

SERVICES AT THE PARISH CHURCH

Sunday in the Month	8am	9.30am	6.30pm
FIRST	CW HC	Matins	3.30pm Christingle
SECOND	CW HC	Morning Worship - Music Group -	CW HC - Choir
THIRD	CW HC	Morning Worship - Music Group -	6.00pm Evensong - Said
FOURTH	BCP HC	Morning Worship with Communion - Choir	Nine Lessons and Carols
FIFTH	CW HC	Matins - Said	-

CW = Common Worship. BCP = Book of Common Prayer. HC = Holy Communion

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FELLOWSHIP every Sunday after Evening Service **Sundays**
in Church Hall

FROGS 11-14 years, first Sunday of month 6 p.m. in Church Hall

OTT 8-11 years, 9.30 a.m. in Church Centre

except on first and second Sunday when in Church

SUNDAY CLUB 3-7+yrs, 9.30 a.m. in Church Centre

except on first Sunday when in Church

HOLY COMMUNION Weekdays

Every Wednesday 10.00 a.m. (BCP)

Saints Days and Holy Days as announced

If you would like to book a baptism or wedding, please contact the Parish Church Office.

SIDESMEN and WOMEN

Messrs Bailey, Beasley, Brackett, Dunning, Finley, Fleetwood, Grogan, Howie, Johnson, Lattimer, Lea, Matthews, Sherwood, Vigis, Wickham, Wood, Worssam, Wragg, Mrs Ambrose, Mrs Beasley, Mrs Dunning, Mrs Fleetwood, Mrs Johnston, Mrs Kelsey, Mrs Marchant, Mrs J. Matthews, Mrs Mills, Mrs Richardson, and Mrs Wood.

PARISH MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTORS

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DECEMBER 2007

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2 – Advent Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion (CW) (Rev. John Goulding)

9.30am Matins

3.30pm Christingle

6.00pm FROGS (Church Hall)

There will be NO Evening Service at 6.30pm

3 – 7.45pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)

- 4 – **Morning Prayer will be said in Church on Tuesdays each week at 8.15am**
- 5 – 10.00am Holy Communion (BCP) (Revd. John Goulding)
- 6 – 8.00pm Homegroup (14 Knighton Road)
- 7 – 7.30pm Tree of Light Service on The Green, followed by Carols
- 8 – **Material for the January magazine by today, please, to David Matthews, 'Beech Coppice', London Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, TN13 2TQ matthews.dg@lineone.net**
- 9 – **The Second Sunday in Advent**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (CW) (Revd. David Casiot)
- 9.30am Morning Worship (CW)
- 6.30pm Holy Communion (CW) (Revd. Brenda Hurd, Rural Dean)
- 10 – 7.45pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 11 – 2.30pm Homegroup (5 Colets Orchard)
- 8.00pm Homegroup (Holmesdale, The Green)
- 12 – 9.30am 'First Steps' Christmas Service: Otford Methodist Church
- 10.00am Holy Communion (BCP) (Revd. Donald Crowther)
- 13 – 6.00pm Russell House Carol Service (in Church)
- 16 – **The Third Sunday in Advent**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (CW) (Revd. John Goulding)
- 9.30am Morning Worship (CW)
- 6.00pm Evensong (said)
- 7.30pm **Christmas Choir Concert in Church** (Admission: £5 for Choir funds)
- 17 – 7.45pm Homegroup (17 Leonard Avenue)
- 19 – 10.00am Holy Communion (BCP) (Revd. David Casiot)
- 2.00pm Otford Primary School Carol Service (in Church)
- 23 – **The Fourth Sunday in Advent**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 9.30am Holy Communion (CW) (Ven. Clive Mansell, Archdeacon of Tonbridge)
- 6.30pm Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight followed by refreshments in the Church Centre
- 24 – **Christmas Eve**
- 4.00pm Children's Crib Service
- 11.10pm Carols followed by
- 11.30pm **MIDNIGHT CHORAL COMMUNION (CW)** (Preacher and Celebrant: The Bishop of Tonbridge)
- 25 – **CHRISTMAS DAY**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (CW) (Revd. David Casiot)
- 9.30am Morning Worship for Everyone
- 10.40am Shortened service of Holy Communion (BCP) (Revd. David Casiot)
- 30 – **The First Sunday of Christmas**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (CW) (Revd. David Casiot)
- 9.30am Matins (said)

