

The Quarterly Magazine

St. Mary's,
Carden Place

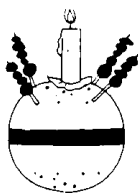
**Christmas
2019**

FROM THE RECTORY

Christmas can, and should be a time of great joy and celebration for everyone. However, we know only too well that this isn't always the case. There will be many for whom this season will be painful due to a family member or friend who has recently passed away. These first anniversaries are always difficult and it is at times like this that we need to be aware of those who might be suffering and not wish to get too involved in the hubbub that Christmas can sometimes be. Does it get any easier? Personally I think that as time passes we tend to cope with it better than we did on a previous year, we 'manage' the pain in a way that allows us to function better than we did twelve months before. I would urge everyone to look out for those who may be a bit withdrawn this Christmas and to make yourselves available should they need a bit of company.

This will be my second Christmas as Rector at St Mary's and it has arrived at an alarming rate: the past twelve months just seem like a blur. So much has happened and there has been a subtle and ever so gradual introduction of new services. Morning Prayer is now a regular slot most weekday mornings as is Wednesday evening Compline. As a result of securing the services of our newly installed Organist Matthew McVey, we have now had a total of three Choral Evensongs at St Mary's, all of which have had an encouraging response in both attendance and feedback. We have maintained good liaison with St James at Holburn Junction and we regularly see members of that congregation joining us for various feast days and celebrations. All in all, we have been very busy and I would like to thank everyone who has pitched in to help with the many social and fund raising events we have held at our Church. The response has as always, been overwhelming and incredibly generous.

At the time of writing this, preparations are underway to decorate our Christmas tree and to get ready for our candlelit carol service, with our Christingle service following a week later. I tried, in vain, to persuade one of our local businesses to donate a real tree for us this year, alas I was unsuccessful, I must 'try harder', as one of my old secondary school teachers was always at pains to remind me.



It has also been a busy year for our Assistant Priest Fr Jason, who, at the request of Bishop Anne, has been helping out at another Church currently in interregnum. We constantly keep Fr Jason in our prayers as he delivers his valuable ministry within this diocese.

Sadly, during the month of November, we said farewell to two much loved people. Ms Pam White, a long-time member of St Mary's Congregation passed peacefully at Deeside Nursing Home, and Mr Alexander 'Sandy' Burns, the father of Mrs Sandra Sinclair, an ardent member of our congregation, also passed peacefully at the Cowdray Club Nursing Home. We remember all who have passed in the last twelve months. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

ST MARY'S QUARTERLY

St Mary's Choir Vestry was once again used as a Polling Station for the General Election. Opening up at 6am to allow the local government officers to set up gave me the chance to catch up on some 'early morning' admin.

I was recently thinking about how we, as a Church, would cope without the contribution of the many volunteers that freely offer their services on a daily basis. I don't just mean St Mary's, but every church of any denomination. Whilst I strive to ensure that everyone is 'sustained' in the spiritual, theological and pastoral aspect of our lives, the everyday running of our Church goes on, unrelenting, behind the scenes. From Church cleaning to flowers, from preparing for services to arranging social events, from keeping tabs on our financial commitments to ensuring the maintenance of our Church; there is so much going on and it requires people of differing skills and abilities to assist.

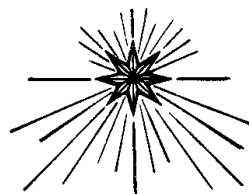
Whilst on the subject of finances, the Vestry have agreed that a new stewardship campaign will be put to our Congregation at the Annual General meeting in February 2020. You will already be aware that a considerable amount of work has taken place at St Mary's over the past few years at some expense and in order to ensure sustainability and strategic planning we need to maintain our financial momentum.

There will be vacancies coming up for a seat on the St Mary's Vestry Committee which shall be advertised in the New Year. Should anyone feel they have something to offer in helping the running of our Church, I would be only too happy to hear from you. Please also feel free to approach any of our current Vestry members should you wish to find out more.

As that cold north-east wind picks up pace and winter begins to take hold, I urge all of you to look after yourselves and to help those less fortunate whenever and wherever you are able. It's not your fault that there are people struggling to get by on the very basic things in life, but it is our collective responsibility to try and alleviate their given circumstances if we are able.

My wife Sam and I would like to wish everyone a blessed and peaceful Christmas, and that you find time to appreciate the stillness and joy of a starry night whence our Lord Jesus Christ was introduced to the world.

Blessings Always
Fr Terry



**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!**

LUNCHTIME FELLOWSHIP

Lunchtime Fellowship continues with monthly services, and all are welcome to join us as we meet on 28 January, 25 February and 31 March. A short themed worship begins at 12:30pm in the Choir Vestry and is followed by lunch and fellowship. We look forward to seeing you there.

We share with you one of the reflections from our Nativity service at the December lunchtime fellowship as the wise men reflect on their experiences as they followed the star to visit the baby Jesus:

A Wise Man reflects

Watching the stars – as a boy, it was my passion. And it's never dimmed – now it's my job. A life watching the stars is all I have ever known.

