

SERVICES TODAY, Sunday 21st December, Advent 4

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion CW, Allan Bucknall
10.00am Morning Worship, Arthur Woo/Charles Kirke
6.00pm Carol Service, Geoff Sowden/Hilary Fortnam
Hannington 4.00pm Carol Service, Geoff Sowden
Blunston 10.00am Family Communion, Geoff Sowden/John Rees
7.00pm Carol Service, John Rees
Newburgh 7.30pm Evening Service, Hilary Fortnam/Jean Ashton

HELP URGENTLY NEEDED..

...to serve tea/coffee in church on Tuesday 23rd - 2 people each for 11-12noon and 12-1pm and 1 person for 1-2pm. Please sign the list on the chest. We now have enough mince pies thank you.

Hilary Fortnam

CHRISTMAS MAIL

Please check the letter-rack each time you are in Church to collect any Christmas mail for yourself or your neighbour.

Hilary Fortnam

CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Don't forget to save your Christmas stamps for the Children's Society. The box is under the table by the south door.

Hilary Fortnam

OPEN CHURCH AND REFRESHMENTS

On 22nd, 23rd & 24th December we will be serving hot drinks and mince pies to those visiting the church at Christmas. No charge is made but donations will go to Gloucester House.

Hilary Fortnam

CRIB SERVICE

The Crib Service will take place as usual on Christmas Eve, 24th December at 4.00pm. Do come along and watch the children in this traditional nativity celebration.

DOUBLE BULLETIN

This week's bulletin is a two-week issue, there will be no bulletin next Sunday 28th December. The next bulletin will be on Sunday 4th January. Merry Christmas!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Wed 24th 3.00pm Crib Service Blunston, John Rees/Jane Ockwell
4.00pm Crib Service Highworth, Arthur Woo/Geoff Sowden
11.30pm Christmas Communion Blunston, Geoff Sowden
11.30pm Christmas Communion Highworth, Arthur Woo/John Rees
Thu 25th 8.00am Holy Communion Highworth, John Rees
9.00am Holy Communion Sevenhampton, Geoff Sowden
10.00am Family Communion Blunston, John Rees
10.00am Family Communion Highworth, Geoff Sowden
10.30am Holy Communion Hannington, Arthur Woo

SERVICES NEXT WEEK, Sunday 28th December

Highworth 8.00am Holy Communion CW, Allan Bucknall
10.00am Praise Service, Hilary Fortnam
Blunston 10.00am Family Worship, Jane Ockwell/Kathryn Dack



CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

This year the collections from the Carol Service and the Crib Service will be shared between the local charity Prospect Hospice which cares so wonderfully for the terminally ill, and the international charity Mercy Ships which operates a fleet of hospital ships in developing countries, taking the love of Jesus with them. For information on Prospect see www.prospect-hospice.net, on Mercy Ships www.mercyships.org.uk.

COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE TODAY

This will be held today Sunday 21st December at 6pm. As in previous years, it will have a dual start - on the Podium with the Silver Band, and also in Church for those not wishing to be outside. At approximately 6.15pm the outside people will join us inside as we all celebrate Christ's birth through carols, readings and poems. Wrap up warm if you are starting outside and you may like to bring a torch or candle in a jam jar.

Hilary Fortnam

NEW DAYTIME HOMEGROUPS

There are two groups for bible study, fellowship and prayer during the daytime, on Monday mornings from 10am-12noon is a group with a play area (contact **Bella Fasham**). On Tuesday mornings at 10am (contact **Lynn Woo**).

WHAT'S ON FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

Mon 22nd 9.30am Prayers in church
10.00am Ministry Team in church
10.00am-2.00pm Open Church & refreshments in aid of Gloucester House
Tue 23rd 10.00am-2.00pm Open Church & refreshments in aid of Gloucester House
2.30pm Funeral of Amanda Bett in church
Wed 24th 10.00am-12noon Open Church & refreshments in aid of Gloucester House
1.00pm Crib service rehearsal
Thu 25th 10.00am Morning Worship in church
Sat 27th 10.00am NO Coffee Morning today
Mon 29th 10.00am-12noon Church office open today only this week
Sat 3rd 10.00am Coffee Morning and Bulletin folding, Church Room
Sun 4th 2.00pm Church Room booked for private hire till 4.30pm

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

John, Anne, Thomas and Philip wish all their friends in St Michael's a very happy Christmas and best wishes for 2009.

