



HURST GREEN NEWS

December 2013

www.stjohnshurstgreen.org.uk

Published on 7 December



The Christmas Story - is it real for you?

We all know and love the Christmas story. But who is your favourite character? Who do you identify and sympathise with the most?

Is it Mary? That confused woman, so surprised to have this happen to her, expecting something wonderful which she knew in her heart was important and special but which might bring her shame and exclusion. Then finding herself homeless, in poverty, giving birth in dire conditions, then having to run away as a refugee. Someone who is certain on the inside, but frightened outside.

Is it Joseph? Battling hard for his family, finding the latest turn of events hard to cope with, but going on, doing his best, sticking to his priorities in life, willing to believe and support his wife.

Is it the shepherds? Working away, but suddenly finding something exciting, something far beyond this world calling to them, making them leave their work to go and investigate.

Is it Herod? So powerful and sure of himself, or was he? Was his domain, his whole lifestyle, threatened by this new arrival, this alternative to his way of money and power, threatened by the power of love and service to others.

Is it the Innkeeper? Seeing these people in desperate need and knowing that he should help but only actually doing the minimum to help them.

Maybe it's the Three Kings? Recognising God in the world and trying to find their way to him, offering him what they can, their gifts.

So which of these characters do you identify with the most in the story? Which character would you leave out of the story, and what difference would that make? What makes it all such a cause for celebration? One person I haven't mentioned:

The baby in the manger. Some people have found that letting this child be born in their lives has transformed them. Some people have noticed that, in spite of, and even in the midst of, the noise, the glitter, the indulging, the spending, there comes a moment of joy and love, a moment of tenderness and that this is somehow connected to this Child.

Some people simply acknowledge and celebrate that, at this darkest hour of the year, the light breaks forth and scatters the darkness. The Christchild comes to our world to show us the way to all love, all goodness, and so Christmas comes again.

Love and joy and peace to you all this Christmas.
Revd Wendy Harvey, Curate, St John's Church

Carol Singing around Hurst Green

**Monday 16 December
6.30pm, meeting in the
Methodist Car Park**



A warm welcome to St John's - well sorry, not at the moment!

At St John's, we always try to offer a warm welcome to everyone who attends our services and events. Unfortunately, this has not been literally possible since early October, when the spell of continuous rain flooded the basement of the church, and the central heating boilers housed therein were seriously damaged. We were advised that it would cost more to repair them than to buy new ones, so, although this 'lesser' option is not exactly cheap, we have embarked upon the process of purchase and installation of two new boilers. They will be re-sited in the old electrical intake room, far from flooding risks, but this will involve some minor building works, and will take a little time. However, we are hoping that the church will be warm particularly for all those extra events in the lead up to Christmas - various concerts, many different school carol services and their rehearsals and our Nine Lessons and Carols. In the interim, we apologise for the lack of heating in the church; as it has become colder, we are holding our Sunday services in the York Rooms which have an independent, under floor heating system, and of course, we are very busy trying to think of ways to pay for this sudden, unexpected and large expense.

Mary Seller, Assistant Priest, St John's

Nine Lessons & Carols St John's Hurst Green



**Sunday 22 December, 5.30pm
Collection for Shooting Star
CHASE Children's Hospice
All Welcome!**

*Details of all the Christmas
Services in Hurst Green are
in the Christmas Card.*

Christmas Crib Services St John's, Hurst Green Christmas Eve, 3.30 & 5pm

You are invited to bring a present with you, wrapped and labelled, saying for what age (0 - 16 years) and sex the gift would be appropriate. No soft toys please. Thank you.

This year gifts will be shared between Welcare (Strengthening Families) and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services.



Please could children come dressed as shepherds, angels or kings so that they can take part in the service.

Oasis Lunch Club

The Oasis Lunch Club has been providing nutritious meals on Friday lunchtimes at Hurst Green Methodist Church for 27 years. We are currently in urgent need of people able to cook a meal on an approximately monthly basis.

The role includes buying, preparing and cooking a meal for about 30 people. We are also looking for volunteers to assist in the kitchen and set up and pack away tables. If you could help, please contact **Kath Fisher on 713771** for further information. Thank you.