Some early January dates:

- 2 – 10.00am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 6 – **Epiphany**
- 8.00am Holy Communion (CW)
- 9.30am Morning Worship with children (CW)
- 5.00pm **CU@5** (Church Centre)
- 6.00pm **FROGS** (Church Hall)
- 6.30pm Evensong

EDITORIAL

Getting ready for Christmas

“Oh, give me an old-fashioned Christmas Card,
With mistletoe galore, and holly in the yard,
With gaudy greens and gorgeous scarlets,
With crackling logs and apple-cheeked varlets,
With horses prancing down a frosty road,
And stagecoach laden with a festive load,
And the light from the wayside windows streaming,
And a white moon rising and one star gleaming.”

This is a verse from a poem by Ogden Nash who longingly looks back to his boyhood, remembering the scenes depicted on Christmas cards; none of which, you’ll notice, have any connection with the birth of Jesus – except, of course, the brief mention of the star.

As we approach Christmas, the debates begin in the press once again about whether in a multi-faith society it is appropriate to refer to ‘Christmas’ at all – should it now be the ‘Midwinter Feast’ or ‘Winterval’? The Post Office, too, has debated the question of whether to have religious images on its Christmas stamps and, although this year’s stamps depict scenes relating to the birth of Christ, it has made the decision to have secular designs on alternate years.

As we observe everyone getting ready for Christmas, we might think that people are no longer interested in its real meaning. There is such huge emphasis on the commercial side of Christmas – on present buying, on eating and drinking, on lights and decorations and on travelling to exotic places – that the baby boy lying in a manger seems to have been squeezed out of the picture.

But has he? Is it true that people in England are either indifferent to the Christmas story or possibly offended by it? I don’t believe it is. In my experience, people of other faiths are pleased to see Christians celebrating the birth of Christ and do not want us to ‘dumb down’ what we do, because many of them have a deep respect for Jesus. And national statistics would suggest that the number of people attending church at Christmas has increased significantly over the past few years, indicating that parts of our population are far from being disinterested or indifferent to the Christmas Story.

During the 1990s I was a Canon at Portsmouth Cathedral and Christmas services there grew and grew – so much so that now they hold Carol Services on consecutive evenings with an additional afternoon Carol Service and on Christmas Eve they have the Crib Service twice in order to fit all the families in.

When I moved to Honiton in 2001, we found that, by involving the community in a nativity procession, our very sizable Church was absolutely packed out. And at Westminster Abbey, where I spent Christmas for the first time last year, during the twenty-four hours between Christmas Eve afternoon and Christmas Day Evensong, we calculated that around 9,000 people had worshipped with us. So I believe that there is still a thirst in our society to discover the true meaning of Christmas.

As the Church in the twenty-first century, we must do everything we can to enable people to celebrate with us and to understand the heart of the Christmas message – that in the vulnerable Christ child, God came to share in our humanity and to redeem it.

God is with us!

Canon Jane Hedges

CHRISTMAS AT ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

Advent Sunday

This falls on Sunday 2nd December. Following the 8am service of Holy Communion on that day, there will be a 9.30am service of Matins, replacing the morning Family Service. The highlight of the day will be the candlelit Christingle service, led by Dawn Hallam, to be held at 3.30pm in church, at which the speaker will be Joan Newell from The Children's Society. During Advent we shall be operating the South American 'Posada' scheme where different families play host to a set of nativity figures which then return to church for display on Christmas Eve alongside the traditional Christmas crib.



Tree of Light Service

This will take place on Friday 7th December this year when there will be a service on The Green at 7.30pm, followed by carol singing round the Christmas Tree and then refreshments in the Church Centre. All are welcome, and labels remembering those who have died may be obtained from the Parish Office, from the book table in the Parish Church, or from Hospice in the Weald, for which organisation donations are invited.



Christmas Choir Concert

The choir's Christmas concert, including carols for choir and audience from across the world, will take place in church on Sunday 16th December at 7.30 p.m. Admission will cost £5 (again!), including refreshments, with no charge for under 16s. Please come and support the choir – and bring a friend!

