

Life News @ St Mary's

St Mary's Eaton Socon Newsletter
December 2019 & January 2020

'Verse for the Year' John 8: 31-32



*Jesus said: "If you hold to my teaching,
you are really my disciples.*



Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."



In This Issue

- Christmas Message
Rev'd Timothy Robb
- Grace Course
- Mission Focus
- Foodbank update
- Wednesday Welcome
- Reflections on CERN
- Calendar



Chosen

Come let us
Adore
Him



Chosen

What choices have you made that will shape your Christmas this year? From what food to eat, to what presents to give, to who you may spend this Christmas time with, this season is full of choices.

Over 2000 years ago, God made the choice to send his Son into the world He had created. A young girl called Mary chose to believe all the angel Gabriel said to her would come to pass, and it did! Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was less sure until an angel appeared to him in a dream, after which he too chose to believe and took Mary to be his wife.

Arriving at Bethlehem, they had no choice where Jesus would be born - all that was available was a stable with all the animals. Born as a baby surrounded by the animals, Mary & Joseph chose to use the manger (the animal's feeding trough) as the King of the Universe's first bed!

God chose to announce Jesus' birth to some shepherds (outcasts of the day), who chose to go and see for themselves this wondrous event that had taken place. Afterwards, they chose to tell everyone what happened.

Magi from the East, saw a special star in the sky, and chose to make a long journey to visit the one who had been born King of the Jews. They chose to bring gifts fit for a King. Soon after, King Herod, threatened by the birth of another King, chose to kill all the young boys up to the age of 2, but Jesus and his family escape safely to Egypt.

All this reminds us that many choices were made surrounding Jesus' birth...and many choices were made by people that surrounded Jesus throughout his life...we learn of these in the Bible.

This Christmas, may I encourage you to choose to explore who Jesus is - both the baby who was born and the man he grew up to be, because there is so much more to Jesus than all of us could ever dream or imagine. He is the world's Saviour; He is the world's true King; and He chooses to love each one of us, both now and for all eternity.

So how will we choose to respond?

With every blessing, Tim



Welcome to St Mary's

It's great to have you here and we hope you enjoy being with us.

If you would like us to contact you with more information about how you can get involved in the life of the Church, please fill in a 'Welcome' card and give to one of the Welcomers.

GIVING

Join us in supporting the ministry at

St Mary's. **The best way** is

using the Parish Giving Scheme.

Gift Aid envelopes are available in

Church. For more details, please contact the Treasurer, Roy Notley:

Tel: 01234 589308

Email: finance@eatonsocon.org

Contact Us

Church Office

Tues, Wed, Thurs
9am - 12noon

Tel: (01480) 352154

Email: office@eatonsocon.org

Website: eatonsocon.org



Sunday 8th December

Christingle Family Event @ 4pm

Thursday 12th December

Christmas Lunch @ 12.30pm

Sunday 15th December

Carol Service @ 6pm

Thursday 19th December

Afternoon Carol Service @ 2pm

Sunday 22nd December

Instant Nativity Play @ 10.30am

Christmas Eve (Tuesday 24th)

Family Carol Services @ 3&5pm

Midnight Communion @ 11.30pm

Christmas Day (Wed 25th)

Family Communion @ 10am

Interested in Confirmation?

Speak to Rev'd Tim for details.

As we welcome Bishop Richard to St Mary's on 1st March 2020.

Mission Focus — Greetings from Sri Lanka



Update from Mano Emanuel

Colombo Theological Seminary celebrated its 25th anniversary in May 2019. The service of thanksgiving was held just weeks after the Easter Sunday bombings. Mano writes that, 'Although it was less well attended than it might have been if not for the bombings, it seemed right to go ahead with plans. Those who

came were encouraged. One person said it was just what the church needed - something to celebrate, be together and worship despite of the cloud hanging over us.' As part of the celebrations, students, staff and faculty were part of a tree planting project. We also held a Sports Day and a prayer week.

Next year's theological conference will be the first ever to be held in Sri Lanka. The theme will be 'The faith once entrusted to the saints'. Mano said, "There is a lot of erroneous and false teaching gaining ground in the growing churches.'

PRAY that the theological conference in 2020 will make a big impact on Bible teaching in Sri Lankan churches.

After 15 years as Academic Dean at the Seminary, Mano is changing her role to allow more time for teaching and writing. She will still lecture at Seminary and participate in academic development but will be freed up from a lot of administrative tasks.

PRAY for Mano in her new role in 2020.

Mano writes, 'On November 16th the country will go to the polls to choose the next President. Culturally, people are prone to prefer 'strong' leaders who promise to protect Sinhala Buddhist interests. If the wrong person is elected the tentative peace could be wiped out and fear will descend on all minorities, dissenters, journalists.'

PRAY that God will increase the power of moderate leaders so that Sri Lanka will have a chance to move forward taking everyone with them.

