book of Common Prayer to be used. Yet, despite the changes we have become used to, Evensong is resistant: in Cathedrals, whether Evensong is said or sung, we still use the language of Thomas Cranmer, Henry VIII's Archbishop of Canterbury. The musical settings that we enjoy work well with Cranmer's language, giving the service a rich and peaceful solemnity which is widely appreciated.

The term 'evensong' goes back to Anglo-Saxon times, when it was used as the vernacular name for the service of Vespers, one of the Hours or services within the monastic daily round of worship. The name 'Vespers' comes from the Latin for 'evening': liturgical books usually headed the service with the phrase 'ad vesperum', which means 'at evening', so it's easy to see why the Anglo-Saxons came up with the name *aefensang* – 'evensong'. Cranmer, when he was writing the new liturgy to characterize and define the Church of England, used Evensong as the name for the service that he created by amalgamating the building upon the pre-Reformation services of Vespers and Compline (the very last service of the monastic day). So his Evensong is highly traditional in its form. It was called Evensong in the 1549 BCP, was renamed as Evening Prayer in the 1552 edition, and was restored as Evensong in 1662.

We can see from this that the history of Evensong doesn't simply tell us about changing practices in the twentieth century; tracking it through the various versions of the BCP also tells us about changes at the time of the Reformation and its aftermath.

In the BCP of 1549, largely prepared under Henry VIII although issued in the reign of Edward VI, Evensong was not thought of as a congregational service,

but rather as one of the services of devotion for the clergy, reflecting something of its ultimately monastic origins. The BCP of 1552, a product of Edward VI's more rigorous Protestantism, changed that: the congregation was expected to attend on Sundays and to take part; there was to be no music – hence the renaming of the service as Evening Prayer; and, alongside this, vestments were simplified – wooden tables replaced stone ones, and church interiors were stripped and whitewashed with greater vigour than before.

It was the Restoration of the Monarchy, the resulting 1662 BCP, and consequent further change to liturgical practice that put Evensong in the prominent position it held in parish life until the mid-twentieth century.

Joyce Hill, Two Valleys Parish News

A POEM FOR FEBRUARY

A monochrome and leaden sky weighs heavy on my shoulder,
And cold and winter hunger makes the garden robin bolder,
Puffed up and rounded, his scarlet breast lights up the gloomy day,
I offer him sunflower seed and grated cheese, tempting him to stay.

Above, untidy flocks of rook and crow and raven,
Seeking food and shelter, a corvid winter haven,
As they float and flap above the frozen fields
But on that sleeping land nothing gives or yields.

In the woods I search, and find a hopeful sign,
A symbol of the coming spring, pure and modest by design,
But tough enough to find a way through ice and scattered snow,
The snowdrop lights up the month with its pale, ethereal glow.

Josie Jeffrey

The Ark of the Covenant

(continued from the December 2023/January2024 issue)

Before the conversion of King Ezana to Christianity by Abuna Salama – formerly known as Frumentius – over half the inhabitants were Jews, the majority of the remainder were worshippers of Sando, the Dragon, and other primitive, animistic gods. As mentioned in previous issues, the conversion of these people to Christianity and the building of traditional circular or octagonal churches continued unabated till the 7th. century.

In about 615AD, when some of Prophet Mohammed's disciples and followers were being persecuted in Arabia by clansmen of his own Qureish tribe, the Prophet sent word to the Axumite King, Armah, and asked for asylum for some of his followers. The Empire was well known to the Prophet as his nurse, who raised him after his mother's early death, was Ethiopian. He also knew that Ethiopia was a free and religiously devout land, ruled by a magnanimous monarch and which had strong cultural and economic links with Arabia and the Yemen. The Prophet's followers, including his first wife, his daughter, his cousin and a number of senior disciples, were granted asylum. When Mecca's leading reactionary tribe heard that the group had fled to Axum, they sent emissaries to bring them back to Arabia, but King Armah protected them. Numerous Arab and Muslim chroniclers over the years have lavished praise on the only land beyond Arabia's borders that responded positively to Mohammed's pleas in his hour of need. Muslim scribes state that the Ethiopian king converted to Islam and adopted the name of Ahmed, much to the consternation of his subjects, the Orthodox Church and the Courts. There is probably much truth in this as, on the king's death, the Prophet, as a token of his gratitude and respect, urged his followers to especially revere the Ethiopians and treat them kindly, so long as they do not take the offensive.

