

*He will come like last leaf's fall.
One night when the November wind
has flayed the trees to bone, and earth
wakes choking on the mould, the soft
shroud's folding.*

*He will come like dark.
One evening when the bursting red
December sun draws up the sheet
and penny-masks its eye to yield
the star-snowed fields of sky.*

*He will come like the frost.
One morning when the shrinking earth
opens on mist, to find itself
arrested in the net
of alien, sword-set beauty.*

*He will come, will come,
will come like crying in the night,
like blood, like breaking,
as the earth writhes to toss him free
He will come like child.*

The words of Rowan Williams' poem 'Advent Calendar' evoke for us the season of Advent. As the day light hours grow shorter, as the vivid colours of autumn give way to frosty winter mornings, the Church begins a new year. During this season of Advent we are called to watch and wait for the coming of God. We recall his coming in the child of Bethlehem in fulfilment of the prophets; and we prepare his coming among us now.

He promises to come among us in the ordinary, in the joyful, in the complex. During our time of waiting, we remember those who prepared for the coming of Christ. We remember them as week by week we light each candle on our Advent wreath. By focusing on their stories we too are called to be alert; to prepare ourselves with joy for the coming of God's kingdom. We begin by focusing on *the Patriarchs*. We remember the example of Abraham and Sarah who were obedient to God's call; who lived in the hope of the fulfilment of God's promises. We remember too their descendants, including David, Jesus' ancestor in whose city he was born.

We also reflect on the way in which the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, is foretold by the *the Prophets*. Their words speak of a Saviour who would bring peace. Isaiah writes of justice and liberation; of joy and gladness; equity and righteousness. He writes of the one on whom the spirit of the Lord shall rest; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the lord.

We also give thanks for *John the Baptist* who prepared people for the coming of Christ. In his ministry he called people to repentance and baptized them in the river Jordan. He witnessed to the truth of God, continually pointing beyond himself to the one who was to come, saying; 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming

after me . . . I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'.

And finally we reflect on *Mary*. Mary the young woman called to be the mother of God's Son. Although she was afraid, she responded to God's call with a joyful obedience. Her words of praise to God echo the prophetic vision of justice, peace and mercy. Her words foretell the mission of her child, our Saviour, God's Son.

And will we be alert and prepared to encounter our God is known in the vulnerability of a baby? Will we be prepared to be changed by him? The one who comes as our Saviour at Christmas will come like child. The profundity of this unexpected truth is expressed in the words of St. Augustine:

*God so loved us that for our sakes he,
through whom time was made, was made in time;
older by eternity than the world itself,
he became younger in age than many of his servants in the world;
God, who made man, was made man;
he was given existence by a mother
whom he brought into existence;
he was carried in hands which he formed;
he was nursed at breasts which he filled;
he cried like a baby in the manger in speechless infancy -
this Word
without which human eloquence is speechless.*

Julie Gittoes

CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2005

Sunday 18th December 18.30 Parish Carol Service

Saturday 24th December Christmas Eve

09.15 Morning Prayer

16.30 Children's Crib Service

23.45 Midnight Eucharist

Sunday 25th December Christmas Day

08.00 Holy Communion

09.30 Parish Communion

Tuesday 27th December

St John Apostle and Evangelist

09.30 Holy Communion

GLOBAL POVERTY: What Can One Person Do?

St Paul's Cathedral engages with the issue - www.stpauls.co.uk/institute

As we near the end of this important year for action on global poverty, a few words on an excellent program of lectures and study days organised by St Paul's Institute. It has been wonderful to see our cathedral engaging so fully with this important issue.

Several people from St James attended one or more of the events. I myself went along to two of the public lectures - in July to hear Kofi Annan and Gordon Brown and in October to hear Jeffrey Sachs and Hilary Benn. On both occasions the cathedral was packed, with a very high percentage of young people, including many from overseas. There was a buzz of excitement that it's hard to convey, but very good to experience.

Transcripts of the lectures are available on the Institute's website and I would encourage you to read them, especially the October transcript of Jeffrey Sachs, Hilary Benn and Bishop Peter Selby. They each spoke so clearly and honestly. I'll be happy to help if you have any problem in finding or downloading the transcript. Professor Jeffrey Sachs is Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York and a key advocate of sustainable development. He is also Special Adviser to Kofi Annan on the Millennium Development Goals. It was a privilege to hear him speak and here are just a few snippets to give you a flavour of his encouraging talk.

