



# *St. Nicholas News*



**Price 50p**

**December 2013**

## Church Diary December 2013

Date	Time	Event
Sunday 1st	8.30 am 10.30 am. 3.00pm	<b>Advent</b> Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion & Young People's Church Service of Glad Remembrance
Tuesday 4th	7.30pm	Taize Evening Prayer
Wednesday 5th	10.00am	Eucharist
Friday 6th	6.30pm	<b>Tree Lighting ceremony, Fog Lane</b>
Sunday 8th	8.30 am. 10.30 am. 12 noon	<b>2nd Sunday of Advent</b> Holy Communion (BCP) All –age Worship PARISH LUNCH
Wednesday 11th	10.00am	Eucharist
Saturday 14th	12to 2.00	CTIB Carol Singing in Tesco, Burnage
Sunday 15th	8.30 am. 10.30 am. 3.00pm	<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b> Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion & Young People's Church CAROL SERVICE
Wednesday 18th	10.00am	Eucharist
Saturday 21st	4.00pm 8.00pm	<b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL,</b>
Sunday 22nd	10.30am	<b>4th Sunday of Advent</b> CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
Wednesday 24th	10.00am 11.30pm	Eucharist <b>Midnight Eucharist</b>
Thursday 25th	8.30am 10.30am	<b>Christmas Day</b> Holy Communion (BCP) Family Service
Sunday 29th	8.30am 10.30am	<b>1st Sunday of Christmas</b> Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion

## Rector's Letter

Perhaps it's a sign of encroaching old age, but the festive season seems to come around more quickly with each passing year. Nonetheless, December remains a precious, if incredibly busy, month. In an age when our society seems to struggle with embracing the season of Advent, it has become a pressured time. Yet those of us who are trying to keep faithful to the Way of Christ should try to prepare for the rejoicing that awaits us on Christmas Day. I know only too well how difficult it can be to treat Advent as a proper time of preparation and prayer. I pray that, for each of us, Advent isn't simply a time of rushing around and worry.

I am delighted that this year our Christmas preparations are marked by activities and events both old and new. As you would expect we have our traditional Carol Service (15<sup>th</sup> December), Christingle (22<sup>nd</sup> December) and Midnight Mass. Each of these services offer a real chance to engage anew with the mystery and joy embedded in the Christmas story. Christingle, in particular, should be great fun this year, as

Janette & Sally (our placement students) will be presenting a puppet-based Nativity! In addition, we expect the Tree-Lighting Service to take place on the corner of Fog Lane on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30. Last year this event brought 300 people into church afterwards for refreshment. If singing carols really is your thing you can also join Christians Together in Burnage at Tesco on 14<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon.

We have another event happening in December which should help everyone get ready for the great celebrations of Christmas Day itself – our new production of A Christmas Carol being held on 21<sup>st</sup> December. Adapted from the Dickens' classic, this production has been written by our musical director Ollie Mills and will be presented by Burnage Community Choir and a full cast. This production builds on the success of St Nick's production of Jesus Christ Superstar in the spring, but is also quite different. A Christmas Carol is a truly community-based production using the skills of a community choir, congregation members and other folk based in

members and other folk based in and around Burnage. It will demonstrate what a small, but focussed community can achieve when it concentrates its resources and talents. Do book your tickets early as it promises to be spectacular.

The story of redemption and good news at the heart of A Christmas Carol is a timeless and timely one. I know I can be a bit grumpy and curmudgeonly, even Scrooge-like, when it comes to Christmas, yet A Christmas Carol's simple message of love shown in sharing and being open to our neighbour is ever potent. I hope it will really help us get ready for Christmas Day itself, when we celebrate God coming to share himself with us in the baby Jesus Christ.

Christmas can be a very stressful time. Sometimes our expectations place too great a burden on the reality. At its heart, Christmas is about grace – its message is that we are not measured by what we can buy or by our power and influence but by our capacity to receive love and offer love. We are invited to open ourselves to God's love and blessing, a love as disarming as a baby, as simple as a child's smile.

Love and peace be yours this festive season. Rachel x

## **Thank Dickens for Christmas as you know it!**

Ever wonder where many of our Christmas traditions come from? A surprising amount can be traced back to the well-loved story of 'A Christmas Carol', by Charles Dickens.

When you read 'A Christmas Carol', you discover almost a template of the 'ideal Christmas' which we still hold dear today. Dickens seems to have selected the best of the Christmas celebrations of his day (he ignored some of the odd excesses) and packaged them in such a way as to give us traditions that we could accommodate and treasure – more than a century later.

So, for instance, in A Christmas Carol, Christmas is a family day, with a family-centred feast. In a home decorated with holly and candles the

characters enjoy a roast turkey, followed by Christmas pudding. They give their loved ones presents. Scrooge even gives donations to charity (!). And all the while outside, there is snow and frost, while church bells ring, and carol singers sing, and hope for mulled wine. In 'A Christmas Carol' there is even a Father Christmas – in the shape of Christmas Present. Only the Christmas tree itself came later, when Prince Albert imported 'a pretty German toy' that won the heart of the English court, and hence the rest of Victorian society.