During the following centuries, there was an influx of immigrants and traders from Arabia and Yemen that increased the number of Muslims in Somalia, Eritrea and what is now Ethiopia. In the coastal areas, Islamic law gradually took root and, by the 14th. century, it was the basis for the official judicial code in the eastern and southern regions. The Muslims coexistence with Christians was not always an easy one and the sultans who ruled over many parts of Ethiopian territory sometimes came into open conflict with

the Christian kings. It is generally agreed, however, that the sultans were tolerant of their Christian subjects and that forced conversions were rare.

By the 7th. and 8th. centuries, the Axum Empire was beginning to wane; embassies abroad were few and its once formidable military power was in decline. This marked change, eventually leading to total isolation over the next few centuries, had much to do with the advance of Islam and the encirclement of Abyssinian Christianity. It would be tempting to assume, therefore, that the Abyssinians had reverted to barbarism during this period, but the opposite was true, if only because of the continued contact with the Egyptian patriarch and the Falashas with Jerusalem.

At the end of the 10th. century, the Solomonic line was interrupted as a result of a *coup d'état* set up by Gudit, who seemed to be intent on obliterating the Christian religion. Gudit was a senior female warrior from a large tribal confederation called the Agaw, to which the Falashas belonged. By all accounts, she raised part of Axum to the ground, killing the emperor and 2 of the princes. A third prince managed to escape to the southern province of Shoa where he married and produced children, thus ensuring the survival of the old dynasty.

One of the most important periods of mediaeval Ethiopian history started in the mid-12th. century, by which time the monarchy had been converted back to Christianity. King Harbay had a half-brother, who seemed to have been destined for greatness: whilst in his crib at his birth-place of Roha, a dense swarm of bees surrounded him and when his mother saw this- believing that the animal world could foretell the future of important people- cried out 'Lalibela'- literally meaning 'the bees recognise his sovereignty'. The prince was therefore named Lalibela, but the king was very jealous, feared for his safety on the throne and tried unsuccessfully to have the young prince murdered. Persecutions continued for a number of years, culminating in his administering a deadly poison that plunged him into a deep sleep. Legends state that the stupor lasted 3 days, during which time he was transported by angels to heaven, where God ordered him to return to Roha and to build churches, the like of which the world had never seen before. The Almighty also told the prince how to design those churches, where to build them, and how to decorate them.

After Lalibela resumed mortal existence, Harbay (acting on God's instructions) went to pay homage to Lalibela and asked for his forgiveness, whereupon Harbay abdicated in favour of his younger brother. When Lalibela was crowned, he brought together masons, carpenters, tools, and purchased the necessary building land. The spectacular, monolithic churches, which were built at Roha (now renamed Lalibela), went up with extraordinary speed and, according to legend, it was because the angels continued the work at night. He renamed the river running through the town the 'Jordan'; one of the churches was designed to symbolise the Church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem; a nearby hill was named *Debre Zeit* (Mount of Olives), representing where Christ was captured.

Even though the capital had been moved to Roha, at no time did King Lalibela consider moving the Ark from the Holy of Holies in the church of Saint Mary of Zion in Axum, which, to this day, is Ethiopia's most important centre of the Orthodox *Tewahedo* Christian faith.

(to be continued in March 2024's issue)

Mike Walsham

WHAT I DID ON MY HOLIDAYS

Well, quite a lot of cake was partaken of, along with the usual vino collapse followed by paracetamol, Benlyn, antibiotics, Vick vapour rub, and a hot toddy or ten. So, the same as everyone else. And here we are, blearily blinking, at the promise of the sunny uplands of February and longer days at least.