School Carol Services

We look forward to welcoming local schools to church for their carol services: Otford School on Wednesday 19th December at 2pm and Russell House School on Thursday 13th December at 6pm.

Nine Lessons and Carols Service

This popular choral service is to be held on Sunday 23rd December at 6.30pm in church. There will be a service of Holy Communion (CW) at 9.30am on that day when we again welcome the Ven. Clive Mansell, Archdeacon of Tonbridge. The usual service of Holy Communion (BCP) will take place at 8am.

Christmas Eve

The services on Monday 24th December will be: a Crib Service for children at 4pm and Midnight Choral Communion at 11.30pm, preceded by carols at 11.10pm. The preacher and celebrant at this service will be The Bishop of Tonbridge.

The 4pm Crib Service will feature carols and a story written by Vicki Howie: 'A Silent Night for the Church Mice'. It is designed particularly for young families unable to attend church on Christmas Day.

Christmas Day

The services on Tuesday 25th December are: 8am Holy Communion based on Common Worship; 9.30am Morning Worship for Everyone; and 10.40am Holy Communion based on the Book of Common Prayer.



'First Steps'. This lively group for babies, toddlers and their carers is always pleased to welcome new members. It is run by the Methodist and our own Churches and includes the opportunity for chat, refreshment, and also a short Bible story with singing and activities for the children, including games and craft. It meets in the Methodist Church New Hall fortnightly, and the last meeting before the Christmas break is to be held on Wednesday 12th December, from 9.30 to 11.30am.

Parcels of Love

After many years of asking you to put together the 'parcels of love' for those refugees living in very difficult circumstances in the former Yugoslavia, we will no longer be sending them, partly because Oak Hall will not be delivering the goods via container lorries. Since 1999, we have sent 573 filled shoe boxes and our grateful thanks go to all of you who have made the effort to assemble them.

Sally Wöstmann

Many thanks to Sally, too, for her enthusiasm and efficiency in organising the scheme over the years.

Historic Missions in Merger Talks. Bill Lattimer has been appointed interim Executive Director of the South American Mission Society (SAMS), with a brief to lead the society in the short to medium term, particularly in discussions about a possible merger between SAMS and the Church Mission Society. The two long-established Anglican mission societies are looking at an approach that would maintain the integrity and focus of SAMS, while bringing it into the global network operated by CMS. Both parties have expressed their intention of consulting widely before any agreement is finalised.

Our thanks also go to:

- *all those who contributed to the 'Send a Cow' project: a cheque for £3,071.88 has been sent; a letter of thanks from the project, together with photographs, have been posted on the Church noticeboard.*
- *Sally Aylward and all who helped at the Christmas Market when £1,512.32 was raised.*

Our best wishes for a swift recovery go to John Hargreaves, long-time friend of the Church and our recent FEBA speaker, who has been diagnosed as suffering from hepatitis.

Dates for Your New Diary 2008!

There will be the traditional Prayer for Christian Unity service on Tuesday 22nd January at 8pm in the Roman Catholic Church.

Saturday 2nd February is the date for the 'Bartholomew' Wind Band Concert in church.

Ash Wednesday falls on Wednesday 6th February when we will have services of Holy Communion (BCP) at 10am and Holy Communion (CW) at 8pm on that day.



ARCHBISHOP'S RESPONSE TO 'A COMMON WORD' 11th October 2007

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, today received a copy of a key letter from Muslim scholars and religious leaders addressed to Christian religious leaders. Dr Anas S. Al-Shaikh-Ali, Chair of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists, and one of the signatories to the letter, presented it to the Archbishop at Lambeth Palace.

The Archbishop welcomed the letter as a clear reaffirmation of the potential for further development of existing dialogue and common action between Christians and Muslims and other faith communities:

“The theological basis of the letter and its call to ‘vie with each other only in righteousness and good works; to respect each other, be fair, just and kind to one another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill’, are indicative of the kind of relationship for which we yearn in all parts of the world, and especially where Christians and Muslims live together. It is particularly important in underlining the need for respect towards minorities in contexts where either Islam or Christianity is the majority presence.”

