

### **Diary dates**

Tuesday – 4.30pm Blue Christmas Service at St Peter's  
Thursday– 9.30am Holy Communion at St John's followed by coffee morning  
28<sup>th</sup> January – Messy Church 10am Woodrow Community Hall

### **Please pray for:**

Garth and Jenny, Richard and Wendy, Ian and Judy.  
Our Licensed Lay Ministers Maureen, Rosie and Vicki.  
Ann Ball and family.

The family of Mary Sabin.

Those suffering with ill health.

Blue Christmas service at St Peter's this week

The Kigezi Water and Sanitation project we are supporting.

Open the Book.

4 U Club.

Those looking for work.

Refugees settling in this country and Town.

Refugee children in camps across the world.

Children waiting for adoption

Charities reaching out to the lost, lonely and hungry.

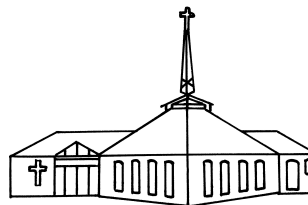
### **Keep praying for**

Ann Ball. Nancy Borthwick Jane Smith  
Sylvia Czink Peggy Snellgrove

### **Contacts**

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## St. John The Evangelist

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Parish of Ipsley

Tel: 01527 501092

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Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Dear all,

A Coptic Christian from Solihull shared this earlier. "My daughter went on an advent walk into Birmingham today, she said 'Mummy we had to walk around to try and find things that reflected the true meaning of Christmas- but there weren't many! We found stars though!'"

God have mercy! What a sad reflection!

Wouldn't it be sad if we went through the whole of the Christmas season and did not find in it the One who came to Bethlehem as a baby boy, Emmanuel God with us. The shepherds and the magi all came to seek the baby. And they found Him! Not only did they find Him but they took Him away in their hearts.

Consider, this year as people look into our celebrations of this Christmas season, will they find Jesus? Is He at the centre of our story, and our celebration? If not, then why not? Wise men still seek Him.

Advent Blessings,

Canon Garth Nathaniel.

### **Christmas Cards**

Instead of sending individual Christmas cards to members of St John's this year, why not write your Christmas message on the poster on the easel instead.

### **Woodrow Carols**

Well done to Rosie, Philip, Barry and Annette for their work in putting on the Woodrow Carols in conjunction with the local schools, Mayor and Messy Church helpers from around the Parish. Around 120 children and parents attended and Garth was able to give a Christmas blessing to all. Thank you if you managed to attend to support the event.

### **Christmas message from Bishop Graham**

The school nativity play where everything goes wrong must be every teacher's nightmare. The innkeeper who says 'come in' instead of 'there's no room'. Joseph standing on Mary's toe and making her cry. The angels who look very grumpy as they sing 'Glory to God in the highest'. The king who won't hand over his present. The reality of the first Christmas is that it wasn't perfect. In fact, it was full of messiness.

The stable would not have been the cleanest, tidiest or most fragrant of places. Mary's pregnancy was a surprise and Joseph risked ridicule. The shepherds, seen as unclean people at that time, were not the obvious choice for the first visitors. King Herod quaked as to what these events could mean for the uneasy politics of his day. Then Jesus' family were soon to find themselves refugees in a foreign land.

Into all of this messiness, God comes.

God continues to do that. He sends Jesus to be with us.

Sends Jesus so that we might meet him in the untidy places of our lives.

Sends Jesus to be with families that are struggling.

Sends Jesus to be with those on the margins of society.

Sends Jesus to be with us in political uncertainty.

Sends Jesus to be with refugees fleeing from oppression and war.

God sends Jesus to be present in the messiness of life.

And what does Jesus bring?

He comes to infuse the messiness of life with a new peace, a new joy, a new sense of love, so that all may truly flourish.

*I pray that the peace, joy and love of God in Jesus may be yours this Christmas.*

### **Today 18<sup>th</sup> December – Advent 4**

10.30am Morning Worship for Everyone 'Nativity' led by the Children Leaders and children.

6.30pm Evening worship with Maureen Hughes.



### ***Christmas activities and services***

Blue Christmas Service at St Peter's Tuesday 4.30pm

Carols on the Green – Town Carols at Redditch bandstand  
Wed.21<sup>st</sup> December, refreshments from 5pm, singing starts 6pm

Christmas Eve - Midnight Holy Communion 11.15pm

Christmas Day Holy Communion 10.30  
'Word made flesh, hope made real'  
with Rob Quarton and Revd.Garth Nathaniel

### **Jonathon Viera**

An evening of "Songs & Tales" with this well known singer and story teller on Friday 20th January 2017 at 7.30pm

St Laurence Church, Church Street, Bidford on Avon.

Contact: Roger Huggins, 01386 872758 [admin@heartparishes.org.uk](mailto:admin@heartparishes.org.uk)

### **Blue Christmas Service**

There will be a service aimed at those people who are missing loved ones more keenly at this time of year. It will be on Tuesday 20th December at 4:30pm at St Peter's – all welcome.