There were some dry days over December and January and I made it over to College Lake for some stress-busting, cheering up walks. On 16th January, for example I was following in the slipstream of a well wrapped up chap with a serious looking 'scope. (what we serious twitchers call a telescope) which he trained on the tops of a group of leafless trees near the lake's edge. There were groups of twittering small birds arriving from a thicket in nearby woodland; they just kept arriving, chattering excitedly as they joined the leaders dancing around the treetops.

From my perspective, they were about goldfinch size and looked beige in colour.. The chap, with his scope fixed on them exclaimed, “Wow”, the bird watchers equivalent of a train spotter catching the Flying Scotsman and the Mallard, even possibly the much rarer 17.48 Euston to Milton Keynes, something of a ghost train. I had to ask what they were and it turns out they were a huge flock of siskins and I added my own “Wow”. I have only ever seen one at a time on my feeders in the depths of a blisteringly freezing winter. They are similar to a greenfinch, but smaller and a bit posher looking, winter visitors from colder climes.

They just kept coming, twittering prettily before, all gathered, they continued along the lake’s edge young trees. There must have been at least sixty and made me wish I had bothered to take my binoculars (* real reason at end of article.). As it had been very cold the lake was partially frozen over so less open water for the waterfowl but as it was such a good berry year there are lots of visitors: small flocks of fieldfares and redwings, plus more blackbirds and mistle (I always want to say Missile) thrushes. They are big bullies. Where I used to live there were 5 whitebeam trees which had good crops of winter berries and a pair of missile thrushes spent all their time chasing other birds away which gave them good appetites.

Something else which was very pleasing, during early December there was a songthrush singing mostly between the pub car park (Parkageddon) and the Park entrance area. He seemed to start off a trainee, practising his calls, (which he repeats from between two to six times, check it out!) and became more confident, increasing his repertoire. So, good luck, hope you find a lovely lady songthrush, we need more of you.

*The truth about my lack of binoculars: The sad fact is that when I spot some avian poser, preening itself on a branch somewhere, it takes me so long to adjust the sights that my target has checked it’s watch, stretched, remembered a subsequent appointment and sadly departed, so missing out on it’s close up. Sad but true. Still, never mind, I have managed to have something to report about the holiday. I mean, 60 plus siskins!. Wow!

