

SUNDAY SERVICES

SUNDAY 6th 8am 10.15am 4.00pm	Advent 2 Holy Communion First Sunday Evensong
SUNDAY 13th 8am 10.15am 068	Advent 3 Holy Communion Parish Communion
SUNDAY 20th 8am 10.15am 4.00pm	Advent 4 Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion with Laying-on of Hands for Healing
MONDAY 21st 7.00pm	Carol Service
THURSDAY 24th 10.30am 4.00pm 11.30pm	CHRISTMAS EVE Holy Communion (BCP) Crib Service Holy Communion
FRIDAY 25th 8am 10.15am	CHRISTMAS DAY Holy Communion Family Communion
SUNDAY 27th 8am 10.15am	St. John Holy Communion Morning Worship
SUNDAY 3rd JANUARY 8am 10.15am 6.30pm	Epiphany Holy Communion First Sunday 'Songs of Praise'
SUNDAY 10th 8am 10.15am 4.00pm	Baptism of Christ Holy Communion First Sunday Evensong
SUNDAY 17th 8am 10.15am 4.00pm	Epiphany 2 Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion with Laying-on of Hands for Healing
SUNDAY 24th 8am 10.15am 6.30pm	Epiphany 3 Holy Communion Parish Communion Service at St. Paul's for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
SUNDAY 31st 8am 10.15am 4.00pm	Epiphany 4 Holy Communion Morning Worship Evensong
EACH THURSDAY 10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)

REGULAR EVENTS

Refreshments are served every Sunday after the 10.15am service and after Holy Communion on Thursdays.

Sunday School meets each Sunday at the 10.15am service, leaving after the first hymn, on all but the first Sunday in the month when there is a special Children's Service. (All ages welcome).

St. Peter's Choir sings at 10.15am services apart from the First Sunday service. Choir practices are on Sunday mornings. Contact Adrian on 409612. New members welcome.

Women's Fellowship meets on 2nd and 4th Mondays at 2.30pm in St. Cuthbert's Hall until the end of the year from which time meetings will be held in the Chapter House
Details from Doris Hoskins Tel: 304424

Cruse holds a coffee morning in the Chapter House on **Tuesdays from 10am - 12 noon** for those trying to come to terms with bereavement. Tel: 340321 for further details.

The Pastoral visiting team helps to care for the sick, elderly & housebound. Offers of help and requests for visits to Do Vesey. Tel: 353024

St. Peter's eight bells are rung each Sunday from 9.40am. Practices are at **7.30pm on Thursdays**.
Details from Richard Entwistle. Tel: 360095

The Mothers' Union meets at **10.30am on the first Wednesday of each month** at 8, de Parys Avenue for coffee, prayer and Bible study. **"Modern Mums"** meet by arrangement at **8pm**.
Details from Pam Coppenhall Tel: 357903

Grapevine Parent & Toddler group meets from 9.30 - 11.30am on Fridays.
Details from Andrea Spice. Tel: 341861

St. Peter's Coffee Shop is open from **10am on Saturdays** with books, sweets and (occasionally) cakes for sale. Donations of cakes and offers of help gratefully received.
Details from Tricia Oakley. Tel: 211499

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6	9	1	5	4	5	8	2	
7	8	7	2	1	5	6	4	
2	4	4	8	6	6	5		

Solution to puzzle on page 7

NETWORK

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER DE MERTON WITH ST. CUTHBERT

December 2009 / January 2010

Dear All,

Christmas is coming! And with it, a busy time for us all, not least at church.

And before it all starts in earnest, can I say a big 'Thank you!' to you all for what you are about to do. St.Peter's would not be a church without you.... (Let's all groan at the old pun - What's in the middle of 'church'? U. R ! But it's true.) And without trying to give a theological treatise that nobody really wants at this time of year, it's what the Stewardship Group are trying to say in their report elsewhere in this month's Network.

There is a danger, though. How do we become involved in a way that doesn't lead to us becoming just another little club? It's so easy to do; to think that we 'own' St. Peter's and to become very proprietorial about it. 'Anyway what do all those people think they're doing when they make their annual appearance?' And it's true, there are a lot of carol services at St. Peter's this year, involving both children and adults, as well as all the usual celebrations.

And I say 'Thank God' for that - because we have a treasure in our beautiful building that speaks so eloquently to those with ears to hear (and eyes to see) the miracle of God's love in Jesus. And because William Temple's dictum, that we are the only society that exists for the sake of those outside it, remains so true.

Why does it matter so much? Because the Christian faith is all about grace; it is pure gift and cannot be won or earned or bought. Isn't that exactly what makes Christmas so wondrous?

