



# The Lion

A Monthly News Sheet for St. Mark's Church, Basford

[www.stmarksbasford.co.uk](http://www.stmarksbasford.co.uk)

CHRISTMAS 2017 & NEW YEAR 2018



As many of you will know, I spent the first Sunday of Advent with our Lutheran partners in Germany. It was my pleasure to introduce Patrick to our so called 'Anticipating Advent' celebration which this year took place in Rostock. At the main Partnership service on the Sunday morning, Philip Swan (our Diocesan Director of World Mission) gave an address on the Song of Mary, commonly known as the *Magnificat*. Though said or sung so frequently, it contains truths which, for Christians, appear fresh whenever we approach it at Christmastime. This is a point I was trying to make more generally about the Gospel in my 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent sermon.

These beautiful words found in Luke are simple, yet profound, they reflect a young life that understood the meaning of joy. Mary's song, which begins, "My soul magnifies the Lord", reflects the "sacred joy" of one who is full of God Himself.

Happiness at Christmas is often reflected through parties, holiday decorations or exotic destinations. The search for "good cheer" is everywhere. The gladness of Mary's song, however, transcends what many perceive as happiness. The focus of her song is a joy that can only be described as "holy".

Perhaps this is true because Mary's joyful song is "divine": its subject is the incarnation of God Himself.

**The Joy of Christmas**

Worthy of music without equal, the song concerns "the Word made flesh" who dwells among us. God among us means that there is no longer a great gulf fixed between God and his people. The humanity of our Saviour has bridged the gap. And there is now "a High Priest" who can sympathize with everyone's problems. Jesus was "tempted in all things, yet without sin."

Yet, the subject of this holy hymn is not so much theological as it is personal. Mary's hymn delights that Jesus, Immanuel, was to be born of her: a special gift of matchless grace. Indeed, only Mary received this great privilege when she was chosen to bear our Lord. But those who name the name of Christ also carry a great honour. They, too, have received "special favour"—the indwelling presence of Jesus Christ. And in

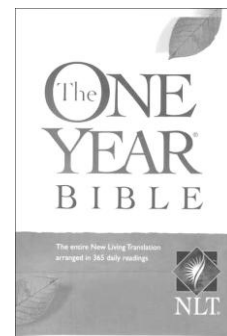
this presence there is a pleasure that is so overwhelming that it defines joy in a totally new way. For happiness is being filled with Christ. Joy is not things—it is Jesus.

This Christmas, it would be beneficial for all of us to imitate this most blessed of women; a young girl who understood the true meaning of joy; a young girl whose joy overflowed in praise to her God.

Try meditating on this beautiful Christmas song. Let the "Magnificat" take you to the best Christmas ever. Ponder these words and then sing... "My soul magnifies the Lord." For we are all privileged — we are filled with "God, our Saviour."

## Daily Bible Reading

A discipline that I've adopted for a few years (not consecutive ones) has been to read through the Bible in a year. Though saying morning and evening prayer together with the Sunday and some midweek Holy Communion readings, the entire Scriptures are far from covered. The only way to be sure of allowing the whole of God's Word to penetrate your mind is to read the Bible systematically. Nowadays there are different ways of doing this. There are many Bible reading plans downloadable from the internet and on mobile phone apps which do the job for technophiles. However, there is always the old fashioned method (which I prefer) in obtaining a Bible split into 365 daily readings. Some offer a selection of the Old Testament, Psalms/Proverbs and New Testament each day whilst others are arranged chronologically. This latter type takes you through the Bible as the God's plan of salvation unfolds with time. In 2017, I've used this latter type for the first time and have quite enjoyed it. The Bible Book Shop in Hanley stocks a few versions and perhaps this kind of reading is something you might attempt. You don't necessarily have to start on 1<sup>st</sup> January like I did in 2017, you can start on any date and finish when you reach the same point. I commend the practice to you for 2018. Terry



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**Churchwardens:** Diane Downward ☎ 01782 621424; Nick Atkins ☎ 01782 632213.

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**Safeguarding Coordinator:** Joanne Locker ☎ 01782 619471 **Hall Bookings Manager:** Beryl Silvester ☎ 01782 613685

# JOIN US FOR ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● FIRST SUNDAYS

Our services on the first Sunday of the month are changing for 2018. We're moving from the present all-age format to something geared more toward adults (particularly those in their 20s/30s) which will address contemporary issues and try to make relevant connections between the Gospel message and the modern world in which we live. Of course, the content will be no less relevant to those of an older age-group! Seedlings will meet in their usual way for appropriate, Christian teaching and will feed back to us in the usual way. Holy Communion is being retained and we hope that you'll like the new format. Some of the themes addressed should prove interesting and as we'll be inviting targeted groups, please make sure there is a really warm welcome to those new to St. Mark's.

## CAMEO LUNCHEON CLUB

The CAMEO Club will resume normal service at 12.30pm on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> January. Please publicise this popular offering and always be on the look-out for those willing to give practical help. The meeting schedule over the next few weeks is...

10 <sup>th</sup> January	✓	7 <sup>th</sup> March	✓
17 <sup>th</sup> January	✓	14 <sup>th</sup> March	✓
24 <sup>th</sup> January	✓	21 <sup>st</sup> March	✗
31 <sup>st</sup> January	✓	28 <sup>th</sup> March	✗
7 <sup>th</sup> February	✓	4 <sup>th</sup> April	✗
14 <sup>th</sup> February	✗	11 <sup>th</sup> April	✓
21 <sup>st</sup> February	✗	18 <sup>th</sup> April	✓
28 <sup>th</sup> February	✓	25 <sup>th</sup> April	✓

## Worship Services during January

3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
	10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
6 <sup>th</sup> EPIPHANY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.30am	'First Sunday' with HC
10 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
	10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
14 <sup>th</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> of Epiphany	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.30am	Holy Communion
17 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
	10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
20 <sup>th</sup> Saturday	1.00pm	Wedding
21 <sup>st</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> of Epiphany	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.30am	Holy Communion
24 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
	10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
28 <sup>th</sup> CANDLEMAS	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
	9.30am	Holy Communion
31 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
	10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)



Please remember our need to stock up on gifts for our 2018 church fund-raising activities. Gifts suitable for general raffles and our usual fayre stalls can be brought in at any time.

## Diary Dates for January

9 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	7.30pm	Wedding Preparation Evening
10 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	12.30pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
16 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	7.30pm	PCC Meeting
17 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	12.30pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
18 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	1.00pm	Clergy Chapter Meal
24 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	12.30pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
	7.30pm	Baptism Preparation Evening
25 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	7.30pm	Licensing Service at Clayton
30 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	7.30pm	Deanery Synod Meeting
31 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	12.30pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club

## Early February Dates

5 <sup>th</sup> Monday	7.30pm	Deanery Committee (Vestry)
7 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	12.30pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club



*Terry, Pat and Patrick would like to wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas!*

## Crib Service



The gifts placed around the Christmas tree at this year's Crib Service will be taken to SANCTUS in time for a Christmas morning distribution during the worship at St. Mark's - Shelton. There are still a good number of refugees from war-torn places still resident in Stoke and Newcastle who will benefit greatly from this annual kindness shown by our extended Christmas Eve congregation.

The PCC has, for many years, made donations to certain charities at Christmas. This year, through your generous giving, we've been able to make the following gifts to organisations doing good work locally and around the world.....



- The Church Mission Society £500
- The Bible Society £300
- The Leprosy Mission £300
- The British Red Cross £250
- SANCTUS £700 (by the kind donation of a single sum for this purpose).