- He said we must stop wasting time and energy in the blame game, most especially in blaming the poor for their poverty.
- He said time and energy should be invested in practical initiatives e.g. techniques to enhance basic food production, disease control and road building.
- He is not against the process of globalisation, but concerned that certain areas of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, are not managing to engage with it. He spoke clearly of why this should be, highlighting the fact that many of the countries are landlocked - a thousand miles or more from a port which isn't their own, along roads that are not their own.
- He is very complimentary of Britain's leadership in the fight against global poverty- both at government and at grassroots level - and was visibly delighted to be able to say this in St Paul's Cathedral. So all the postcards you have sent, all the letters you have written, all the mass rallies you have joined, really do make a difference. They empower politicians to take action, both here at home and on the international stage.
- He said elimination of extreme poverty is achievable in our lifetime, without the need for additional promises from leaders of the developed world - they simply need to deliver on the promises already made.

This last point brings to mind Bob Geldof's colourful phrase that we need to find a

way 'to hold the politician's feet to the fire'. In practical terms that means a timetable, with a clear set of benchmarks, to ensure that promises are transformed into action and cash. This will need constant vigilance from civil society, so please continue to play your part as we approach another year.

Ann Peterken, 020 8891 5862

What Can One Person Do? Faith to Heal a Broken World by Sabina Alkire and Edmund Newell. Published September 2005, Darton Longman and Todd, £12.95. Sabina Alkire is Research Associate at the Global Equity Initiative, Harvard University. Edmund Newell is Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral and Director of St Paul's Institute. *If you feel discouraged, disheartened and powerless to affect change, if you are looking for a way to put your Christian faith into action, then this is the book for you* - John Hammock, former Executive Director, Oxfam America.

This Made a Difference

I was offered a year's free piano tuition in Germany with a well respected piano teacher, after she had heard me play. I learned new techniques and a variety of different styles of music. I played the piano in concerts throughout the year. I also played in the first violin section in the local under 18 orchestra. In February I went on tour to Limburg with the orchestra for a few days. I was also involved in a musical with the orchestra.

I went to the local school and I had to learn German very quickly. I made lots of friends and stay in regular contact with them. School started at 8am and finished at 1pm. The students in Germany don't study as many different subjects as we do in England. I had to learn about German politics!

My favourite time of year that I experienced there was winter and especially Christmastime. It was so pretty with the surrounding area covered in a thick frosting of crisp white snow, just like the icing on a Christmas cake. The temperature dropped lower than I had ever experienced, but the excitement of snow kept me warm as toast and my ski-jacket, gloves, scarf and thick socks helped! Every year on 6th December all children put one of their shoes outside their front door. Then St Nicklaus leaves in your shoe such delights as chocolate, money and other small gifts. I was worried that someone might steal my shoe until someone pointed out, 'what's the good of one shoe?'

The best experience of Christmas in Germany was going to Frankfurt Christmas market. At the Christmas market there were Christmas songs, music and dance, twinkling lights joining stall to stall with festivity, people laughing over hot steaming mugs of mulled wine and the smells of gingerbread and pine trees, but the

most enjoyable part was the camaraderie of the people.

My Headmaster at Bishop Wand School was very supportive of my year in Germany and I easily settled back into Bishop Wand. My piano teacher in England is delighted to have me back and I am very pleased to be home with my family.

Jennifer Greville-Giddings

3RD HAMPTON HILL SCOUTS AND GUIDES

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

We currently have 200 young people aged 6 to 18 years involved in our activities. These are some of the highlights of our recent and current programmes.

Beavers -now two colonies. The theme this term is friendship. Beavers are taking part in a Beaver Fun day and sleepover.

Brownies - have had a busy time since September. Natasha and Sarah took over the running of the pack at the start of term, and have thoroughly enjoyed organising the meetings for the girls. They have completed a range of activities from making sweet kebabs to playing rounders, but think the girls will agree the highlight was a bar-b-que in the dark, complete with a Brownie sing song and toasted marshmallows. For some of the girls it was the first time they had seen a sparkler. If you want more information about Brownies or would be interested in helping out you can contact Sarah on 020 8241 0499.

Cubs - both packs are co-educational and continuing to grow. In the cub challenge and Ian Goddard challenge the packs came second by just one point.

Guides now have a large number of new members. We entered three teams for Day Prowl and came first and third in one category. In November we are tackling climbing, abseiling and kayaking on the Regent's Park canal and enrolling new Guides on the London Eye.

Scouts - also growing and have new assistant leaders. Once again Day Prowl champions. Enjoyed a superb water based summer camp at Longridge and had some good placings in the national Air Rifle Tournament.

Explorers - new leader and a healthy membership. Once again Day Prowl and county night hike champions. Another successful sedan chair rally with an imaginative theme.

Duke of Edinburgh - 9 people taking their bronze award of whom four have completed, and 9 people taking their silver award of whom 4 have completed.

All groups (except D of E) take part in monthly church parades. We are gradually taking more of a role in these services. We provide help to the church in several

ways; making coffee, making Christingles, helping with the gutter clean and church decoration and providing a number of young bell ringers and a colour party for Remembrance Sunday. The guides and brownies also run regular fund raising projects which link to charities that the church supports.

