



St Leonard's

Ordinary People. Extraordinary God.



Parish Magazine

December 2014

Mens' Prayer Breakfast

**on the first Saturday of every month
in the Nicholls Room**

8.30 to 10.00am

with a breakfast of

Cereals, Tea, Coffee, Fruit Juice and Bacon Rolls.

Followed by Prayer Time

REGULAR SERVICES

Sunday:

- 8.00am Holy Communion
(BCP using Common Worship lectionary)
9.45am PARISH EUCHARIST and Junior Church
9.45am All Age Worship (1st Sunday in the month)
6.30pm Evensong and Sermon
6.30pm PARISH EUCHARIST (1st Sunday in the month)

Wednesday: 10.00am The Eucharist.

Thursday: 8.00am The Eucharist.

Monday-Wednesday: Morning Prayer is usually said at 9.00am

Monday-Thursday: Evening Prayer is usually said at 5.00pm
(Please check times listed in Weekly Notices each week)

CHURCH OPENING

The Church is open every weekday morning, for anyone who would like to visit, to enjoy this beautiful building and to have the opportunity to experience God's presence. The normal opening hours are:

<i>Mondays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.00</i>	<i>Thursdays</i>	<i>7.45 – 12.30</i>
<i>Tuesdays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.30</i>	<i>Fridays</i>	<i>9.45 – 2.00</i>
<i>Wednesdays</i>	<i>8.45 – 12.00</i>		

Advertisements: The inclusion of an advertisement in this magazine should not be taken as implying endorsement of the objects of the advertiser by this church or the diocese.

Diary for December

Monday 1st

7.45pm PCC meet in the Nicholls Room

Tuesday 2nd

10.30am Holy Communion at Wren House

12 noon Lexden Ladies lunch at Ardleigh Garden Centre

Wednesday 3rd

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 4th

8.00am The Eucharist

7.30pm Christian Aid Service

Saturday 6th

8.30am Men's Prayer Breakfast

10.30am - 2pm Christmas Bazaar

SUNDAY 7th December: Advent II

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) with the Bishop of Colchester

9.45am All Age Eucharist

6.30pm Fifth Event

Tuesday 9th

2.30pm Lexden Ladies and Mothers' Union joint carol service

7.30pm 'Medley' house group at 20 Wordsworth Road (Rosemary 515245)

Wednesday 10th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 11th

8.00am The Eucharist

3.00pm 'Canticle' and 'Wordsworth' House Groups meet (Hugh 564577)

Friday 12th

1.00pm Lexden Primary School Carol service in church

Saturday 13th

10.30am Coffee morning at 1 Acland Avenue

SUNDAY 14th: Advent III

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Tuesday 16th

2.30pm Carol service at the Old Rectory

Wednesday 17th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 18th

8.00am The Eucharist

9.30am Home Farm School carol service in church

8.15pm 'Harmony' house group at 145 High Road. Layer (Alison 734246)

SUNDAY 21st: Advent IV

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church

6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Monday 22nd

10.30 Carol Service at Woodlands

11.00 Carols and Holy Communion at Hill House

6.30pm Carols and Holy Communion at Cheviot

Tuesday 23rd

11am Carols at Wren House

Wednesday 24th: Christmas Eve

2.30pm Crib Service

4.30pm The Service of Light

6.30pm The Service of Light (these two services are identical)

11.15 Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th : Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist

Cont'd.....

SUNDAY 28th: Holy Innocents
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
9.45am Parish Eucharist
No Evensong

No mid-week services from 29th December to 3rd January

3rd January

8.30 Men's Prayer Breakfast

4th January: The Epiphany

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am Parish Eucharist with Junior Church (INCENSE WILL BE USED AT THIS SERVICE)

6.30pm Evensong and Sermon

Wednesday 7th

10.00am The Eucharist with prayers for healing followed by Open Church

Thursday 8th

8.00am The Eucharist

Saturday 10th

9.00am Alpha course begins in church

Dick Whittington

A date to put in your diaries...

The Parish Pantomime hits the stage towards the end of January. This year it is Dick Whittington, with all the usual suspects on stage and some new ones. The jokes will be of their usual high quality, the songs you will recognise but will not be quite sure where from. You can be guaranteed a very enjoyable time, it's for children and adults alike. The productions will be in the Church Hall on:

- Friday 23rd Jan at 7.30pm (with supper)
- Saturday 24th Jan at 3pm

Saturday 24th Jan at 7.30pm

more details of how to purchase tickets will appear in the weekly newsletter and the January Magazine.

