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Another New Year

I want to begin the New Year by saying thank you to everyone for the good wishes I received for the New Year. I am sure I am not the only one who thinks that last year passed very quickly, and not just the last year, how did it get to be 2015 already?

What will this New Year hold for you? The Christmas letters and cards Sue and I received included news of special events some of our friends are looking forward to this year: family weddings; birth of grandchildren; significant birthdays, impending retirement, for some a second retirement; moving house; new jobs; holiday plans; and in some cases the prospect that this year might be someone's last. A New Year brings opportunities and challenges, and the possibility that some things will remain pretty much the same and some could change for ever.

The church year, like the calendar year, has a repeating cycle. In the calendar year the cycle is of months and seasons; in the church year the cycle is of festivals and holy days. In the calendar month of January the church cycle includes the feast of Epiphany when we remember the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, along with Herod's horrific attempt to remove any threat to his own position and power by killing all the infant boys who might possibly be the child the prophets had spoken of who would be 'King of the Jews'. For those who are into such things January also includes the feasts of St Peter (18 January) and of the conversion of St Paul (26 January). The time between these two feast days is now often celebrated as the Octave (usually called the week) of Prayer for Christian Unity.

As we go through the year other major and



minor festivals and seasons give a rhythm to our church life – Lent and Easter; Pentecost; Harvest; Advent and Christmas. And before we know it (scary thought) another year will have passed and we will be marking the start of 2016!

The cycle of church life helps to remind us of important aspects of our faith and reinforce their significance for our lives, and I value the rhythm the cycle provides, but I do sometimes wonder whether the cycle is counterproductive. The rhythm reinforces repetition and in doing so implies that this year things will be pretty much the same as last year, and next year will be more or less the same as this. There is something comforting in that rhythm. Most people do not cope well with change; we want things to remain the same, but is that what Christian discipleship is about?

Christ invites us to follow him on a journey, a journey of faith as well as through life. We are not invited to join him on a circular walking

tour but to set out on an adventure travelling to unknown destinations. The danger of the cycle of seasons is that we can end up in stagnation, going round in circles but never really going anywhere, never moving forward.

My prayer for myself and for you this new year is that we will resist the temptation to go round in circles; that no matter what treasures or pressures this year might bring we will have the courage to go through the cycle asking, 'What new things might God be saying to me?' and 'How can I move forward with God this year rather than simply tread the same old ground again?'

I wish you all a very happy and occasionally challenging 2015.

Nick

God's Little Black Book

Nick's preaching often makes me rethink a position or disturbs me from a comfort zone. Jonathon Sinclair and I used to debate it at

length and I frequently lay in bed on a Sunday night mulling over what Nick has said. So it was recently when he preached about judgement.

I don't use churchy words like 'heaven' and 'hell' (how I wish we could drop our churchy vocabulary and talk language that speaks to those outside our congregations) but I have a life-long memory of my grandmother telling me that if I was naughty "you will go down in God's little black book". Somehow there had to be reckoning!

But then Nick posed not a belief in a cataclysmic Day of Judgement but in daily judgement. As I pondered this truth dawned. Every evening when I talk through the day with God in my prayers I am aware, not of a wrathful, judgemental deity but of a kindly friend who has been disappointed by my shortcomings. He doesn't judge me but I judge myself. I hear God saying, gently, "you can do

better than this"! And I know I can.

But when we move into whatever phase of existence lies beyond our present lives, is there some way in which God calls u to account? I don't believe that anyone is consigned to eternal hellfire. If anyone went into it would mean that God's love had failed to break into that person. I cannot believe in a defeated God. But perhaps we shall have to look into a mirror. Consider, if you will, these words from the late Chas Stubbs, Bishop of Truro.

I sat alone with my Conscience
In a place where time had
ceased;
We discoursed of my former
living
In a land where the years
increased,
And I felt I should have to
answer
The questions it put to me'
And to face those questions
and answers
In that dim eternity.

And the ghosts of forgotten actions
Come floating before my sight,
And the sins I thought were dead sins
Were alive with terrible might.
And I know of the future
Judgement,
How dreadful so 'er it be,
That to sit alone with my conscience
Would be judgement enough
for me

Jesus taught that our sins are forgiven. I don't know (and nor does anyone else) how God will deal with our sins 'at the end' but I am certain it will be as a loving Father and not as an Old Testament judge. One author writes "It is not what you are or what you have been that God looks at with his merciful eyes, but what you desire to be".