**BURNAGE  
COMMUNITY  
CHOIR**  
presents

A co-production with  
**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH**

Written and Directed by  
**OLIVER MILLS**

*A*  
**Christmas  
CAROL**

*AN ORIGINAL, MUSICAL, FAMILY FESTIVITY*

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, BURNAGE, M19 1PL**  
**21st DECEMBER 2013, 4.00pm & 8.00pm**  
**TICKETS £7.50 (£5 Under 12s)**  
[boxoffice@st-nicholas-church.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@st-nicholas-church.org.uk)

## ***Parish 80th Birthday Lunch***

***Sunday 8th December at 12 noon***

***Tickets £5.00 including hot pot, apple pie, tea/coffee***

***Tickets available from Churchwardens***

## December 6 - How Father Christmas got where he is today

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. These days he seems to frequent shopping malls and garden centres. If he looks tired, just remember that he has been around a long time, and gone through a lot of transformations.

Father Christmas wasn't always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Nicholas was a serious theologian: he was a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. He even, reportedly, slapped another bishop in a squabble over the exact nature of the Trinity.

Nicholas died in Myra about AD343, but the stories of his generosity and kindness were just beginning. One enduring tale tells of the three girls whom he rescued from certain prostitution by giving them gold for their dowries. When the father confronted him to thank him, Nicholas said he should thank God alone.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character. Meanwhile, Dutch and German settlers had taken him to America with them as Sinter Klaas and Sankt Nicklas.

It was in America that Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom. The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, turned from his life-work of writing a Hebrew/English lexicon, to write a fun poem for his children one Christmas. His 'The Visit of St Nicholas' is now universally known by its first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'.

From Clement Moore we discovered that St Nicholas is round and pink-cheeked and white-bearded, and that he travels at night with sleigh, reindeer and a sack of toys on his back. It was Clement Moore who also revealed that St Nicholas enters houses down chimneys and fills children's stockings with toys and sweets.

So how did we find out that Father Christmas wears red? That was the US Coca-Cola advertising campaign of 1931, who finally released the latest, up-to-date pictures of Father Christmas: wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt.

These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol. In order to get round all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound. For all those of us who are exhausted just rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.

## **Celebration of the Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade at St. Nicholas**

It is with much sadness that the Reverend Rachel and the Leaders have come to the decision, that we are unable to sustain the Brigade at St Nicholas church with the current number of members. We have come to the painful decision that there is no other option than to close the company. The final night was 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

Reverend Rachel has arranged a Celebration service for all members, both past and present, to meet and commemorate their time and achievements in Brigade, since its introduction at St Nicholas Church in 1986. It would be lovely if as many as possible could attend the service which is to be held in church on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 at 10.30am. This will be followed by a buffet lunch to enable everyone to catch up with friends.

We would especially like all the church family here at St Nicholas to be part of the Celebration to thank them for all the support and encouragement they have given us through the years in so many different ways.

For catering purposes could you please let me know if you are able to attend by signing the sheet on the front pew or contacting me on 0161 432 2933.

Thanks , *Margaret Witty*

## Didsbury TFSR Group Supporting Sierra Leone



The Didsbury TFSR Group is pleased to announce that they have been able to send funds to finance development programmes amongst Sierra Leone communities.

Funds raised by the Group over recent years at events such as the Didsbury Festival and Parrswood Environmental Centre are going to directly fund two elements of a major multi - charity community programme in the region around Bo in southern Sierra Leone. Communities in this area have experienced the traumas of the recently ended civil war as well as the ravages of HIV/AIDS on family life.

**Craftshare, HELP - SIERRA LEONE, Feed the Minds and Tools for Self Reliance** are co-operating with an overall programme specifically targeted at young, unemployed adults. The 12 months programme will include specific training on Carpentry, Tailoring, Building, Metal work and Auto mechanics trades for an identified group of 125 people, and will cover Life Skills and HIV/AIDS awareness. The courses the Didsbury Group are funding are for Carpentry and Metal Work, each for 15 people, which will give participants a good grounding in relevant aspects of technical and vocational training, which ultimately will lead to the strengthening of a local economy and improved educational opportunities for both boys and girls as the skills are spread within communities.

The initial stage of the scheme involved 'training trainers' in essential business skills such as administration, financial organisation, pricing, purchase of materials and covering life and business skills including organising work rosters, sales records, financial transactions and the management of income, resources and production. This phase has recently been completed. (October 2013) The necessary tool kits are

coming from TFSR headquarters in Southampton and are the largest consignment that TFSR has ever prepared. They will be packed in to a **40 foot** shipping container and will include **400** individual tool kits together amounting to some **14,500** tools, which it is hoped will soon start their long journey to Sierra Leone.\* Each kit sent is individually addressed to the community trainer, who will then broaden the training process by passing on the skills they have been taught previously. And so the ball will continue rolling..... from 120+ trainers to well over 850 participants.