David Burrows

From Richard

Dear Friends,

I was delighted and humbled by your generosity in my leaving gift.

Teresa had hinted that there might be a collection (in true St Leonard's style) and I said I'd like to get a copy of "Visual Liturgy" - a computer program for producing orders of service, and if there was a bit left over I might put it towards a red stole.



The fact that both are now possible is wonderful, and will be for many years a reminder of St Leonard's, Lexden. Thank you all very much. Not only for the gift, but for the support and encouragement that you gave me over the years that I worked in the parish.

I am now involved in the parishes of Ardleigh, the Bromleys and Elmstead, and have rapidly come to realise what immensely rich resources St Leonard's has. In the new parishes there are no readers, pastoral assistants, evangelists, youth workers or parish administrators. And there are 3 PCCs! Please continue to pray for me as I work in these parishes, and for them as they seek God's path. To date there have been no applicants for the post of Priest in Charge, so it looks like I'm going to be on my own there until at least the spring of 2015.

Again, thank you for your wonderful generosity. I pray that you will continue to reflect God's abundant love to you within St Leonard's, and in your lives as you seek to live out and rejoice in your faith.

With love.

Richard

CARDS

Owen Shepherd makes cards of various sorts that are on sale in the Nicholls room after all services. Also, he can make cards to order. All proceeds going to Church Funds.

Bishop Stephen's Christmas Christmas Message 2014

Do not be afraid



Knife crime, gun crime, immigration, unemployment, genocide, the war on terror, nuclear holocaust, Aids, bird flu, anti-biotic resistant super bugs and now Ebola, it feels as if the world is gripped by one potentially life threatening or 'civilisation as we know it' threatening cataclysm after another. And we are understandably filled with fear.

Into this maelstrom of panic and dread is the Christmas season a welcome escape, or an opportunity to get some perspective? Well, there are probably many people who will indeed eat and drink and forget the troubles of the world at Christmas, and good luck to them. But for those of us who look to Bethlehem, not Bluewater, for our centre of gravity at this time of year we encounter a very different story and a very different set of challenges.

So may the words of the angel Gabriel to Mary ring out loud and clear across the globe, and if only they were strung up in brightly flashing neon lights in every High Street: 'Do not be afraid'. Yes, there are the most terrible horrors engulfing our world, not least the Ebola outbreak and its possible consequence for all of us, and the already devastating toll it has taken on some of the world's poorest communities. But Mary is told not to be frightened because she is to be the one through whom God's purposes of love and justice will be made known. This can also be true for us, who follow Jesus. We can be bearers of his love and his justice, ordering the world differently.

Jesus is born to show us what humanity is supposed to look like and to restore lost community with God. In doing this he reminds us that we are one humanity inhabiting one world, that we are all children of God and that we belong to each other. This should change the way we approach the horrors and challenges of the world. There are some strident, cynical and scaremongering voices around. We should be suspicious of them. This is

not the time to pull up the drawbridge. On the contrary it is the time to put extra resources into helping those in need, especially the poor, for our well-being is tied up with theirs.

Finally, Jesus was born into a persecuted people living in an occupied land. In an effort to rid the world of the threat he posed, a despotic puppet of a leader wiped out a whole generation of little boys, and Jesus and his family fled into exile. If we make this story ours, then we too must change the way we treat strangers, the way we confront tyrants and, yes, have an immigration policy that is as much concerned with hospitality for those in need as it is for the feathers in our own nest. The Son of Man had no place to rest his head. He was born in what was the equivalent of a bus shelter at the back of a pub. We cannot claim to follow him and ignore others who share his plight. We cannot confront the brutal terrors going on in Iraq, Syria and other places in the world, and at the same time close our doors to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced and persecuted minority groups. So free yourself from fear this Christmas. Follow the one who alone offers hope in the midst of the very real challenges we face. Discover that his way of peace - upside down thought it seems to so much of the received wisdom of the world - is actually the way of justice, prosperity and well-being for everyone. It is available, gift wrapped, with lashings of love, free of charge and ready to go at a local church near you.

Have an interesting Christmas.

+Stephen

Coffee Mornings

A big thank you to Edward and Beverley Kettell for inviting us to their lovely home. A lovely time was had by all and £240-85p was raised for church funds.

As in previous years Francis Bonner
has kindly offered to hold a

Christmas Coffee Morning

At her home, **1, Acland Avenue**

From 10.30am to 12 noon

On Saturday, 13th December

She will welcome everyone with mince pies and coffee
and there will be raffle.

