

WISHING YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS WITH BLESSINGS FROM THE PASTROW BENEFICE

	St Thomas Charlton	Hatherden with Tanglely		Holy Trinity Penton	St Michaels' & All Angels Weyhill	Smannell with Enham	
		Christ Church Hatherden	St Thomas' Tanglely			Christ Church Smannell	St Georges Enham
Sunday 3rd Dec	10.00 am Family Service	10.00 am Holy Communion(CW)		10.00 am Morning Worship	10.30 am Darkness to Light		10.00 am Holy Communion
Sunday 10th Dec	9.00 am Holy Communion(CW) 3.00 pm Christingle Service 6.30 pm Encounters Christmas Service		10.30 am Holy Communion (CW)	4.00 pm Christingle Service	10.30 am Christingle Service	10.00 am Holy Communion	3.00 pm Carol Service
Sunday 17th Dec	9.00 am Morning Prayer	10.00 am Nativity & Christingle Service	6.00 pm Parish Carol Service	8.30 am Holy Communion(BCP) 4.00 pm Carol Service	10.30 am Carols & Lessons	6.00 pm Carol Service	10.00 am Holy Communion
Christmas Week	Monday 18th Dec 7.30 pm Carols around the Christmas Tree	Friday 22nd Dec 6.30 pm Carols around the village 8.30 pm Community Carols Old Bell & Crown			Friday 22nd 12.30 pm Stable Concert The Fairground Weyhill		
Sunday 24th Dec	3.00 pm Great Bethlehem Bake off 5.00 pm Carol Service 11.30 pm Midnight Communion	2.30 pm & 4.00 pm Dr Who and the Baby from Nazareth, 11.00 pm Midnight Communion		10.00 am Holy Communion	11.00 pm Midnight Communion	5.00 pm Crib Service 11.00 pm Midnight Communion	
Monday 25th Dec	10.00 am Family Service		10.00 am Christmas Day Service	10.00 am Christmas Day Service			10.00 am Christmas Communion
Sunday 31st Dec	United Benefice Songs of Praise St Thomas' Charlton 9.15 am Bacon sandwiches & Croissants 10.00 am Service						

All are welcome to join us for any of our special services over the festive season.

Darkness to Light

Christingle Service Christingle Service



Carols around the Christmas Tree

Stable Concert

Great Bethlehem Bake Off

Dr Who & the Baby from Nazareth

Carol Service or Carols & Lessons

Crib Service



Midnight Communion



A traditional candlelit service ushering in the time of advent. A wonderful way of celebrating the beginning of the Christmas season. A special service celebrating the 'light of the world', with the traditional dressed orange with candles and fruits. Not to be missed by children or adults.



A time of gathering together as a community around our Christmas tree singing carols and accompanied by the Test Valley Brass Band Wrap up warm and join us for a selection of carols and a Christmas message followed by mulled wine & mince pies. Held in the stable area at the Weyhill Fair Ground An interactive service for children and adults alike.



All aboard the Christmas Tardis with Dr Who as he travels back 2000 years to a stable in Nazareth. A traditional Carol service, with bible readings. Suitable for all the family.



A special service which involves the children and takes them through the story of Christmas building the nativity scene as the service unfolds. Carols, readings, and the Eucharist to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ

Please visit our website <http://www.pastrowbenefice.org.uk/> to find out about services and events throughout the year in the Pastrow Benefice.

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GOOD NEWS AT CHRISTMAS !!

2017 Edition

FROM THE PASTROW BENEFICE

Sharing the love, grace and truth of Jesus Christ

www.pastrowbenefice.org.uk

A very warm welcome to this special edition of news from around the Pastrow Benefice! It has been such a busy and exciting year that we thought we would tell you of some of the many things that have been going on in churches, along with some of the new events for 2018. I hope what is obvious from reading through the magazine is that Jesus is very much alive and inspiring our congregations to reach out to others in love. On the back cover, you will find all of the services happening throughout Advent and Christmas and you are warmly invited to come and share in the Good News!

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and many blessings to you and your family throughout 2018.
Alex

NEW FOR 2018!

2018 promises to be a very eventful year as we move in to our 'Year of Discipleship', journeying together as a collection of churches to look afresh at what it means to be part of a loving and serving community.

Ever wondered what that meant but been too afraid to ask? We will be running courses in most of our parishes to explore just that in 2018, so why not come along and find out? We will also be starting some new, informal styles of Sunday worship in some of our churches, looking at ways of reaching out to all. There are also lots of social events taking place in 2018, please check out our website or contact your local church for more details!

CHILDREN TAKE THE LEAD!