I have been asked why I always end my pieces in 'Look-In' with a question, but I am unrepentant! I am not seeking to tell Christ

Church members what to think! I am asking what you think. If you have a moment, read Hymns & Psalms 450, especially verse 2 and 3. We are its people of God!
Howard Cooper

Church fundraising and charity news

A Little Christmas concert

Thank you to everyone who attended the 'A Little Christmas' concert on 13th December. We raised £213.46 for the church charities.

Mercy Ships

Eye Clinic Opens

What a difference a month can make. We are so thankful for our advance team and local construction crews that have worked around the clock to get our eye clinic ready for patients to use.

Now our ophthalmology team can begin the work of restoring sight to people in Madagascar. The eye

clinic will also host “The Celebration of Sight” where patients will come for their follow-up appointments and share how grateful they are to have their site returned to them. Kathryn Stock, ophthalmology supervisor, shares the impact that sight restoration can have:

“Sometimes the sparks happen when the bandages come off but sometimes there is just confusion and awe and it’s not until they return for their two-week follow-up that you truly see their excitement. They can see their kids and grandkids and everything around them. It is a wonderful time.”

Christ Church - a base for everyone

When I joined Christ Church in 1987 it wasn’t for religious, cultural, dutiful or committal reasons to Christ Church. Irrespective to my beliefs, I joined because it was a feeling

of being accepted for what I am and belonging to a community that cares for all mankind, no judgements or expectations or pressure.

Christ Church reaches out to the community beyond its own congregation, for example, Tuesday Club, Communicare counselling, the Brigades, lunches for people on their own, coffee mornings for the communities and charities. I could go on, but the list is so long.

In 1986, my son Peter was born almost three months prematurely. Weighing only 2lb 6oz, he was lucky to survive but by a miracle, although having a disability (left-sided hemiplegia) has managed to cope with life. I myself am a Christian and have been baptised and confirmed so it was only natural for me to have Peter baptised. I approached a church in Uxbridge only to be told I must

come to church for at least three months before they would baptise Peter, also being told "God has sent Peter to remind me of my commitment to God." In fact, that's what drove me to Christ Church and I had Peter christened by Derek Strange.

Since joining Christ Church Peter, my son, attended Boys' Brigade for thirteen years and gained the Queen's Badge. I also became inspired and became a Boys' Brigade officer for seventeen years in Anchor Boy section which I thoroughly enjoyed. Also in the past set up with my colleague Pearl Pyramid Preschool which ran for seven years. Then Homestart Family group supporting vulnerable families with children under five giving practical and emotional support.

I am thankful and grateful to this day that Christ Church accepted Peter and me for what we are. Christ Church is part of our family and has given Peter and myself

so much love, hope, faith and fulfilment.

Thank you
Janice Hull

Refugees in Uxbridge

It was the German army's invasion of Belgium in August 1914 that brought this country into the war, and in the following month Belgian refugees began to arrive in this district. Accommodation was needed immediately, so St Peter's Church in the Greenway was commandeered. (The building is now the Community Centre.) The congregation was asked to worship at St Andrew's church, which most of them did for the next five months. A house in Cowley Road (where Frayslea is now) was made available by the owner free of charge for a year. Two large houses in Park Road, standing empty, were also put to use. One was actually re-named Albert House in honour of the King of the Belgians. The other

required conversion work, and this was paid for by Lady Hillingdon. (Lord and Lady Hillingdon were living in Vine Lane, in what is now the American School.)

A Belgian Relief Fund was hastily set up, and door-to door collections began to raise funds for the maintenance of the newcomers. Local people gave or lent items of furniture.

It is thought that about 100 refugees were living in the Uxbridge area a century ago. They soon settled in, found employment, and blended into the community. The visitors made it clear they greatly appreciated the welcome and support they had received.

By December 1918 only three Belgian families remained. All the others had returned to their native land.

Ken Pearce.

Church family news

- Mary and John Heslam have both been unwell recently.
- Rachel Bailey gave birth to twins on 28th October. Mum and babies Zach and Maiya are doing well - congratulations to Rachel, Barry, big brother Jonah, grandma Val and auntie Louise.
- Good luck to Tom Rees, Christian Hinton and Aileen Marr with their exams as they return to university after the Christmas break.
- Jessica George started preschool for the first time at the beginning of January and enjoyed her first day.