Running these groups takes a great deal of time and commitment but brings great rewards for all adult leaders. We are looking for additional help from members of our community including administrative support, and ad hoc assistance such as sharing a skill e.g. First Aid, craft, teaching Asian cuisine; a chairperson for the Scout group executive committee; minibus drivers.

If you are able to support us in any of these ways please speak to Susan Blay (Guides) 020 8979 8239, or Richard Moody (Scouts) 020 8286 6918.

All units will be working to continue to develop our adult and young leader teams to ensure exciting and active programmes for our members.

A date for your diary: **Saturday 4th March 2006 Scout Hut**, the Guides and Scouts will be running a Big Curry Party to raise funds for USPG.

Celtic Summer

An Invitation for people in the Diocese of London

Every summer Durham's character changes significantly when the students go on vacation and the historic streets behind Durham's majestic Cathedral breathe more easily.

From August 2 - 9, Revd. Rob Marshall will lead one of his immensely popular Celtic Summer trips taking in Whitby, Lastingham, Ripon, Holy Island, Bamburgh and Monkwearmouth. Based at St John's College in Durham, this is a great trip for parish groups to join in and is great value (£460) at the height of summer. Experience worship, learning and a time of relaxation and fellowship. Brochures are available on 0845 601 9567 or news@ukltg.com

www.ukltg.com

Praying for the Peace of the World

'The peace of the world needs to be prayed for by the faiths of the world' wrote the late Edward Carpenter, a former dean of Westminster. He was the first chairman of the organisation called the 'Week of Prayer for World Peace'. This was founded in 1974 by a group of Christians and rapidly became multifaith. One of the co-founders was the late Canon Gordon Wilson, the husband of Jean, whom we know as a regular worshipper at St James'.

On 23rd October Jean and I attended the opening ceremony of W.P.W.P. 2005, an interfaith observance at the London For Guang temple. For Guang is a branch of Buddhism established 38 years ago to promote humanitarian ideals including world peace. The main shrine of the temple, where the service was held, was a blaze of light. The walls were lined with row upon row of little Buddhas, each with a small electric light built in. Above the altar, which was covered with candles and offerings of flowers and fruit, were three great Buddhas.

The service started with a procession of representatives of the nine faiths who take part in the W.P.W.P., led by the World Peace Flame. Each representative carried a candle which was lit from this and the candles were all placed on the altar.

The Venerable Cheh Yann Shih, sister in charge of the temple, welcomed us and the service was compered by two young lay people. Together, throughout the service, we made five affirmations, to Respect the Earth, Human Worth, Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, the Supremacy of Love, our membership of one Human Family. There were readings from the scriptures of all faiths, a delightful peace song performed by the temple youth group using their arms in sign language, and a Buddhist dance performed by six graceful girls in pink and pearls, sitting in the lotus position on big wooden flowers. After the readings the Gordon Wilson Peace Award was presented to the Zimbabwe Victim Support Group by Jean, who spoke a few impromptu words about her husband's work for peace.

Then we prayed the International Prayer for Peace and the service ended with an exchange of the Sign of Peace, joining our hands in prayer and bowing our heads and saying 'o mi to fu' (peace be with you, we wish you infinite light and a long life).

Balloons and folded paper stars were let down from the ceiling and we were then given delicious Taiwanese refreshments in another room.

It was a very moving experience to have taken part in this service and a great privilege to have been received by these warm, hospitable people and made so welcome in their temple.

All I can really add is to echo the words of Edward Carpenter and to say that it was a joy to see so many young people there.

The W.P.W.P. is over now for this year, but all people of whatever faith or of no acknowledged faith need to keep on praying and working for peace in our stricken world, in formal prayer, or prayer with no words, it does not matter as long as we keep on doing it!

Greta Rosten

The recent Charity Christmas card sale was, as usual, very
successful raising £615.00

Thank you all for helping whether buying or selling.

An Ecclesiastical Sudoku

As *The Spire* is always abreast of current fashion, here is our very own Sudoku. Those of you familiar with this compulsive time-waster may wish to attempt a variation of an 'easy' puzzle. Anyone who has never tried it would be put off for life by this, as it will confuse you. Here are the rules: 175 - The age Abraham was when he died; 3 - The Trinity; 7 - Deadly sins; 4 - Gospels; 40 - Days in the wilderness; 12 - Apostles; 10 - Commandments; 5 - Books of the Law; 1 - God. Solution in January 2006 *Spire*.

