

February 2024

Christmas seems to be a dim and distant memory by now but anyone who has visited the Stanley home during January will see that we still have decorations up – the tree, the greenery and candles on the mantlepieces and importantly, the nativity crib. There's something lovely about enjoying the lights and candles throughout the dark evenings of January and so for the past few years I have resurrected the tradition of years past of leaving everything in situ until Candlemas – 2nd February – which falls forty days after Christmas and marks the end of the Christmas season.

For this reason, too, you might have noticed the cribs still in place in our churches. After all, the magi don't get to arrive until the 6th January so if the crib is packed away then they miss out on their moment of glory!

Candlemas is a festival full of symbolism, folk tradition and church history and in the Church it marks the moment when our focus changes from the crib to the cross as we take a last look at Christmas and the infant Jesus before we move forward towards Lent and Holy Week – for details of this year's Lent Course please see below. At our Holy Communion Candlemas service – this year celebrated on Sunday 28th January – we hear the story of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Luke 2:22-40) when the forty-day old Jesus is recognised by Simeon and Anna as Light of the World, our Saviour and Judge. At the end of the service everyone is given a lighted candle and turning to face the cross we prepare to take the light of Christ out into the world. And the crib is packed away for another year.

God bless
Rev'd Sue

Have you ever wanted to find out more about prayer? Why do we do it? Why doesn't it always seem to work? This year on Tuesday evenings during Lent we will be following 'The Prayer Course' which takes us on a journey through the Lord's Prayer, learning together and helping us to grow in our relationship with God. The first session will be on Tuesday 27th February at 7pm in Maidford Village Hall. For more details please contact Rev'd Sue

If you would like to talk please contact me on stanley.thehole@btinternet.com or 01327 341307