God entrusting himself to us in that way is almost unbelievable. Which is why our believing cannot be possessive; it can only mirror the God who always behaves so generously and inclusively (give or take the odd Old Testament blip that may be more about human misunderstanding than anything.)

I came across this beautiful passage written by Thomas Merton, that expresses this great truth so perfectly:

'The most wonderful thing about the world is that it is nobody's property, not even God's! We who are ruined by our own indigence to the point of thinking that we can possess something worship a false god, a god of possession, that is, a god of destruction. God is the God of the living.'

What a wonderful commentary that is on the miracle of Christmas, and the global responsibility we all bear as we pray for those who hold the world's future in their hand in Copenhagen.

May the grace of God come very close to us in these next weeks, and the Christmas we share be a real joy.

With my love,

Mike

www.stpeter.org.uk

Stewardship

With the completion of our current Stewardship Campaign at the APCM in April this year, the responses have brought a moderate increase in offers of help with the many facilities that St. Peter's provides on a weekly and monthly basis and a moderate increase in financial support.

For your information, we are summarizing below where we are at the moment, the areas that are now covered and those that need more support.

Firstly:-

- **Finance** - Although we have had a fairly good response to our Stewardship campaign, and quite a few of you have increased your giving, for which we thank you very much, the New Year is perhaps a good time for us all to consider how important St. Peter's Church, and its ministry, is to us. As has been mentioned on several previous occasions, sadly our outgoings continue to exceed our regular income, which we are sure you will agree is not a very unsatisfactory position to be in. So if we could all review our giving once again and, after taking care of all our household bills and other regular commitments, see if we can possibly increase the amount we set aside for the church that is very dear to us, and which, as Stewards of St. Peter's we would hate to lose.

Secondly:-

The areas that are fairly well covered are:-

- **Church Watch** - we are pleased to say that we have set up a stewards rota, which allows us to open the church for approximately two hours every week-day morning from approximately 10.30am until 12.00pm.
- **Reader Rotas & Sidesmen Rotas** are also well catered for.
- **Children & Young People** - as we know, we do not have many young children attending Sunday School, but we have a small stalwart band who

work on a rota basis to teach any young ones that do turn up. More volunteers would of course be always welcome.

- **Social Committee** - we have a thriving & active committee prepared to organize social events and special 'one off' occasions. **Helping at special events** - it would be very useful if we had a list of people who would be willing to help with setting up the Church or Chapter House, manning the doors, and generally welcoming visitors etc for any special occasions. Please let Tricia know if you would be willing to be on such a list.
- **Mother's Union** - meets monthly with quite regular attendance.
- **Women's Fellowship** - meets twice monthly and is also well attended.
- **Flower Arranging** - a very able team of flower arrangers led by Gwen Farmer do a wonderful job, with additional arrangers helping out for the 'special occasions' such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest etc but more helpers would always be welcome.

Thirdly:-

There are areas which still have need for help in providing a service to the community (in St. Peter's and outside) and these are listed below:-

- **Pastoral visiting** - involves visiting those who are sick, in care homes, and those who receive home communion. Generally, this would require daytime visiting. There is more and more demand for this type of ministry, so if you are interested please contact Mike, who would be delighted to put you on his list.
- **Network / St. Peter's Green** - a very small group finds copy for the quarterly magazine but

responsibility for the former falls on Tricia's shoulders. More members would be a valuable asset to the production of the weekly notices and the monthly magazines and indeed to providing articles and features for the magazine.

- **Publicity** - publicity is an extremely important part of our ministry, not only to us but also to the local community. We wish to set up a proper committee of people who would be willing to help with advertising our activities, such as special services, concerts, open days, lunches, sales etc, by helping to produce posters, leaflets etc. and arranging for them to be distributed and displayed. **To find out a bit more about what is involved a meeting is planned for Thursday 14th January at 11.30am in the Chapter House, so do please come along, without any commitment, if you feel you might be interested.**
- **Saturday Coffee Shop & Sunday Morning Coffee** - there are vacancies in both these services at the moment which means that the current helpers are involved practically every week, which is quite demanding and an unfair acceptance of their willingness to meet this need. Additional helpers would be greatly appreciated to share the load and lengthen the time between each individual's duty.
- **Monthly lunches** - this is something that is being looked at for the New Year.
- **Dusting and light cleaning** - volunteers are needed for next year's Spring Cleaning effort, which will take place on the 18th, 19th & 20th of March, and many willing hands would be very welcome for this annual event.
- **Gardening** - help in keeping the churchyard tidy, on an 'as required' basis would be a great service.