Relax with Art is on **every** Friday afternoon from 1:30pm. The emphasis is on **relaxing** - painting or drawing to help with life's stresses. We have "paint by numbers" and colouring in books for those with no prior skills, as well as watercolour, acrylic, and pastel paints, brushes and paper. Refreshments are available and there is no charge. If you wish to learn more, please speak to David Hesketh, Michael Findley or myself! **Roger Peppiatt**



If you don't first know God's love for you in your heart - not just your head - it's impossible for your life to be motivated by love for Him. Instead, you are likely to end up motivated more by guilt or shame or fear or pride. You may be doing and saying all the 'right' things but there will be precious little fruit and you won't experience the true rest that Jesus promised.

The Grace Course is a tool to help Christians recover their first love for God so that they go on to love others and make a great impact on the world. Its objective is to enable Christians to experience God's grace in such a deep and real way that love for Him becomes the main motivator in their lives.

The course consists of 6 sessions and will be held in the Church as follows:

Thursdays 16, 30 Jan; 13, 27 Feb; 12, 25 March (9.45-11.45am).

Sundays 12, 26 Jan; 2, 23 Feb; 8, 15 March (5-7pm)

Please sign up online or see Tim to find out more



Wednesday Welcome meet every Wednesday at 3pm in the church hall for friendship, over a cup of tea and cake. Most weeks entertainment is provided: be it a speaker, quiz or social event, including lunches at the 'Barley Mow' or a bit of Christmas shopping followed by a cream tea (as in the photograph)
New members are always welcome and certain of a friendly welcome.

For further details contact **Mike Gilham Tel: 07899856636**

Reflections on the recent visit to CERN



I was privileged to join a party of about thirty friends and acquaintances of John Wood on a trip to CERN, the European physics research centre outside Geneva. The party included Bishop Alan and about ten of us from St Mary's. The big impression was of the vast effort being put in to exploring the tiniest building blocks of our universe. Over two thousand scientists work at the site, with thousands of scientists from around the world visiting every year. The biggest machine, the Large Hadron Collider has extremes of engineering:

- it's over 5 miles diameter in an underground circular tunnel, but carries beams of particles narrower than a human hair
- it's cooled to nearly absolute zero using 120 tonnes of liquid helium
- the beams run through a vacuum of less than a million millionth of atmospheric pressure
- the beams run for hours at a time, while giving rise to about a billion proton-proton collisions a second

It's sobering that as we push the boundaries of our understanding, we are still getting surprised. The more we learn, the more we find that we don't know. The 17th century astronomer Johannes Kepler wrote, "I was merely thinking God's thoughts after him" - it seems that God is still ahead of us and his design still has features way beyond our explorations! **Anthony Harris**



Thank you all for your generous support for the foodbank with both food and cash donations. It is really humbling to receive them. We are unfortunately busier than ever with demand for our services from very needy people in our community so we need every help we can get.



Our umbrella organisation, the Trussell Trust, which supports 428 foodbanks, has recently published its "State of Hunger" report, which is the largest piece of research into hunger and food bank use in the UK. Key findings are quite shocking. They tell us about the people who are referred to foodbanks:

- households have an average of £50 week to live off, once costs and housing have been paid for.
- 94% are in real destitution, struggling to buy the essentials to keep fed, warm, clean & dry.
- nearly 75% have at least one health issue, and more than half have a mental health problem.

As the Trussell Trust says, "This isn't right".

I thank God that we are here to give support these people, these "neighbours" of ours. Thank you for your support and prayers, which mean so much to us.

Roger Peppiatt



St Mary's Clergy, Churchwardens and Staff wish you



CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2019

- ◆ 2nd M-Team (Christmas Tree)
@ 8.30am
Café on the Green @ 10am
- ◆ 3rd Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 4th Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 6th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 8th Christingle Family Event @ 4pm
- ◆ 9th Café on the Green @ 10am
Breakout Prayer @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 10th Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 11th Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 12th Christmas Lunch @ 12.30pm
- ◆ 13th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Friday Clubs @ 6pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 14th Women's Event @ 1pm
Mayor's Carol Service @ 6pm
- ◆ 15th The Carol Service @ 6pm
- ◆ 16th Café on the Green @ 10am
- ◆ 17th Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 19th Afternoon Carol Service @ 2pm
- ◆ 20th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 21st WLTD0? @ 9am
- ◆ 22nd Instant Nativity Play @ 10.30am
- ◆ 24th Family Carol Services @ 3&5pm
Midnight Service @ 11.30pm
- ◆ 25th Christmas Day Service @ 10am
- ◆ 29th Combined Service @ 10am

JANUARY 2020

- ◆ 3rd Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
- ◆ 6th M-Team @ 9.30am
- ◆ 7th Craft @ 10am
Church Office opens
- ◆ 8th Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 10th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Friday Clubs @ 6pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 11th Men's Breakfast @ 8.30am
- ◆ 13th Café on the Green @ 10am
Breakout Prayer @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 14th Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 15th Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 16th Grace Course Starts @
9.45am
- ◆ 17th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 18th WLTD0? @ 9am
- ◆ 20th Café on the Green @ 10am
- ◆ 21st Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 22nd Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 24th Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Friday Clubs @ 6pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm
- ◆ 26th Grace Course @ 5pm
- ◆ 27th Café on the Green @ 10am
- ◆ 28th Craft @ 10am
- ◆ 29th Wednesday Welcome @ 3pm
- ◆ 30th Grace Course @ 9.45am
- ◆ 31st Relax with Art @ 1.30pm
Fusion @ 7.30pm