Josie Jeffrey

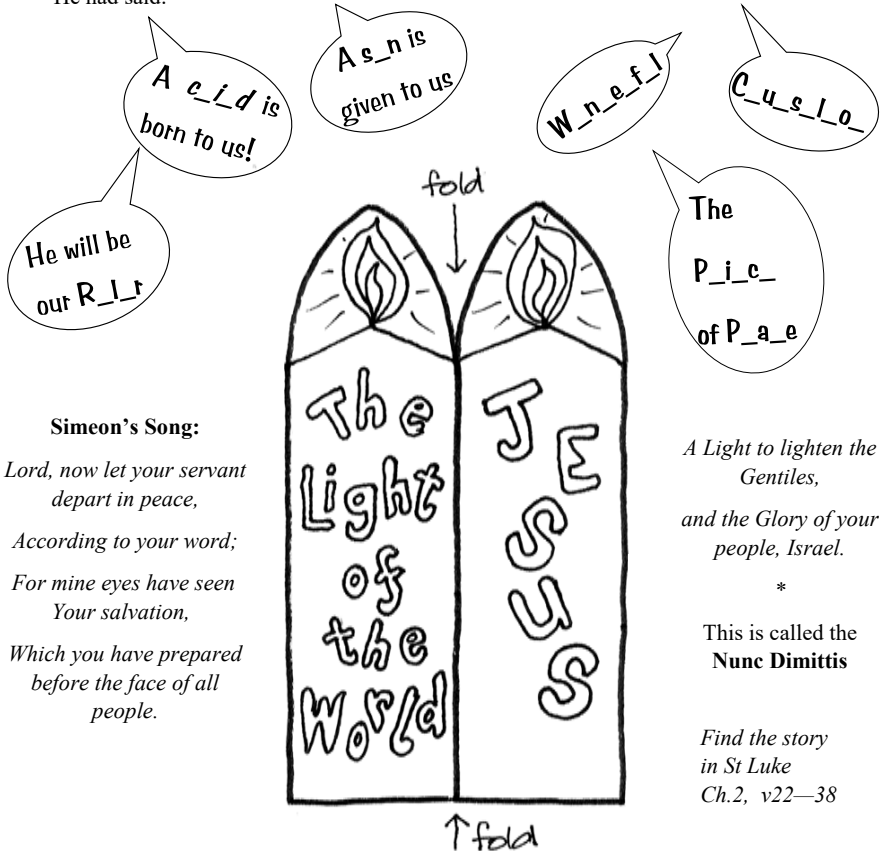
CHILDREN'S PAGE

February the 2nd is when we celebrate **ACHAINEDOLSEUMPARS** _____

(take every second letter to find the word). We remember when the baby Jesus was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem. A faithful man called Simeon had come to the Temple that day, and when he saw baby Jesus he immediately knew that He was the true Messiah whom the prophet Isaiah had written about, hundreds of years before. (Isaiah ch.9 v.6)

He had said:

And he will be called:



Simeon's Song:

Lord, now let your servant
depart in peace,
According to your word;
For mine eyes have seen
Your salvation,
Which you have prepared
before the face of all
people.

A Light to lighten the
Gentiles,
and the Glory of your
people, Israel.

*

This is called the
Nunc Dimittis

Find the story
in St Luke
Ch.2, v22—38

Simeon called Jesus A LIGHT so here is a candle bookmark to cut out and make up.
Cut around the whole shape then fold it in half, glueing it together. Colour it in.

PRAYER PAGE

O God of all hope and peace,
we bring to you the needs of our broken and hurting world.
Our hearts are breaking with images of lives lost and torn apart
by grief in Israel and Palestine.
We pray for an end to violence and warfare so that the challenging work
of rebuilding may begin.
Help us, O Lord, to affirm our common humanity
so that in our differences
we may build together for justice and peace.
In Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Heavenly Father,
you have taught us, through your servant St Francis,
that all creation is your handiwork.
Grant us your grace that we may
exercise wise stewardship of this Earth;
tread lightly upon it
and cherish its resources,
that our children may enjoy its riches throughout all generations,
and your name be glorified through all that you have made.

Amen

Rt Revd David Walker, Bishop of Manchester

O God, the strength of my life,
make known your will for me in this place:
help me to discover friends among strangers,
to meet opportunities and challenges eagerly,
and to do my daily tasks in your name.
Give me strength to overcome my worries,
and preserve me in your safekeeping,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

CHURCH SERVICES – FEBRUARY

I Sunday 4th February – 2nd Sunday before Lent		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
II Sunday 11th February – Sunday next before Lent		
9am	Morning Prayer	Nettleden
9am	Café Church	Little Gaddesden
11am	Café Church	Great Gaddesden
Wednesday 14th February – Ash Wednesday		
7.30pm	Sung Eucharist with imposition of Ashes	Great Gaddesden
III Sunday 18th February – Lent 1		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden
IV Sunday 25th February – Lent 2		
9am	Morning Prayer	Nettleden
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
I Sunday 3rd March – Lent 3		
9am	Parish Communion	Little Gaddesden
11am	Parish Communion	Great Gaddesden
6pm	Evensong	Nettleden

Mid-Week Services		
Tuesdays	9am Holy Communion	Great Gaddesden
Thursdays	10am Holy Communion	Little Gaddesden

Parish News Editors:

Helene Hockings, Nick Murray, Mike Walsham

editor-pn@littlegaddesdenchurch.org.uk

Deadline Date: Friday 16th February