On Saturday, 1st July, Holy Trinity, Penton held a children's service. Rod, Penton's Churchwarden, had asked Claire, one of the members of our Family Service, whether she could get all our families together at the same time, it didn't matter what day or time it was. That was back in December, she just about managed to get them all together in July... Everyone is so busy nowadays! We had a wonderful evening, and all Mums, Dads and children attended! Claire had arranged for some of the Children to take part some were too shy, so Alexander played his clarinet, Alex & Harry sang, Phoebe said a poem, Ben gave us a short 'sermon' based on Jelly Beans! Sam had a puzzle for us to complete and Amelia did a short piece of

drama which she had prepared for her school exam, and even one of the dads was 'volunteered' to say a poem. All of this excitement was interspersed with short talks from Rod, and a monologue from Louis. Afterwards, Tom thanked us, and told us what the church meant to the young people. Revd Alex played his guitar and got everyone singing, jumping and waving their arms about. We finished the evening with light refreshments with a wonderful chocolate cake made by Ben (aged 7), and a PowerPoint presentation of the families in church over the last 10 years. A very special evening.

PASTORAL VISITING TEAM

One of the key groups developed in 2017 has been a group of Pastoral Visitors. The purpose of the group is to ensure that care is offered and given around our benefice. The group have met over a few months to ponder, pray & learn together about the role of a parish visitor, the boundaries to be observed and the background knowledge and experience we can bring to the role. After their commissioning in January 2018, the group, ably led by Revd Jill Bentall, will offer their ministry to all of those in the Benefice who request it. Would you like, or do you know someone, who would like a visit? Please contact us via our Benefice website or call us.

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

"Encounters with Jesus" is a new evening service held in St Thomas' Church, Charlton on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. It is deliberately informal, starting with tea, coffee and biscuits, and the purpose is to look at people who have met with Jesus, whether that is in the Old Testament; while he was here on earth; through the disciples in the rest of the New Testament or since, including people who have encountered him today. The format is a time of worship; a short explanation of who the person was, how they met Jesus, what happened and what effect it had on their life; a short discussion in small groups; a time of prayer and a time of worship to finish. The Encounters events are open to anyone who wants to find out more about meeting Jesus and how he changes lives. Why not come along and try it out?

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, TANGLEY

Peace and stillness embrace Tangley's little church in the woods. One visitor wrote of it: "It is small enough to create an instant, intimate atmosphere, the walls themselves waiting patiently for us to trust them with our thoughts and prayers." The place lends itself to quiet reflection. From time to time Tangley holds a Sunday evening reflection on the life of a person whose faith and witness brought healing and encouragement to those around them or who followed in their footsteps over the years.

Martin Luther, John Wesley and Albert Schweitzer were three such figures that we have reflected upon. Another was Pope Gregory the Great, who died in 604 and is considered a saint by most Christian churches. Closer to our own times were prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, Cicely Saunders, creator of the hospice movement, and Jackie Pullinger, missionary to the poor in Hong Kong, as well as Archbishop Elias Chacour, peacemaker of the Middle East.

Please go to the Pastrow website for details about coming to this service.

WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS 2017



There has been a record number of baptisms and weddings around the benefice this year, over 30 weddings in our 7 churches and over 40 people, young and old, coming forward for baptism! We have also trained a superb group of people who now act as coordinators and journey with wedding couples and baptism families to ensure that the occasion is a very blessed one. Baptism preparation evenings take place once a month and help families understand both the service and explore what baptism means. Gary commented, 'it really helped us to appreciate the words we were saying in the service.' Similarly, we host a wedding preparation day for those getting married throughout the year. Alice remarked, 'it was a superb way of getting to explore our vows and it was a lot of fun! Everyone involved from our initial inquiry to our wedding day was so helpful!'

MESSY CHURCH



"This is church but not as you know it!" by Karen Blakeman

The messy church team have been in action for just over a year now with two sessions each month - our 'congregations' are the schools in our parish - Hatherden and Smannell. A steep learning curve but 'God never said it would be easy' or was that Coldplay! It's hard work but so enjoyable –

I'm not sure who has the most fun, the helpers or the children!! – sessions last 2 hours of WORSHIP, crafts, games, play, music, prayer and FOOD.

Messy church is designed for the whole family to enjoy and we welcome people of any faith and none – why not come along in the new year and find out what it's all about?

Our wonderful team plan each session with a theme which runs throughout our gathering. If you get a chance to visit either Christ Church, Hatherden or Christ Church, Smannell you will see evidence of our Messy Play.

Over 50 families have registered but they don't all come to each session!! We do however have on average 20- 30 adults and children each time. We are so encouraged that the Spirit is moving in our school communities.

Please do keep Messy Church in your prayers. This is a Benefice in action - new friendships made and cords that cannot be broken!

2017 OUR YEAR OF PRAYER

While the Chinese have been enjoying 2017 as the Year of the Rooster, we here in Pastrow Benefice have been enjoying the Year of Prayer. The really Good News is that prayer is rather simple – it's communicating with God and listening to Him. The not so good news is that we could all be much better at it. However, sometimes the simplest lessons are the ones we remember most – like 'Tea Spoon' as a reminder of the best sequence for our prayers – Thank you Sorry..... Please..... By any measure we are a stronger praying community now and are looking forward to more Good News as we move towards the 2018 Year of Discipleship. Exciting times ahead!