So do come and enjoy this festive get-together

From the Curate

Advent is a beautiful time of reflection in the Christian church. A time when it is most rewarding to reflect in prayer as we wait in anticipation the good news of the arrival of Christ.

Yes, I grant that there is much to detract from that nourishing reflection and prayer. The degree to which we are bombarded by the commercial interests of Christmas, (the first Christmas decorations I saw this year went up on 31 October), the pressures we are put under to create the perfect Christmas festival and even, dare I say, the plethora of carol services, all serve to crowd out a time when we should be waiting expectantly and prayerfully.

Prayer is fundamental to Christian faith, and must be fundamental to each of us as we live out our Christianity. Unfortunately, all too often prayer can be viewed as effective only if we meet certain conditions laid down somewhere, probably in our heads. This approach suggests that only if certain obstacles are overcome, will prayer be answered. If we do not successfully negotiate the obstacle course, God will not hear us. But, this implies that God is like a tennis umpire watching our every move, waiting to disqualify us if we make a fault or are only slightly over the line. Viewing prayer in this way makes prayer a spiritual exercise with answers depending on our efforts rather than on God's grace and good will.

When Jesus' disciples call on him to: "Teach us how to pray, as John taught his disciples." He gave them the Lord's Prayer as their model for prayer. He did not tell them precisely the circumstances in which they should pray. He does not tell us where, when and how we should pray, only that we should pray. Kneeling, standing, sitting, hands clasped, hands or arms outstretched, eyes open, eyes closed, eyes to heaven or to an object of devotion, with a lighted candle, with incense, alone, corporately, in church, at home, in the park, in the street, in the gym, in the pool, on the train or in the car – it does not matter where we find the best place to pray, as long as we adopt the model of Christian prayer and pray often.

Praying is putting yourself near God. But this is not always easy. Prayer can sometimes be deeply moving, with a feeling of closeness to God and the palpable sense of the divine presence. At other times...well, at other times we just don't seem to be able to get it right. When this is the case,

we should not become obsessed like a tennis player analysing again and again why a manoeuvre did not prove the winning stroke despite apparently having all the same circumstances as when it won the point before. We should just persevere in our prayer and faith in God.

Our former Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, gives the most beautiful advice, confident in its simplicity, as what to do when effective prayer is proving difficult. Prayer, he says is simply putting yourself near God, with God, in a time of quietness every day. You put yourself with him just as you are, in the feebleness of your concentration, in your lack of warmth and desire, not trying to manufacture pious thoughts or phrases.

You put yourself with God, empty perhaps, but hungry and thirsty for him; and if in sincerity you cannot say that you want God, you can perhaps tell him that you want to want him; and if you cannot say even that, perhaps you can say that you want to want to want him! Thus, you can be very near him in your naked sincerity, and he will do the rest. What Michael Ramsey is saying here is that we can each be with God not by achieving certain devotional exercises in his presence, but by daring to be our individual selves and reaching out towards God.

Prayer is the spontaneous, heartfelt sharing by needy human beings with God, who is able and willing to help. In prayer we come to the Father through the Son and accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Prayer is a continuous expression of the personal relationship that has been established with God through Jesus and the content of our prayer grows out of our relationship with others in the body of Christ, including our community at St Leonard's and the Church throughout the world, our global Christian community.

Prayer is efficacious, perhaps not in the ways we expected, but in God's ways (My ways are not your ways says the Lord). And what greater assurance do we have than that promised by Jesus:

“Ask, and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you; For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened”.

Wishing you a prayerful Advent, **David**

From Judy



The last time I wrote an article for the parish magazine feels quite a long time ago. Yet it is hard to believe that by the time you read this I will have been with you all at St. Leonard's for three months. And also as you read this, Advent will be underway. Where has the time gone?

October for me consisted of my first ministry team and Junior Church meetings, more wonderful Sunday lunches, and church coffee mornings. We had our first Junior OMG youth group which was great fun. We talked about friends and looked at Jesus being the best friend we could have and how he too needed his friends.

The Cubs went climbing at the university during half term and it was funny to be on campus again; the last time I was there was four and a half years ago when I looked at Essex University as a possible choice to study American Studies.

On 30th October we had my first Holy Commotion. It was 'A Party of Light' and thank you to everyone who came. It was a busy afternoon with songs, prayers, parachute games, star-shaped biscuit decorating, paper lantern making, sparkly prayer crosses, and light card making. There was a lot going on and we all had plenty of fun learning about Jesus being the light of the world. Thank you to everyone who helped out, and an extra big thank you to Rachel for reading for me!