HURST GREEN CHURCHES WELCOME YOU

ST JOHN'S, CHURCH WAY

8am Holy Communion
10am Parish Eucharist
 Crèche and Children's groups - all ages
12 noon Holy Communion, David Gresham House
Other services: details in church porch
12 noon Weekday Eucharist
Wednesday
Assistant Priest: Mary Seller - 715675, 11 Home Park
Assistant Curate: Wendy Harvey - 01959 562340
Churchwardens: Frank Hutchings - 713293
 Barbara Richards - 715636
Southwark Monica Fenton - 715769
Pastoral Auxiliaries: Pearl Hobson - 712366

METHODIST CHURCH, HURSTLANDS

10.30am Morning Worship and Junior Church
6.30pm Evening Service
Minister: Karen Bell - 371346 (day off - Friday)

EVANGELICAL CHURCH ON HURST GREEN

10.45am Family Worship
Pastors: Steven & Margaret Cox - 717510

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH OF OXTED & WARLINGHAM

All Saints' Church, Chichele Road, Oxted - 627762
St Ambrose Church, Warren Park, Warlingham - 622142
5.30pm Saturday First Mass of Sunday, All Saints' Oxted
9am Sunday St Ambrose, Warlingham
11am Sunday All Saints' Oxted
Parish Priest: Fr John Olliver - 713776

OXTED UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The Church of the Peace of God
21 Bluehouse Lane, Oxted - 730406
10am Sunday Service includes story-time for children, Junior Church, and communion monthly
Minister: David Skitt - 01342 837449

Please telephone any of these numbers for details of weekday worship and activities, to discuss baptism, marriage, or the arranging of a funeral, or if you want help in times of joy or sorrow.

St Agatha's Hall Booking Secretary: M Walker, 714492



The Man in the Red Suit

Who can that be? Santa wouldn't be the same without his red suit and the big white beard, but this image is less than 100 years old.

Santa Claus is short for St Nicholas, the patron saint (amongst other things) of Russia, Moscow and Amsterdam, children, sailors, and repentant thieves.

He was the Bishop of Myra (modern Demre) in southern Turkey in the early 4th century, where there are two statues of him, one as a bishop, the other in a Santa suit. A leader of the early church, he was at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD which defined the church's beliefs, but was imprisoned by the Roman Emperor Diocletian. However St Nicholas is best remembered for his miracles and for giving generously to the poor wherever he went. As Christianity spread northwards in Europe the legends of St Nicholas came with it; his feast day, December 6th, became a day for giving gifts to the poor and especially children.

However, in the pagan North there was another player on the scene. At Yuletide the Norse god Odin, with his long white beard and blue cloak, rode across the skies, distributing gifts as he went. Some European countries embraced St Nicholas and gave their gifts on December 6th, others incorporated him in to Christmas and the Yuletide feast.

In medieval England Santa is usually shown as a big bearded man in either a red or green cloak. When Henry VIII reformed the church, he abolished Saints' Day celebrations, so gift giving was concentrated on Christmas. The Puritans abolished the old Christmas traditions, but the Victorians brought about a great revival. Santa Claus came to the fore, usually wearing a green suit. The rush for red came in 1915 when the American White Rock Beverage Company used Santa in a red suit in an advertisement, the Coca-Cola Company took this up and the image is now firmly established. If anyone catches a glimpse of him on his magic ride this year please let me know what he is wearing. *Kath McCarthy*

Santa's on his way to Hurst Green



Santa and Rudolph are coming to Hurst Green to see all the boys and girls and they'll be visiting the following streets:

Monday 16 December

5.30pm - The Hollies, Juniper Close
 6.30pm - Holland Lane, Holland Crescent
 7.15pm - Barnfield Way

Tuesday 17 December

5.30pm - Mill Lane, Warren Lane
 6.30pm - Boulhurst Way, Hazelwood Road, Wolfs Wood
 7.15pm - Hurstlands, Pollards Oak Road

Listen out for Rudolph's bells and you might get a glimpse of him....and a sweet from Santa too! Santa's helpers will be collecting for Rotary charities. **Ho Ho Ho!**

Titsey & District Rotary Club, www.titsey.org.uk



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Missing the White Christmas...

Over the past few years many Poles have made the UK their new homeland, successfully adapting to the new Christmas traditions. However, some aspects of celebrating Christmas in Poland are unmissable and irreplaceable. For Poles, the most important day of the Christmas period is undoubtedly Christmas Eve. A normal working day, it is also unique, involving a lot of preparation before the magic happens.

Everybody has a task. Mums, grannies and daughters are busy in the kitchen preparing the traditional twelve meat-free dishes (for the 12 apostles as well as the 12th month), while the men arrange the Christmas tree and the table with one free seat for an unexpected guest. It is a tradition in Poland that on Christmas Eve no one should be alone or turned down, so it is better to be prepared. Children sit glued to the window for the first star to appear, indicating the time for supper to commence.

Everybody gathers round the Christmas table in their best clothes, to share greetings and the holy wafer. Next, they eat the most delicious food, only for this special day: mushroom or beetroot soup (sometimes also almond or fish soup), carp, cabbage with beans, dumplings and sweets like poppy seed cake or cheesecake. After dinner children normally fidget waiting for the magical appearance of presents under the tree, but in my family we put out cookies and milk for Santa Claus and a carrot for Rudolf. Christmas Day starts with opening the presents, followed by the traditional Christmas Roast.