Gradually, it is envisaged, employment prospects will increase bringing better and wider opportunities for education for younger age groups as well as economic and health benefits for families hitherto experiencing severe and prolonged poverty. Individual enthusiasm and entrepreneurship, based on previously taught skills, will lead to the emergence of hope for an increasing number of people. All members of the Didsbury Group are happy to be lending a hand, encouraged by the support we receive from so many members of our local community.

Thank you.

For further information please, or to donate tools, please contact -

## Christmas Fair Saturday 23rd

November

Huge thank you to everyone who helped in any way by contributing goods, by preparing and running a stall and to all our customers who supported the event. Great fun was had by all. Even Father Christmas braved the elements to join us. !

## Church Duty Rota (December 2013)

Date	Warden 8.30 a.m.	Warden 10.30 a.m.	Alter Server	Lay Assistants	SidesPeople
1	Fred Murphy	Alison Mills	Brenda Maclese	Brenda Maclese Cliff Stockton	Julie Crossley Sue Morris
8	Fred Murphy	Jill Lomas	Jane Cawley	Jane Cawley Grace Manley	Anne Tudor Anne Holmes Elaine Johnson
15	Fred Murphy	Jane Cawley	Louise Hollingsworth	Louise Hollingsworth Margaret Vessey	Sybil Gawkrodger Caroline Abiodon
22	Fred Murphy	Alison Mills	Caroline Abiodon	Lyn Rimmer Julie Crossley	Margaret Vessey Michael Vessey Muriel Clark
24 11.30		Jill, Alison, Jane, Fred	Emily Crossley	Katy Mills Alison Mills	Grace Manley Jane Cawley
25	Wardens	tbc	tbc		Wardens
29	Fred Murphy	Jill Lomas	Jane Cawley	Anne Holmes Anne Tudor	Muriel Nicol Amy Haygarth Val Hagan

## Parish Registers (October 2013)

Week Ending	Communicants	Cash	Envelopes
6th	47	£10.60	£259.00
13th	56	£8.00	£401.50
20th	53	£11.10	£429.00
27th	36	£5.70	£281.50
		Total	£1,371.00

## Organisations

**The Maker's Club** (Sunday School)  
Mrs. Margaret Witty (0161 432 2933)

For all children aged 3 years upwards in the Vestry at 10.15 a.m.

### **Women's Fellowship**

Chairman: Mrs Ann Holmes (0161 434 2245)

Second and Fourth Wednesdays at 2.30 p.m.

**Confirmation Classes** For young people and adults by arrangement with the Minister.

### **Burnage Community Choir**

Thursday Evenings 7.30pm (in church)

## Church Prize Draws

St Nicholas Club Draw—drawn  
Sunday 1st September

1st Prize: No 15 Elaine Jess

2nd Prize : No 13 Jill Lomas

## Christians Together in Burnage

*Carol Singing*  
**Saturday 14th December**  
12.00 to 2.00pm  
**Tesco, Burnage**

## SMILE LINES .....

### Children's version of the Christmas story

- When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger.
- When Mary heard that she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta
- Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

**Christmas in my heart** Christmas is in my heart twelve months a year and, thanks to credit cards, it's on my Visa card statement twelve months a year, also.

**Santa** What do you call Santa's helpers? - Subordinate Clauses.

**Wise** A little boy rushed home from school and said excitedly: "I got a part in the Christmas play!" "What part?" asked his mother. "I'm one of the three wise guys!"

**Runs over** A father gave his daughter a young puppy for Christmas. An hour later, he found her in the kitchen, looking sadly at a puddle in the centre of the floor. "Look Dad," she said, "My pup runneth over!"

# The Parish Church of St Nicholas Burnage

## Sunday Services

8.30 a.m

Eucharist (BCP)

10.30 a.m.

Family Service and Eucharist

For Saints and other weekday Services, please see the Diary page inside the magazine.

Holy Baptism on 3rd Sunday of each month at 10.30 a.m.

Holy Communion is take to the housebound by arrangement with the Minister.

## Minister

Rev'd Rachel Mann

0161 432 7009

## Organist

Vacancy

## Churchwardens

Mrs. Jill Lomas (0161 432 5426)

Mrs. Alison Mills 01625 540376

Mobile : 07932 071977

## Assistant Wardens

Mr. Fred Murphy

Ms Jane Cawley

## Hon. Treasurer.

Mrs. Elaine Jess

## Minutes Secretary

Mrs. Ann Ackerman

## Electoral Roll Officer

Mrs Lyn Rimmer

## Deanery Synod

Mrs. Grace Manley

Ms. Jane Cawley

## Elected on PC

Mr. Fred Murphy,

Ms. Jane Cawley,

Mrs. Ann Ackerman,

Mrs. Elaine Jess,

Mrs. Julie Crossley,

Mrs. Alison Cullen,

Mrs. Sue Morris,

Mrs. Christine Price,

Mrs. Lyn Rimmer,

Mrs. Margaret Witty,

Mr. Michael Vessey,

Mr. Tony Witty.

## Magazine Distribution

Mrs. Brenda Maclese

## Missionary Secretary

Mrs. Margaret Vessey

## St. Nicholas Church Website

[www.st-nicholas-church.org.uk](http://www.st-nicholas-church.org.uk)