	175		3	1	10			5
	3		7	40		175	1	
40		7				10		12
		12	175		40	3	10	7
3	10	40	12		7	5	175	1
5	7	175	10		1	12		
7		1				40		3
	40	3		12	5		7	
4			40	7	3		12	

CHRISTMAS COOKING

In a culinary sense, Christmas seems to be the climax of the liturgical year throughout all Christian communities. In Provence, the French 'meat fast' on Christmas Eve, means eating fish, typically oysters, salt cod and chard, and the

magnificent Thirteen Desserts, the centrepiece of which is a rich olive bread, representing Christ. He is surrounded by twelve different types of local produce such as nuts, sweetmeats, fresh and dried fruits, symbolising the apostles. This dish is left on the festive table and replenished until Twelfth Night. In Poland, too, Christmas Eve is a fast day; no meat but soup, noodles, fish such as carp, pike or herring, and pastries, in all 12 courses representing the apostles. The favourite for Christmas dinner in Britain, France and the USA is roast turkey. Americans might serve theirs stuffed with cornbread to be accompanied by cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes with garlic and herbs, stuffed onions and creamed spinach. Desserts include crunchy pecan pie, especially in the South, or creamy cheesecake topped with fresh blueberries.

Africans enjoy couscous with chicken and chickpeas, while Mexicans and Costa Ricans make *tamales* - beef and cornmeal patties. In Tuscany, Italy, you might be served stuffed quail with grapes and glazed fennel. Norwegians enjoy graviax salmon, then roast leg of lamb with rosemary and garlic and caramelised vegetables. Neighbouring Sweden prepares 'Dip in the Pot Ham' - rye bread is dipped into the pot of broth left over from cooking the Christmas ham, so nothing goes to waste. The Ukraine's fertile soil produces an abundance of grain, so speciality breads, such as mushroom bread, appear to particular designs.

Other countries celebrate with fish or game, many of these dishes surviving in Europe from medieval times. Hot, rich foods would drive away thoughts of the cold, dark winter. German monasteries had special fishponds for breeding carp; they would start to fatten the fish for Christmas on St Bartholomew's Day, August 24th. The fish would be baked and served with sweet and sour sauce. A typical modern German Christmas meal might begin with a rich, meaty beef soup with noodles, and then roast goose stuffed with apples representing the tree of knowledge, and nuts to symbolise the tree of life. This will be accompanied by spicy sweet and sour red cabbage and potato dumplings. To follow, a special coiled strudel and sweet *stollen*.

Sweet treats include the gingerbread house originating from Nuremberg, decorated with icing and sweets. Greeks have spiced honey cake, Russians a *pavlova* decorated with frosted fruits. The Scandinavians bake a wreath cake (decorated to look like a door wreath), and the Norwegians macaroon cake - a stack of rings up to two feet high, adorned with icing, flowers, glacé fruits and nuts. English mince pies also originate from medieval times, formerly containing shredded or minced meat with fruit. Nowadays, the meat has disappeared and the recipe sweetened. Our traditional Christmas cake used to be known as Twelfth Night Cake for Epiphany, and was always decorated with almonds or almond paste (marzipan). By the 19th Century it had become a masterpiece of piping and gilded decoration.

Richard Melville (from Kirstie Hird's research and notes)



We have two birthdays to celebrate in December: Rose Frier will be 90 on Friday December 2nd and Betty Stewart will be 80 on Monday December 19th. Love and best wishes to both Rose and Betty.

Thank you to those who have given to our 'Books for Prisons' appeal. Any more books will be very welcome - please put them in the Baptistry, or leave them in the office. You will be

interested to know that, through our friend and fellow Spire reader Fr. Tom Stanton, books have been given by the monastery to the prison in Johannesburg, South Africa!

Those of us who remember a greatly respected former organist of many years service, will be sorry to hear of the recent death of Ron Dafforne.

Dorothy Edmonds is in Teddington hospital but has been able to join us for the 9.30 service on recent Sundays, thanks to voluntary transport. Good wishes for her recovery and return to her home.

Congratulations to Kunle Adelaja, who, with his parents and brother, was member of our congregation; he has won an award from the National Black Boys Care Association for his excellent GCSE results and his work helping to educate other students about black history, and setting up a network to support black students.

We are very sorry to learn of the sudden death of David Dore's wife. Our prayers and thoughts are with David.

FROM THE REGISTERS

FUNERALS

18	Miss Valerie Frances Killick, Hampton Hill	76
	Mrs Jacqueline Marthe Spoor, Hampton Hill	81
20	Mrs Megan Olwen Parry	83

DATES TO NOTE

4	Second Sunday of Advent	09.30 Christingle Service
11	Third Sunday of Advent	
14	John of the Cross, poet and teacher, 1591	
18	Fourth Sunday of Advent	18.30 Parish Carol Service

FOR DETAILS OF ALL CHRISTMAS SERVICES SEE BOX ON PAGE 2

26	Stephen, deacon and martyr
27	John, Apostle and Evangelist
28	Holy Innocents
29	Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and martyr 1170
31	John Wycliffe, theologian and reformer, 1384