PASTROW PRAYER TEAM

A close examination of New Testament scripture reveals that Jesus made his prayer times with God central to His Earthly ministry. In fact, in Matthew's Gospel Jesus says "When you pray", so it is a commandment. As a way of honouring Jesus, a prayer group was established just over a year ago. A dedicated body of people from across our Benefice churches meet on a monthly basis for Bible study, Christian meditation on God's word and most importantly...prayer. Recently we led a service of Wholeness and Healing, this fits into our purpose of providing prayer support, development of prayer lives, raising the profile of prayer and the establishment of a healing ministry across the Benefice.

Would you like prayer for something in your life or a loved one – please check out our prayer page on our website or contact us!



RETREAT DAY 2017

The peace and tranquility of Penton Place was the setting for Pastrow Benefice's first retreat day. A time of prayer was followed by a reflection leading to time to ponder on what had been said, sit quietly or just to wander the marvellous grounds. After a break for coffee we heard a second reflection from our guest speaker and again had time to consider what he had said in the peace of the house or grounds. As the day continued, one delegate commented, 'a complete sense of calm washed over me and, as I dropped a pebble in a pool of water, I watched the ripples take away some of my worries'

The Benefice is holding two Retreat days in 2018 – please see our website for more details or contact us.

A WHIRLWIND OF ACTIVITIES!

There have been so many activities and events throughout this year that we haven't been able to include them all. Barn Dances, Concerts, Lectures, Fetes, Quizzes, Prayer Nights, House Groups, BBQ's, Training Events, Foodbank Collections, Pet Services, Harvest Festivals & Celebrations, Remembrance Services, Fayres...to name but a few! All of these perhaps demonstrating that our local churches are certainly alive in our wonderful communities, we look forward to more in 2018!

JOY TO THE WORLD...

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, with the all-round meanie Ebenezer Scrooge as the central character is one of my favorite all-time reads. I used to love as a child watching the many different adaptations on the TV (which in those days had only 4 channels - how times have changed...) of this wonderful story of a person's journey to redemption and finding the true spirit of what Christmas really means. One of Scrooge's favorite catchphrases is 'bah humbug!' which can be translated to mean a dislike of anything we disagree with or don't find to our liking...and I wonder how many times we have been tempted to use this, or perhaps a similar phrase, throughout 2017? Whilst there is certainly much to 'bah humbug' at the moment, I find it difficult to bring this attitude to Christmas-time. Sure, I certainly 'bah humbug' when the shops seem to be starting this wonderful time of year in September, but moving beyond the glitter and the presents we find in the Christmas story an astonishing tale of love and hope, where a child is born whose purpose is to show us a different way of living through exercising those wonderful qualities of compassion, mercy and generosity of the human spirit. Dickens wrote Scrooge as a caricature of how we can sometimes lose our way, and the message of the story is that if he could find his way back at Christmas, then there is hope for us all – I would encourage you to come and find that hope in one of our churches this Christmas!

I wish you and your loved ones a very blessed Christmas.

Alex

THE GREAT BETHLEHEM BAKE OFF MEETS STRICTLY COME X-FACTOR!!



'Hilarious', 'entertaining' and 'loads of fun,' are not usually words associated with a Crib service...however, here in the Pastrow Benefice we do like to 'rise' to a challenge! Over the past two years in Hatherden we have been using great TV shows to re-tell the traditional crib story. Written by Revd Alex and performed by a few willing volunteers and children from Hatherden School we have seen characters such as Paul Hollywood and Mary 'Holly' Berry witness the amazing story of how Jesus Christ was born in to the world. For last year's Strictly Come X-Factor we even had Simon and Craig singing along with the carol 'Joy to the World!' In fact, we had such a good time last year we had to put on an extra service to cope with all of the people coming! This year at Hatherden church we have a new service – 'Dr Who and the child from Nazareth' with services at 2.30 pm and 4 pm. We will also be putting on 'The Great Bethlehem Bake Off' at St Thomas, Charlton at 3 pm, so why not come along and join in the fun!

BISHOP'S WALK



We were blessed with wonderful weather for our walk with Bishop David on the 17th June. The event began with maypole dancing on the school field in Smannell and much fun was had by all.

We were well supported by staff, parents and friends of the school, who came out in force! Some of this goodly crowd joined us for the short re-dedication service inside the church of Christ Church with the Bishop.

We then set off on the walk and the bishop took the lead, walking through some of our beautiful countryside, and thanks to a team of marshals we were in very safe hands and at last a welcome committee met us near the road by Hatherden Church for our journey's end. There was just time for cold drinks outside the church before joining the bishop for a re-dedication service at Christ Church, Hatherden. Lunch followed and for those energetic enough, Karen led a game of rounders on Hatherden school field.

It had indeed been a wonderful day. We achieved our objective of re-enacting the walk of a bishop 160 years ago, who had originally dedicated both churches on the same day. Revd Val stated 'we had a great deal of fun while doing so and I feel the two churches have grown together in fellowship a little more as a result!' Special thanks go to Liz whose idea it was. We nearly had Claire Balding join us...now that would have been something!