From the archives

The following article appeared in the January 2000 issue of Look.

Ken's Korner

What was Uxbridge like a thousand years ago, at the last millennium?

The place-name is Saxon in origin, so we can say that Uxbridge did exist in 1000A.D. Most local place-names are of that period, and of course Middlesex means 'territory of the Middle Saxons'. It is thought that a Saxon tribe called the Wixan settled in this area and built a wooden bridge over the river Colne. The 'Wixanbridge' is the origin of the word 'Uxbridge'. (The initial W was still in use in the 17th century). Our town developed first as a small settlement near the river, in the area of the Crown and Treaty public house.

66 years after the first Christian millennium, the Normans invaded and, in 1086, they completed their nationwide survey in the so-called Domesday Book. Uxbridge was not important enough to be

mentioned, but formed part of the Manor of Colham – a large area stretching down to Colham Green and Yiewsley. Other nearby manors in the Domesday Book are Cowley and Hillingdon. A little further away were Harefield, Ickenham, Hayes, Dawley and Drayton.

A picture begins to form of a series of small communities dotted across the district. Each settlement was self-supporting. They grew their own food, were grinding their own corn in mills along the River Colne, and fishing in local waterways. In all, a few hundred people lived in the area, and the settlements were linked by trackways through grassland, scrubland or woodland. It was doubtless a struggle to survive and life was short. People lived close to nature, were very aware of the seasons, and knew the night sky well. How quiet it must have been!

Unfortunately the Middlesex part of the Domesday Book does not

list churches but we can be confident that there were small places of worship at Hillingdon and Cowley.

Ken Pearce

From the Methodist Circuit

A Letter from our Superintendent Minister

Dear Friends,

No news is good news, the saying goes, which is to imply that lots of news is bad – and there has certainly been a lot this year. In many ways a review of the events of the last 12 months makes for sad reading. It has been a year of growing intolerance as right-wing parties have advanced across Europe, and of the growing persecution of Christians and other minorities around the world. The Church has had some sad knocks to its credibility, and appears to be in a state of terminal confusion about what to think about the

whole sexuality thing. We have heard stories of the decline in Methodist Church attendance; of course some observers have asked is it our unique Connexional structure with its Circuits and Districts, all strictly accountable to a high-spending, highly-organised and multi-layered central administration, which is part of the problem rather than part of the solution?

Within what might be called bad news we have also seen some good news - the Church of England has now appointed the first woman bishop and our own Methodist Church is still at the forefront of speaking out against injustice within our communities. Of course we need to continue to speak of God's love to all people no matter what their ethnic origin, sexuality or background, for as disciples of the living God we are called together, not only into the fellowship of the Church with

God, but also to go into the world with him and celebrate his love there.

Over the coming weeks churches in the circuit will be renewing the covenant as we do each year; within the covenant we affirm that the God we worship enjoys our company, he meets us and invites us to meet him in the ordinary and routine areas of life, and transform's the mundane into something new. It is to this God that we renew our covenant, with this God who turns the everyday grey into the multi-coloured celebration that we find together. We live out this relationship which the covenant has established and confirmed, not waiting for heaven but seeking to do his will on earth as it is in heaven.

As we look towards another year with its challenges and unknowns and as we continue to encounter God in the physical world, so we rejoice in his love for each of us

and we are able to respond to his love with joy and thanksgiving.

With every blessing

Nigel

The Circuit newsletter is available online at www.hah.org.uk/files/ENews.pdf

Churches Prayer Diary

w/c 4th January - Christ Church

w/c 11th January - Eastcote Methodist

w/c 18th January - Hayes Methodist

w/c 25th January - Hayes End Methodist

Look-In

Please help us to produce an interesting newsletter by handing in news items or articles to the office, or sending them by email to Louise George (publicity@christchurchuxbridge.org.uk). The next issue of Look-In will be the February issue and the deadline for articles for this is Friday 23rd January.