ALPHA HOSPITALITY

The next Alpha course starts on Thursday 9th January and we are looking for a team to provide the fellowship meal which starts each session. Examples are chilli and rice, jacket potatoes with fillings or perhaps a pasta dish, followed by fruit or cake. All costs will be met by the church. You would need to be at the church room by 7pm and should be able to leave by 8.30pm. The teams will need people to cook, to serve and to clear away, so even if you don't want to cook you can still help. Please sign the list in church if you are able to help. More details from **Lesley P**

PRAYING FOR THE BENEFIT

This week we pray for those living in Pentylands Lane, Pound Road, Priory Green, Quarry Crescent, Queen's Avenue and Redland Close

PRAYER

Holy God, our strength and our redeemer, who prepared Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

NEW ALPHA COURSE

After five successful Alpha Courses, St Michael's Church is hosting a new course starting on Thursday 8th January 2009 at 7:30pm in St Michael's Church Room. Please invite anyone you know who may be interested in exploring the Christian Faith (you need only invite them to the first night to check it out) - this is a great opportunity to enable the Gospel to be shared. Please contact either **Phil Bradley** or **Arthur Woo** for details. This is open to anyone regardless of location.

Phil Bradley & Alpha Team 2009

In January the prayer list will be cleared down. If you would like your name kept on the list please contact **Lesley Uzzell**

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

...all those who are sick or troubled, praying especially for

Yvonne Beck, Lorna Bowie, Bob Bromberg, Beryl and Eric Brown, Leonard Cheesley, Val Cox, Andrew Crowley, Arthur Francis, Kim Fulgoni, Peter Gibbs, Syd Huband, Peggy King, Netta Porter, Julia Riggs, Mick Sellar, Jean Stanley, Betty Taber

...all those who are recently bereaved, praying especially for those who love and miss Amanda Bett

Parish of Highworth, with Sevenhampton & Inglesham - who to contact

All Ministry Enquiries - Rev Geoff Sowden (day off Friday) telephone 01793-765554
Church Office (Administration/General Enquiries) - tel 01793-762702 or

email to stmichaelshighworth@offices.orangehome.co.uk

Youth Ministry Enquiries - telephone 07983-507349 (day off Saturday)

www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk



Week beginning Sunday 21st December 2008

What did Gabriel look like when he came to give God's message to Mary? We all know that he had a huge flowing white robe and enormous wings and that a sort of light shone all around him. Don't we? I am not sure we can agree on the angle at which he wore his halo, but we all know that he had one. Didn't he?

But maybe it wasn't like that. Luke tells us that Mary was 'greatly troubled' when Gabriel said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you" and she 'wondered what kind of greeting this might be', so maybe he wasn't that obviously a messenger from God. Perhaps he looked just like an ordinary person when he met her. Perhaps Mary's first thought was that a nutter had escaped from somewhere. And she might have been even more convinced of that when he told her that she was going to have a baby Who was "the Son of the Most High" and that "The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."

But somehow she knew at that moment that this was a genuine message from God, and she accepted it. And through that acceptance Jesus came into this broken world to defeat the powers of death and Hell and make it possible for us to be right with God through His sacrifice on the Cross. The whole universe must have held its breath in the space between the angel's offer and Mary's acceptance.

She listened and accepted God's message. Let's follow her example. Let us as individuals and as a church resolve to do the same - let's listen out for God and when we hear what He says let's accept it. Who knows how many angels may be holding their breath?

Charles Kirke

Our readings today are

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (pew bible p310)

Luke 1:26-38 (pew bible p1026)

Please join us for refreshments after the 10am service today

If you prefer not to take alcohol, alcohol-free wine is available at our communion services - please take a pink card from a steward and ensure it is visible as you come for communion