The Archbishop said that the letter’s emphasis on the fundamental importance of belief in the unity of God and love of neighbour is welcome. He said, “the letter rightly makes it clear that these are scriptural foundations equally for Jews, Christians, and for Muslims, and are the basis for justice and peace in the world.”

Dr Williams continued:

“There is much here to study and to build on. The letter’s understanding of the unity of God provides an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to explore together their distinctive understandings and the ways in which these mould and shape our lives. The call to respect, peace and goodwill should now be taken up by Christians and Muslims at all levels and in all countries and I shall endeavour in this country and internationally, to do my part in working for the righteousness which this letter proclaims as our common goal.”

From The Church of England Communications Update, October 2007



GUIDE CHRISTMAS POST. This year will be the 25th year of the Guide Christmas Post when Guides and Brownies will deliver Christmas Cards in Otford Village. The stamps have been designed this year by the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

and all the proceeds will be divided between Hospice in the Weald and Valence School Children’s Wish List. The Post Box will be in Otford Library between Monday 26th November and Tuesday 18th December inclusive during opening hours. A second Box will also be available in the Parish Council Office on Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 noon *between the same dates*. Stamps will be **20p** per card and *all* the money will go to the chosen charities. Please support us by posting early and make this 25th year a great success!

OTFORD GARDENERS’ SOCIETY. On Tuesday December 4th the Society will hold a Quiz and Fun Night – a social evening to round off the gardening year. It will start at the usual time of 8pm in the Village Hall, and the admission price is expected to be as usual 50p to members and £1 non-members, to include refreshments.

W.I. OAST. Thursday 6th December: Christmas party and 12th Birthday for the W.I. Oast. Stella Redman will be entertaining us today with her humorous readings, entitled ‘A Stockingful of Rhyme’. Refreshments will be served.

ON SUNDAY 2nd DECEMBER the only place to be seen between 11am and 4pm is your own village of Otford when our lovely shops here in the village will be open for business.

Itinerary

- Church Bells – 11am
- Bobbo the Clown – 11am
- Primary School Choir on the Green – 12 noon
- Raffle Draw – 2.00pm
- Fire Juggler – 3.00pm



Also Father Christmas, Morris dancers and chestnuts and mulled wine. Please come, bring your friends and family and enjoy this fun day and support your shops, who help to keep this such a lovely, lively, thriving village.

OTFORD AND DISTRICT WINE CLUB. The Club has started selling tickets for its Christmas Social which will be held in the Memorial Hall on Saturday 8th December. The evening will begin at 7.15pm with a welcome glass of sherry and then there will be the usual Christmas dinner, plus mince pies, coffee and mints, a raffle and a joke competition, followed by dancing to live music. Please bring glasses and your own liquid refreshment. The price for members is £19 and guests will be charged £22. Please ring the Secretary on 01732 761359 if you would like to come, but do not delay as this is normally a very popular event, as the Otford Wine Club is now the only organisation in the area which holds an annual Christmas Dinner!

OTFORD AFTERNOON W.I. In November we held our Annual Meeting, when our President, Betty Medhurst, was re-elected and three new committee members were welcomed onto the Committee. For our last meeting of 2007 in the Village Hall, on 11th December, we will celebrate with a light buffet lunch, commencing at 12.30 and this will be followed by 'Bah Humbug', an entertainment by Mr P. Sheran at 2.00pm. If you are interested in joining our W.I. why not come along as a visitor. In January 2008 we look forward to learning about Tai Chi.

Joyce Allen

OTFORD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY. The Society's next meeting is on Wednesday December 12th at 8pm in the Village Hall. This will be the occasion of the Annual General Meeting, when following the business of the evening, and refreshments, there will be a talk and discussion on the subject of the society's archives. Some of the documents will be on display for members to see and to help them to appreciate just what the archives, which go back for a number of years, now contain.

OTFORD EVENING W.I. At our November meeting the Eco-team reported that they were now weighing their waste and trying to reduce it, as well as doing their utmost to buy locally-sourced produce in their weekly shopping. The three discussion groups are flourishing and the Craft Group will be re-forming again the New Year. This meeting will be in the Hope Room at 2.00pm on 17th January, when we will decide on our project.

