

FROM THE VICAR

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

That is the traditional greeting at this time of the year, and I would like to send those greetings to you. However, I suspect that for many this year, the economic situation we are in as a country and the financial hardship in which many will find themselves may well mean that the words 'merry' and 'happy' will have a somewhat hollow ring.

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The economic outlook for us and for many other countries looks rather bleak. Coming out of this will take a long time and a lot of hard work. The prospects for the future look very uncertain. What a time for all ages, but especially for families

- what a world we are bringing our children up in.

When Jesus was born two thousand years ago, life was also very difficult, and the future for a new born child was very uncertain. Jesus was born outside of marriage (a major problem in those days), and born into a poor family. They lived in an occupied country, ruled by a foreign power (the Romans) who were not exactly gentle and loving. His parents had to travel to Bethlehem with Mary heavily pregnant - a journey on the back of a donkey at nine months pregnant is hardly a recipe for a safe and secure birth. He stood a much lower chance of survival to adulthood because the death rate among such children was much higher than it is today.

He was brought up by an ordinary working man, a carpenter, in the town of Nazareth,

although he had been born in Bethlehem. As Jesus grew up he learnt his father's trade, and did not have a position of privilege or power or influence in life.

Yet despite the fact that so much was against him in life, and his prospects were not brilliant, he grew up to be a man who by the time he was killed on the cross has arguably had the greatest influence on life and society than any other man the world has ever seen or known.

Jesus' life and ministry, and his subsequent death and resurrection, can give hope and purpose for the future, despite the rather bleak future that seems to lie ahead.

Jesus' life was marked by care and compassion, and by a concern for justice and peace. His death dealt with the problem of sin in the world and



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FROM THE VICAR...

in our own lives by granting forgiveness for the errors and mistakes we make. And his resurrection opened the door to life in eternity with God.

I'm not saying that following Jesus and being a Christian will protect us from the hardships we are going through and will continue to face. But I do believe that it can give us a perspective on life and on the

future that is not bound by the restrictions of this world. Jesus said that he came to give us life in all its fullness - my prayer is that we may appreciate and value this, and that in doing so we may have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

With best wishes,
Tim Hatwell
Vicar



COMMUNITY ACROSTIC POEMS FOR CHRISTMAS 2011 FROM BISHOP RIDLEY SCHOOL



Churches are great,
Often used by
Many who love Jesus.
My school has a local one,
Uniting the elderly -
Nice people meeting
In every town and village.
Together we celebrate -
You, me, everyone with God.

Jack Martins (year 6)

Churches are very special to us:
Often people get baptised,
Most of us go there for Sunday School,
Many festivals are held there,
Usually the choir sings at Christmas.
Never straying from God,
In this together,
Things happen through the church;
Yes, we are Christians.

Holly Murphy (year 5)

BISHOP RIDLEY MAGAZINE

THE FRIENDS OF BISHOP RIDLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

As you all know on Friday 29th April it was the Royal Wedding, the Friends of Bishop Ridley held a Red White & Blue non-uniform day on THURSDAY 28TH APRIL, in the afternoon we held a special celebratory indoor street party for all the pupils, it was great fun, here are some photographs to share with you



ALPHA BY JOE

I went on the Alpha course to learn more about God, because I had lots of questions and wanted some answers.

I loved the format, first there is a tasty warm meal where there is a chance to get to know the people you are on

I had lots of questions and wanted some answers

the course with. It is all very relaxed and informal. Then there's a DVD to watch on subjects such as; did Jesus exist? Why did he have to die? Why and how should we pray?

Over coffee and cake, we discuss what we have seen. It's just another chat really where I have found my questions being answered. I have realised that all of us here have similar questions to ask.

What really made a difference to me though was when we had a day away in Hildenborough, where we learnt about God's Holy Spirit and how God is working in

people's lives today. When people prayed for us, I could feel God's amazing love for me, I began to tingle and feel warm all over as many others did too.

It was then that I decided to ask Jesus into my life, which means you have to acknowledge to God that you have sinned, (that is to hurt God and believe that Jesus died on the cross to allow forgiveness from God to happen). Since that day I have a new perspective on life, I feel more peaceful and calm, and I'm telling people that I go to Church and what Alpha is all about (I can't believe I can do that).

*I could feel
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I still like all of us, have a lot more to learn, but my faith is growing and I'm trusting in God. I would like to thank everyone that has assisted in making the Alpha course happen.

It's been great.

Joe

MY FAVOURITES - GRACE WOODLEY

Colour: Blue seems to suit me.