Stewardship being an ongoing activity, it is never too late to help St. Peter's serve the community and strive to do God's will in the Parish, so the Stewardship team will be only too pleased to receive your offers and give any information necessary.

The team continues to meet and discuss stewardship matters and currently the introduction of 'Welcome' packs for new members and a handbook outlining the function of the church officers are under discussion.

The stewardship team thanks everyone who responded to the appeal and offered to help with activities and/or increase giving.

The Stewardship Team.

Rev Mike Fudger Tel: 354543
Maureen Tompkins 360495
Gloria Clarke 357676
Roy Jupp 213468

At the start of the New Year, my boyfriend had moved house and job. I decided to ring him to see how he was settling in. To my astonishment, a woman picked up the phone. "Is Mike there?" I asked.

"He's in the shower," she responded, with some hesitation.

In the shower?! "Please tell him his girlfriend called," I said frostily, and hung up.

When he didn't return the call, I got more and more angry, and finally dialled again. This time a man answered. "This is Mike," he said.

"You're not my boyfriend!" I exclaimed. "I've got the wrong number."

"I know," he replied. "That's what I've been trying to tell my wife for the past half-hour."

'Is This a Sign of the Times ?

Following an illustrated talk I gave in the Chapter House in December 2003 based on Christmas Stamps since the inception in 1966, the Reverend Cyril Harris responded with an article he wrote in January 2004 Network. I re-write part of the article as follows:-

Quote, "One realised that such a collection now and in years to come will be a religious, social and historical statement of the second half of the twentieth century. In the first years the art work reflected the story of Christmas and the Nativity scenes followed by the merry aspects such as the joy of children, Christmas crackers and sparkling trees and snow. Latterly this was followed by tales of pilgrims, inventors, workmen and entertainers. In other words increasing emphasis on the secular society. One could trace the movement from the religious to the worldly" Unquote.

This year's colourful Christmas generic sheet of stamps issued on 3rd November 09 show Nativity figures and verses from the Gospel according to Luke, each has a different background showing scenes from the Nativity story.

The individual stamps feature sections from stained glass windows as follows:-

- 2nd Class *Angel with Mandolin* by William Morris, from the church of St James, Staveley, Kendal, Cumbria.
- 1st Class *Madonna and Child* by Henry Holiday, from Ormesby St Michael, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.
- 56p *Joseph* by Henry Holiday, from the Parish Church of St Michael, Minehead, Somerset.

- 90p *Wise man* by Edward Burne-Jones from St Mary, the Virgin, Rye, East Sussex.
- £1.35 *Shepherd* by Henry Holiday from the St Mary's Church, Upavon, Wiltshire.

The First Day Cover bears the inscription: -

*And God Said,
Let there be light ;
and there was light.
Genesis 1: 3*

The postmark on the envelope states:-

Every
colour ought
to encourage
Prayer

(referring to the colourful stained glass)

I was therefore pleased to see this year that the Royal Mail have issued Christmas Stamp designs based on religious subjects. However, I have to add that in the current publication of the Philatelic Bulletin, it does state :- " For those customers preferring secular rather than religious stamps, reprinted 2006 generic stamps will be available."

Eric J. Coppenhall

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS	
FUNERALS	
26 th November	Joan Armsby
3 rd December	Robert Stuart
INTERMENT OF ASHES	
9 th December	Ted Loughlin
12 th December	June Oakley
13 th December	Mary Briggs

Where did Christmas stockings come from?

No one is really sure, but a story is told of St Nicholas, a bishop who lived in the 4th century, who may have started the custom by accident. St Nicholas was of a wealthy family, and of a generous heart. As Christmas approached one year, he wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney.

The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put their stockings out, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.

12 Days of Christmas

When most people hear 'The 12 days of Christmas' they think of the song of the same name. It is believed by many that this song had its origins as a teaching tool to instruct young people in the meaning and content of the Christian faith. From 1558 to 1829 Roman Catholics in England were not able to practice their faith openly, so they had to find other ways to pass on their beliefs. The song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' is one example of how many people believe that they did it.

The song goes, "On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me..." The 'true love' represents God and the 'me' who receives these presents is the Christian.



The 'partridge in a pear tree' was Jesus Christ who died on a tree as a gift from God.

The 'two turtle doves' were the Old and New Testaments - another gift from God.

The 'three French hens' were faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Spirit that abide (1Corinthians 13).

The 'four calling birds' were the four Gospels, which sing the song of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The 'five golden rings' were the first five books of the Bible, also called the 'Book of Moses'.

The 'six geese a-laying' were the six days of creation.

The 'seven swans a swimming' were 'seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.' (1Corinthians 12:9-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1Peter 4:10-11.)