It's how I make my living. I offer advice based on the movements of the stars. And I guide important people – Kings even. I guess I must be ok at what I do – for even one bad reading of the stars would have surely ruined my reputation - and taken my livelihood with it.

But I've never used this skill for myself – I've not been brave enough for that, or maybe the stars have never told me to take action myself before. But then this new star began to shine. And I had that feeling that this was for me to act. This was for me and those I watch the stars with. As we studied it, we realised it was on a journey, and it seemed to be calling us to follow.

That star led us when we needed to go – the only time we went wrong, is when we stopped looking at the star – and instead followed our own heads. But to arrive at that stable, and see that baby – that was special, and we are privileged to witness his presence and offer the gifts we had worthy for that little king:

The gold – for a king, showing status
The frankincense – to acknowledge Jesus' priestly role,
The myrrh – to anoint his body for the death he'll one day face.

In following the star, we've learned we're part of something bigger. For the first time, we really have done our part. And, yes, we'll now continue to do our part.

We too reflect:

It's easy to put something off isn't it? To put things off we don't want to do. To turn our back on the stars that call us to action, as that star called the magi to action.

I wonder what might be our "guiding star" today? For each of us, it's probably something different. That sign from God that we cannot fail to notice.

But like the magi, each of us must actively decide to follow that star. We must actively decide to travel that journey. And that is made more difficult when we don't know where it will lead us.

Are we prepared to follow that star to the stable? And when we get there, are we prepared to humbly drop to our knees and give whatever it is we can offer? And will we allow this experience to change us – to be part of the story not just at Christmas time but in the weeks and months ahead?

A LETTER FROM THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS

(at the beginning of December 24 knitted hats were despatched from St. Mary's to the Mission)

'On behalf of the Mission to Seafarers Scotland please accept our sincere gratitude for all of the hats which I received today. Your thoughtfulness in this way is so very much appreciated and I know how much these items will mean to our seafarers especially now when the weather is so cold.

'We are now well into making our plans for Christmas with services to prepare and lots of lunches to enjoy. It is a special time for us all but for the seafarer a time when so many miss out on being with their friends and family whilst they work to bring us over 90% of our daily needs knowing that our Christmas would be much bleaker without them. Your support helps us to ensure that they know they are not forgotten.

'I was reminded today of the hymn, 'We thank you that our church unsleeping, while earth rolls onward into light, through all the world her watch is keeping, and rests not now by day nor night.' It was likened to the work of the 24 hour global ministry of the Mission to Seafarers. Just as one chaplain is packing up for the evening so another is starting the morning rounds. We never cease to be on watch and the prayers of our teams and supporters are continuous.

'The Mission to Seafarers has, as I am sure you know, been in existence now for over 160 years but seafarers' working conditions have not improved as they should and I still hear stories of how it is not unusual for shore leave to be banned and for seafarers to have to wait four to six months to get on to dry land. They are often over worked and underappreciated, a potentially toxic combination in the middle of the ocean, thousands of miles from family and friends.

'We are there for them and it is your support which makes this possible. Please do keep the knitting needles clicking for us again whenever you are able.

'You remain, always in our prayers and I take this opportunity also to wish you and those you love a very happy Christmas, a peaceful and healthy New Year.'





Remembrance poppies adorn the font



St. Andrew's Cathedral Choir visit to lead Evensong in October, an inspiration for our own series of Evensongs to follow.

Happy Birthday to the Rector!



OUR FAVOURITE HYMNS



*O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.*

It seems that every year the standard, and much loved, carols are sung, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, *O Come All ye Faithful*, and *Once in Royal David's City*. Then there are the others that seem to fall into fashion for a year, however old they might be, and they suddenly feature in every carol service. This year that carol seems to be *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.

The carol as we sing it is another of those international hybrids that appear so often in our hymnbooks. The author was a man named Phillips Brooks, an American born in Boston in 1835. He was ordained aged 23, and served as rector in Philadelphia and Boston before becoming Bishop of Massachusetts in 1891 – he died in Boston two years later. While he was rector in Boston, he visited the Holy Land at Christmas time, riding on horseback in the hills about Bethlehem, an experience which inspired this carol. At a time just after the American Civil War and the assassination of President Lincoln, the quiet peacefulness of this carol, eschewing the glory of, say, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, might well have been a very welcome theme, and was written for his Sunday school in Boston.

The tune to which we usually sing the carol, though (leaving aside Cliff Richards' 1982 version) is an English folk tune, 'Forest Green', which Ralph Vaughan Williams turned into a hymn tune for *The English Hymnal* in 1906. He was the first to use it as a setting for *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.