Poles agree that celebrating Christmas in the UK adds another dimension - except the English weather. Being used to the sound of snow under our shoes while walking to midnight mass, or watching the beautiful patterns of ice on the windows, we find it bizarre to celebrate Christmas in plus temperatures. But maybe this is why the Polish-English Christmas is a very warm holiday for all Poles in the UK - literally and figuratively. *Wesołych Świąt! Agi Dewberry*



More Dates for your Diary 2013

- 2 & 3 ...and every Monday and Wednesday, Harry's ACOL Rubber Bridge Club, Oxted Red Cross Centre, 1.15-4pm, 715900 or 713128
- 5 Dec ...and every Thursday, Oxted Country Market, 10-11.30am, Oxted Red Cross Centre
- 9 Dec Tandridge Club for the Visually Impaired, Methodist Hall, 2.30-4pm - Christmas Songs, Hurst Green School
- 10 Dec Carers' Group, Community Room, Eastlands Close, Oxted, 10.30-12 noon B Harling 723034
- 11 Dec Oxted & Limpsfield Flower Society, Christmas Lunch and AGM.
Demonstrator - Myra Lester; competition - Christmas Eve
- 12 Dec Pollards Oak WI, Methodist Church Hall, 7.45pm - Members' Christmas Party
- 6 Jan Tandridge Club for the Visually Impaired, Methodist Hall, 2.30-4pm - New Year Party & Present Exchange with entertainment

REMEMBER to send your 2014 programme to the Compiler (see bottom of front page) by **13 December 2013** for dates of activities to be included in the Diary.

Christmas Pudding

Not yet made your Christmas Pudding? This pudding is lovely and may be made up to a few days before Christmas, but does not keep for more than three weeks. There is no added sugar. *Serves 8 - 10.*

8 oz raisins	finely grated rind of ½ lemon and ½ orange
4 oz currants	½ teaspoon salt
4 oz sultanas	1 teaspoon mixed spice
4 oz dates, finely chopped	3 oz grated carrot
8 oz shredded vegetable suet	3 eggs
4 oz brown breadcrumbs	¼ pint milk
3 oz wholemeal flour	1 tablespoon brandy



- In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients except eggs, milk and brandy.
- Beat the eggs and blend in the milk and brandy.
- Pour this onto the other ingredients and mix to a soft dropping consistency, adding more milk if necessary.
- Butter a pudding basin and almost fill with the mixture.
- Cover with greased greaseproof paper and tie with a cloth.
- Steam for 5 hours. (Keep the water topped up to avoid boiling dry.)
- Store in a cool place until required.
- To re-heat, steam for 2 hours before serving, or follow microwave directions.

This recipe come from 'Manna From Heaven', the St John's Church Cook Book. There are a few copies still available, price £6. Contact 717473.

Tandridge Club for the Visually Impaired

Chairman Diana Drysdale welcomed everybody to the 35th Annual General Meeting and went over some of the events held during the past year with so many wonderful speakers. Members also went out for afternoon tea, a pantomime, shopping trip, garden party and a day trip to Eastbourne. All the volunteers were thanked for their help in setting up the hall and looking after and transporting members to and from meetings. The meeting ended with a delicious home made tea.

Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month at the Methodist Hall, Hurst Green from 2.30 - 4pm. If you know anyone with a problem with their sight who would like to come, or you could help at the meetings or with transport, please contact:

Diana Drysdale, on 742708 or
Ian Garden, on 717681.

PARISH REGISTERS

Funeral

Our sympathy goes to all her relatives and friends:

4 November Dorothy Brooks

St John's Book of Remembrance
To have a name entered, phone **712845.**



Hurst Green Singers' Christmas Concert

Sunday 15 December at 7pm
St John's Church, Hurst Green

Samuel Coleridge Taylor's
Hiawatha's Wedding Feast

with shorter pieces by

Elgar and Britten & Christmas Carols
for Choir and audience

Conductor: Michael Barlow;
Tenor soloist: Matthew Smith
Organist: Christopher Harris

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Registered charity 311871

Children's Church

For toddlers and children who have just started school



Monday, 16 December
3.30pm at St John's Church

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Anyone looking after your children is welcome to bring them.
Future dates: 27 January, 24 February
Further information - 715769

The Diamond

Hurst Green, 716040

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Christmas Party bookings still available up to 30 People,

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- 2 The use of a coach for the group to go on an excursion

We would also consider offering one of our drivers for one day per month to drive any of the dial a ride type services. In normal years one coach goes to Mighty Oaks, One to Little Oaks and in 2013 one went to Edenbridge Friends. For 2014 Little Oaks will not require a coach as they are using a different type of transport!!! This means there are two opportunities for 2014.

If you feel this offer would benefit your Group or Organisation, please contact me on john@allenbycoachhire.co.uk

Wishing you
all a very
Happy
Christmas



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