The 'eight maids a milking' were the eight beatitudes.

The 'nine ladies dancing' were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

The 'ten lords a-leaping' were the Ten Commandments.

The 'eleven pipers piping' were the eleven faithful disciples.

The 'twelve drummers drumming' were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

So the next time you hear 'The 12 Days of Christmas' you can make up your own mind: could this non-religious sounding song really have had its origins in the Christian Faith, or not?

"My wife doesn't know what she wants for Christmas."
"You're lucky. My wife does."

DIRECTORY

Clergy	Mike Fudger (Rector)	354543
	Cyril Harris (Hon. Asst)	344927
Churchwardens	Alison Davis	267480
	Dave Hoskins	304424
Assistant Churchwardens	Bruce Reid	267137
	Liz McHale	210620
PCC Secretary	Tricia Oakley	211499
Treasurers	Hannah Potter	352675
	Anthony Chestney	351719
Planned Giving Officer	Gloria Clarke	357676
Electoral Roll Officer	Roy Jupp	213468
Bookings:		
Chapter House	Ann Lawrence	358950



Church Flowers: Please see the Rota at the back of the church or ring 270514

CONCERT

Kempston Musical Society are giving a 'Christmas Concert' here in St. Peter's on Saturday 12th December at 7.30pm, in aid of the Arthritis Research Campaign. There will be music on the organ by Brian Fox, Derrick Robinson on the piano, and a brilliant young musician Stewart McDonald playing the violin. Tickets are £7 and are available from members of the Choir, Bedford Box Office, Classic Music in Lime Street, Tema Music in Kempston, or Gloria on Tel No 357676. Do join us for a very entertaining night out, in aid of a really worthwhile cause.

DIARY

December

- 4th Retirement Education Centre Carol Service 2pm. First Friday 7.30pm.
- 7th Ministry Group meets at the Rectory 3pm. Modern Mums 8pm
- 8th Pilgrims School Christmas Celebrations 2pm and 7pm
- 9th Simeon's Song - Advent and us 7.30pm
- 11th High School Carol Services 9.30am and 11am
- 12th CONCERT 7.30pm
- 14th Film Club 7pm
- 21st Carol Service 7pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Chapter House

January

- 7th Sunday School leaders meet at The Rectory 8pm
- 12th Social Committee meets at The Gables 8pm
- 14th Publicity Group meets in church 11.30am
- 15th Chapter House Users Group meeting 11.30am (tbc)
- 19th Education Group meets at Do's 2.30pm. BCoF AGM in the Chapter House 7.30pm
- 25th PCC meeting 7.30pm

FIRST FRIDAY IN THE MONTH
February 5th 7.30pm
Heather L Harris
Gray's Elegy and all that!
All welcome

*"What is a church? – Our honest sexton tells,
'Tis a tall building, with a tower and bells."
(George Crabbe 1754-1835)*

The central tower of the Church of St. Peter de Merton, Bedford dates back to the 10th or 11th century.

THE FRIENDS OF ST PETER'S value Bedfordshire's best-preserved Anglo-Saxon church and want to maintain it in excellent condition.

Please join us

Further information from
Mrs. Rosemary Evans
15 Linden Road
Bedford
MK40 2DQ
(01234) 211226

*BRINGING UP CHILDREN IS A FUNNY THING...
You spend the first two years of their life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next sixteen telling them to sit down and shut up*

Solution on back page

7	1		6	8			
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			1	9		3	5

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Beware the 4th of January !

On Monday 4th January, keep your voice down on the phone, don't eat your lunch too noisily, and for heaven's sake, don't sniff! You risk really irritating your colleagues if you do.

The first Monday in January is reckoned the most stressful day of the year, and researchers have found that annoying personal habits are most noticed then. It is a day of when millions of us struggle with rising tension, soaring stress levels and increased blood pressure.

The reasons are easy to find: Christmas festivities are finally over and it is time to return to work. The car needs scraping, and it is cold and miserable outside. That is depressing enough if you had a good Christmas, but suppose you had a terrible Christmas? More people visit divorce lawyers on the first Monday in January than at any other time of the year.

Also, January is the month when we pay for December, and fight the urge to keep spending in the sales... real economic gloom can set in. All in all, researchers warn: don't be surprised if you return to work feeling fragile.1



SCOUTS CHRISTMAS CARD DELIVERY SERVICE

This year cards will be delivered to Bedford, Bromham, Clapham, Kempston, Oakley, Ravensden and Wootton.
The cost is 15p per card and the correct money must be left in the box with your cards.
Last day for posting is 17th December.