BOOK REVIEW

Phil Rickman, *The Wine of Angels*

The Wine of Angels is the first in the Merrily Watkins series, which is, nominally at least, crime fiction. Merrily Watkins is a young, recently widowed, vicar, recently moved to Ledwardine in Herefordshire with her rebellious and tentatively pagan teenage daughter, and in order to placate a very trendy young bishop Merrily agrees to become the new diocesan Deliverance Officer, the current acceptable title for 'exorcist'. This series begins at a point in the history of the Church of England when female priests are still a novelty, and modern technology is also a beat or two behind where it is now, so it is almost a historical read. It is definitely more supernatural than crime fiction, with nods to the Herefordshire orchards and the folk traditions associated with them, and I have it on good authority that it's an accurate portrayal (if perhaps a little dramatic) of much of deliverance ministry, as well as of the area and the diocese with its uneasy relationship between apple and hop growing, Welsh borders, SAS training grounds, old established families and rich newcomers. As the series progresses some of the main characters grow stronger, particularly Merrily, her failed folk singer friend Lol, her daughter and the daughter's Welsh boyfriend, and the inimitable Gomer Parry, Ledwardine born and always reliable. The books are all rich and detailed, and on a winter's evening will certainly run a little shiver down your spine.



ACCOUNTS

September 2019

Income:	7,672
Expenditure:	<u>6,324</u>
Net result for month:	1,348

Balance at month end: £87,379

October 2019

Income:	4,584
Expenditure:	<u>8,773</u>
Net result for month:	-4,189

Balance at month end: £84,190

November 2019

Income:	4,831
Expenditure:	<u>6,205</u>
Net result for month:	-1,374

Balance at month end: £83,030

ST MARY'S QUARTERLY

A NOTE FROM OUR ORGANIST

Having now been in St Mary's for four months, I feel very welcomed and at home. The welcome received from both congregation and clergy of the Parish has been heart-warming and I extend my thanks to each and every one of you.

Well it's been a very busy few months hasn't it? We have achieved many things!! We had the cathedral choir join us for Evensong and we then held our own with a choir made up of our own parishioners (and a few drafted in helpers too!) - you have even seen me almost take flight during the service!!! Now we see a continuation of this. We have Compline to come and many more services to look forward to in order to broaden our worship diet. All thanks to the commitment and hard work of the congregation (and a great deal of hard work from Fr Terry).

I hope that having been organist here that the congregation feel comfortable with me. Please come and give feedback from the music of our services. There is always something we can learn from, be it mistake or success (we have had many of the latter).

Your organist,
Matthew

ABERDEEN CITY CHURCHES

From St. James'

It has been great to have joined forces with St Mary's for the Advent Study Course. We've been having three sessions on "Journeying through Advent with the Magi", and our small group have had very thoughtful and helpful discussions to help us prepare for the celebration of the coming of our Lord.

A few of our members have been ill and in hospital and two have died recently. It really makes a difference to a small congregation like ours, each member is valued and needed!

We have the privilege of a visiting organist with us for a while. Kamil Mika has moved to Aberdeen from Krakow in Poland, and is learning how to be a church organist to add to his skills as a teacher and concert organist. We are looking forward to hearing him play in his time with us.

Greetings from St James to the congregation of St Mary's for a blessed and joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year!

Revd Dr Ruth Green

From St. John's, Crown Terrace

St John's autumn fair was a great success and they have had a busy quarter with AGM and energetic walks, to judge by their Tattler! Several members of the congregation joined with members of Crown Terrace Baptist Church and Crown Terrace Methodist Church last week to sing Christmas carols on Union Street and hand out details of Christmas services to passersby.

From St. Andrew's Cathedral

Some fellow-feeling for the Cathedral in this cold season as the heating has been condemned! An emergency heating system is in the process of being set up but it could be chilly this winter, so please keep the trustees and congregation in your prayers as they look for ways to fund a new system, and work towards employing a new Director of Music!

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Rector: Rev. Terry Taggart 07768 219984 / 01224 588776

Assistant Priest: Rev. Jason Hobbs

Rector's Warden: David Rose

People's Warden: Graham Thomson

Vestry Secretary: Elizabeth Smyth

Vestry Treasurer: Lydia Ross

Lay Representative: Nicola Mills

Sacristan: Anne Farquhar

Organist: Matthew McVey

Lunchtime Fellowship: Mary McKinnell itofficer@aberdeen.anglican.org

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Co-ordinator: Graham Thomson

Flower Convener: Irene Pratt (01224 583687)

Church Office (01224 561383) office@stmaryscardenplace.org.uk

Online: www.stmaryscardenplace.org.uk / facebook.com/stmaryscardenplace

All copy for the Easter magazine must be with the Editor by 6 April, 2020. Hard copy to Nicola Mills, or telephone 01224 488700, or e-mail to palaeography@aol.com. Thank you!

Your Magazine

You can order your St. Mary's News to be sent to you each quarter by e-mail, or ask for a Large Print version, or ask for any back copies of editions you may have missed. Just contact the Editor!

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Carden Place, is a charity (Scottish Charity No. SCO 14062).