Patsy Groom, aromatherapist, then performed an Indian head massage on Linda Richfield who, with eyes closed, grew more and more relaxed throughout the treatment. As she worked, Patsy explained the purpose of the different techniques she was using and later answered many members' questions.

Our next meeting, on 13th December, will be a time to enjoy some Christmas entertainment from the drama group and an excuse to indulge in some calorie-rich snacks – with wine or fruit juice – in the company of our guests from other institutes in the District.

Brenda Young

SPOTLIGHT ON

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Chairman: Mr John Allen

Parish Clerk: Mrs B. Darby. Tel: Otford 524808

Last month I wrote about our Police Community Support Officer and our Rural Warden, who work in close co-operation with the council, and the appeal by the police for Special Constables. The need for assistance of all kinds was brought home by an attack on a woman commuter going home from the station, lead stolen from roofs in the centre of the village and a rash of graffiti. The police are dealing with all these offences and the council is doing and will continue to do all that is within the power of parish councils to minimise crime. If you think you are able to assist by becoming a 'Special', please contact the office. Vigilance and reporting crimes are also vital.

It is good to know that Otford's post office is not on the list for closure but the council has written to emphasise the need for it to continue and other post offices to remain open. Closure of those nearby would result in even greater pressure on parking at the Parade.

Our public toilets have had to close because of the illness of some of those working on them. There will be three phases: first, the electrical system must be updated; next, essential plumbing work must be done; finally, they are to be redecorated.

The parish council welcomes the special Christmas opening of the shops in Otford; it is important for us to support and so keep shops in the village and the council is assisting by supplying some of the lights. It is probable that the council will also have to renew other decorations, such as the Tree of Light or our Christmas Tree – which continues to grow well and require more lights every few years!

The parish council wishes all residents a happy and safe Christmas and New Year, and hopes that life runs as smoothly as possible for all of us in 2008.

JGA



THE PRIZE-WINNING SCHOLAR

In 1523, John Frith became a scholar at Queen's College, Cambridge. In 1524, he transferred to King's College, where the archives indicate that he financed himself by working in the kitchens; the inn-keeper's son no doubt felt at home there. The University archives reveal his outstanding academic ability. The 1525 Cambridge BA results show that Frith headed the list and was awarded the Proctor's Prize. The University archivist commented that this record probably implies that John Frith was not just academically outstanding but that he had a gracious character, as invariably, the Proctor awarded his prize to a member of his own college: the Proctor in 1525 was not a fellow of King's. In 1523, William Tyndale started working in London on his translation of the Bible into English; he asked Frith to come and help him. The two probably met at the White Horse Inn in Cambridge, where a number of members of the University met regularly to study Erasmus' Greek New Testament, among them Latimer, Ridley and possibly Cranmer. When Cardinal Wolsey founded Cardinal College in Oxford (later re-named Christ Church College), it was to be the grandest college in Oxford, staffed by some of the best scholars that could be found. John Frith was among them. (Incidentally, Thomas Cranmer was also invited, but he preferred to stay at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he was a fellow.) Frith did not stay long in Oxford. Two years later he and several others were imprisoned in the College cellars; they had been discovered studying the New Testament. Later released, Frith fled the country and, in December 1528, joined Tyndale in Antwerp. Next time, we consider Frith the fugitive.

Brian Raynor

IN MEMORY

We offer our condolences to the family of **Joan Elsie James**, who died in Sevenoaks Hospital on 23rd October, aged 78. Her funeral service was held at St Bartholomew's on 8th November and burial took place at Otford Burial Ground.

Joan worked for the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers for many years and lived in Willow Park for a long time, distributing our church magazine, caring for her garden and taking a great interest in Otford gardens, as well as loving dogs. She was a lifelong bibliophile, with books prominent almost everywhere in her home, including a collection of 19th century diaries and religious notebooks.



Registers



Funeral (Our Sympathy)

8th November Joan Elsie **James** (aged 78) – Burial at Otford Cemetery

Church Offerings in October

Open Collections for charities and Church expenses £481.85
Freewill Offerings £5,369.00



*Please note the date of 8th December
for receipt of copy for the January magazine;
this is caused, of course, by Christmas holiday dates.*

KEMSING WATER SOFTENERS

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