Church Calendar

All events are at Christ Church unless indicated by an X in the final column

| Day/ Date | Event | Group | Leader | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| January | | | | |
| Tue 6 | Tuesday Club | Church | Wendy Pollard | |
| Fri 9 | GB and BB new session starts | GB & BB | Stephanie Marr / Paul Edgeworth | |
| Sat 10 | Saturday Morning Coffee | Little Hearts Matter | Louise George | |
| Sun 11 | Sunday Lunch | Church | Rosemary Moere / Val Bailey | |
| Tue 13 | Tuesday Club | Church | Wendy Pollard | |
| Thu 15 | Church council | Church | | |
| Sat 17 | Saturday Coffee morning | Oak Tree | Lucia Franca | |
| Sun 18 | Prayer meeting | Church | | |
| Mon 19 | CTU meeting | CTU | | |
| Tue 20 | Tuesday Club | Church | Wendy Pollard | |
| | Youth Meeting | Church Youth | Iris Racher | X |
| Thu 22 | Craft Group | Church | Doreen Smith | |
| Sat 24 | Saturday Coffee morning | RDA | Tom/Tracy Rees | |
| Sun 25 | Members meeting AGM | | | |
| Tue 27 | Tuesday Club | Church | Wendy Pollard | |
| | Worship planning meeting | Church | Peter King | |
| Fri 30 | Elders meal | | | X |
| Sat 31 | Saturday Coffee morning | Mencap | Dot Bryant | |

WHO'S

Christ Church
Redford Way
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01895 258956

Registered charity
no. 1139255

Ministry team:
Rev'd Nicholas
Skelding
Deacon Jackie
Fowler

Administrator
Martin Vowles
01895 258956

Contacts via office for:

Brigades:
Girls' -
Stephanie Marr
Boys' -
Paul Edgeworth

Junior Church
Club -
Jenny Peet

Tuesday Club -
Wendy Pollard

Prayer Tree -
Val Bailey
Rosemary Moere

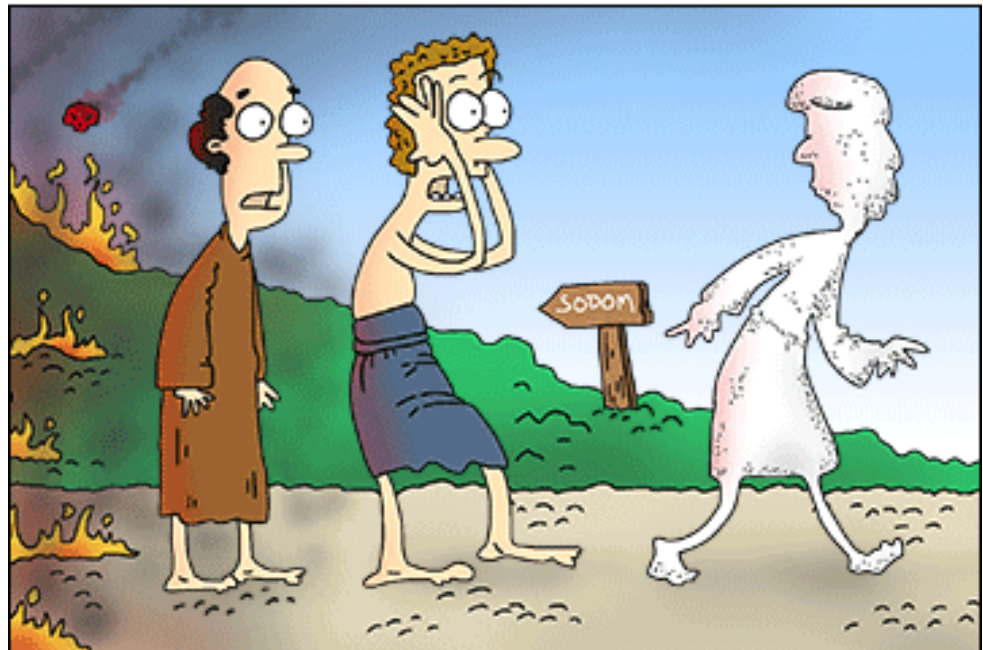
WHO!

January Services

(All services are 11am unless stated otherwise)

- 4th Rev'd Nicholas Skelding (Holy Communion)
- 11th Ms Catherine Wells (Methodist local preacher) (All Age Worship)
- 18th Rev'd John McKerness (URC minister and chaplain at Heathrow Airport)
- 25th Rev'd Nicholas Skelding

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Thanks to Joshua Zambrano (See Genesis 19:23-26) 01-17-2014
**IRONIC THING IS, SHE HAD JUST CUT WAY
BACK ON HER SODIUM INTAKE**

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