As well as that I spent a weekend at home where I went to a friend's wedding, and I also met my Mum in London at the end of the month to go and visit the beautiful poppies at the Tower of London and have afternoon tea at the Fan Museum in Greenwich after a boat ride from Westminster.

Although December will be busy, I'm looking forward to celebrating Advent at St. Leonard's!

God bless!

Judy

New Hythe

At a Mission and Outreach meeting it was suggested that as a church we make up Hampers at Christmas for the residents of New Hythe which is run by Family Mosaic, so I felt that it would be a good idea if I explained what New Hythe is.

When I went to see the manager I was welcomed with open arms to say the least. She was so pleased to have been approached with this offer.

New Hythe is in our Parish and is situated on London Road and is a supported housing scheme for young people aged 16 - 25 (single people and couples) who either have care of a baby or are expecting a child. Applicants are referred to the scheme by Colchester Borough Council and Social Services having been assessed by them as being homeless and both needing and wanting the kind of support that the scheme can offer. Applicants are prioritised and normally there is a short waiting list.

The scheme is made up of 16 self-contained units. The aim is to offer temporary housing and support to young people whilst they gain confidence as parents and learn the skills to live independently and manage a permanent tenancy.

The length of stay can be between 6 months and two years depending upon the individual needs. They help the residents with all the aspects of living in their own home, including day to day living skills and also support them in their new role as parents.

A list of items for the Hampers is in the weekly news sheet but things for the babies and the parents would be appreciated such as toiletries for baby and mother, nappies, baby wipes etc and a small toy for the babies and perhaps chocolate for the parents. The ages of the babies are not born to 16 months and a lot of the residents have no contact with their families.

The idea is to collect the items and then make up the Hampers nearer to Christmas when we know the ages of the babies and whether they are with a lone parent or a couple.

Judith



LEXDEN WASSAIL

By
candlelight

Led by
*Beyond
Blue*

Saturday 20th December 2014

7.30pm in the Hall @

St Leonard's Church

Lexden CO3 4BL



An evening featuring traditional carols
mulled wine, finger food & raffle

Limited tickets available from 7th December

after church services or email:

sally@stleonardslexden.org.uk

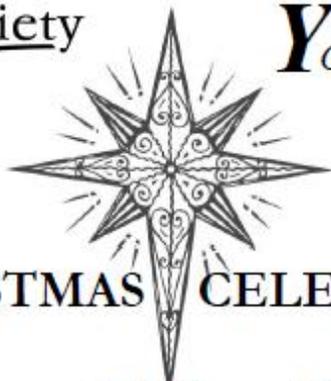


All profits shared between church funds
and our NotDec child Moses

£8

Lexden
Choral Society

Lexden
YOUTH CHOIR



A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

New and Traditional Carols

With
Audience Participation
Followed by
Finger Buffet

At
ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, LEXDEN

Saturday 13th December 2014

at 7.00pm



Tickets – £10.00 Students/U-18s £8.00
(Finger Buffet - wine not included)

From: Mann's Music /Phone Col: 766906/or at the door

Remembrance Sunday



This year, we were joined by a Lieutenant and a Sergeant from 16th Medical Support Unit based at Colchester Garrison.

At the Parish Eucharist we heard a moving homily by the Reverend David Armstrong, before assembling with the uniformed groups at the war memorial, where the Act of Remembrance was led by the Reverend Teresa Wynne.



An Evening of Remembrance 9th November 2014 MUSIC, POETRY, READINGS, PRAYER & REFLECTION

It always seems appropriate that Armistice Day falls in November - a season of remembrance in the Church's year. This year of course was particularly poignant as it marked the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War 1914-18. With this in mind I wanted to mark the occasion by perhaps highlighting some of the horrors, hardships and hideous waste of war both on a personal and national level. Of course there were many heroic deeds, acts of friendship and camaraderie but nothing could disguise the conditions endured by those fighting for "King and country".

One great source of what the soldiers experienced was of course the poetry that the war inspired as well as the personal diaries and letters written by countless men at the front. Music too was important and many of the songs sung by soldiers at the front still live on today and I'm sure that no-one in church on Sunday evening could fail to be moved by the singing of "Keep the Home Fires Burning".

The atmosphere on that Sunday was wonderful, not least because it was all done by candlelight - a symbol of hope in a sea of darkness - and I'm confident Jesus walked in the darkness alongside those men and women who fought in that terrible war and those who continue to put their lives on the line for others.

I would like to thank everyone who shared the evening. A special thank you to those who read, sang, said prayers, lit candles, operated lights, operated the screen, produced the order of service and helped in any way.

Maggie Whiteman