Book: "The Shack" Great new way of understanding Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Film: "Sleepless in Seattle" Staring Tom Hanks & Meg Ryan. Nice & Romantic

TV Show: "Dancing on Ice" wish I had the energy!

Singer: Russell Watson (The Voice) Great Range Modern & Classical

Food: Indian. Yumee & Scrumptious.

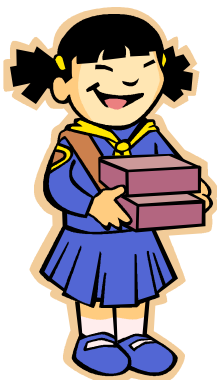
Holiday Destination: Caribbean. Clear Seas, Lovely Sun.

Season: Spring. Seeing new life appear after dark winter.

Book in Bible: Acts of the Apostles. Exciting to see them at work.

Worship Song: The new version of "The Lords My Shepherd.

2ND WELLING GUIDES



We are a group of 12 girls, aged between 10 and 14, that meet on a Monday night in the Scout Hut 7.45 pm – 9.15 pm.

The things we like about Guides are:-

We get to see friends that we do not go to school with.

We mess around!

We have fun doing activities like painting and welly wanging!

We meet new

people.

We do different challenges, like making igloos from sugar cubes, and Viking boats from bananas.

We go on camp.

We cook a lot with chocolate and then eat it.

Girls only!

Fun trips like Thorpe Park and swimming.

If you would like to meet us, please pop in one night and see us in action, or contact our leaders.

7TH WELLING BEAVER SCOUTS

This term, the 7th Welling Beaver Scouts have been very busy. We have found out about the army and filled shoe boxes with gifts for our soldiers, learned about emergency aid, tried science experiments and played many different games.

On 1st October, we went on the district visit to Woodlands Farm, where we followed a trail, made dens in the woods, cooked on a fire and played a wide game. On 17th October we finished the half term with a party to celebrate 25 years of Beaver Scouts and were joined by many of our former leaders

and a former Beaver from the first meeting in 1986.

In November, we have been to the bowling alley and will finish the term by singing carols for the elderly with the district, followed by a Christmas Party on our last week.

Parents are welcome to contact me (Phil Wilson) on 020 8304 6748 or phil.7thwellingcoutgroup@ntlworld.com as we will have a small number of places available in 2012

LES'S LAUGHS

Why did the gardener plant bulbs?

What do you call a mosquito on holiday?

So the worms could see where they were going

An itch hiker

What do you call a sick crocodile?

Three men fell out of a boat, only two of them got their hair wet. How?

An illigator

The third one was bald.

What two things do you not eat for lunch?

Breakfast and dinner



FOOTBALL—ST JOHN'S DANSON

After winning the league last year the St John's Danson boys had high hopes for the new season. The season started against the weaker teams in the league and the first two games were won 7-0, 5-2. This left the boys with high hopes as they entered their cup matches and have made it through to the quarter finals of the Bromley and Croydon Christian Football Cup. Two more league games were played with St John's Danson winning them both putting them in second place with a game in hand over the current leaders. St John's Danson have improved off the pitch

as well as on as a bank account has been set up to keep a much tighter track of money and their financial status has improved although still feeling

*they have
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the strain of having to buy two kits to get the team up and running initially. They have also managed to put into place a committee with two other of the long serving players in partnership with the manager Robert Still.

With St Johns Danson now in their third season, it is very easy to see changes within some of the players. For instance, non-christian players who had previously often been involved in scraps and fights previously in their lives have been a credit to themselves and the team as they have changed dramatically in their self-control and keeping bad language as much out of the game as possible. Some of the players have much more recently been involving themselves in "God" discussions much to the surprise of their team mates.



On the whole, this season so far has been an improvement for the St Johns Danson boys both on and off the pitch.

The St Johns Danson players are greatly in need of supporters as they have had a maximum crowd of 13 this season but generally the numbers are between 2 and 5.

www.clubwebsite.co.uk/stjohnsdanson this is the team website which shows match reports, scorers and league table.

ALPHA BY LEIGH

I wasn't brought up in a religious household even though my Nan was Catholic and my Mum had been christened Catholic but isn't practicing. I wasn't baptised either and there were times when I wished that I had been. I was given a Bible in primary school and it has stayed with me for around 40 years through several house moves where I have lost many other items! I felt that I

was safe with it around and when I had children I felt that having it protected them. I have also always liked religious art.

My two closest friends are Christians and I used to attend church with one of them from time to time as I liked the atmosphere and singing! I first did The Alpha Course in 2008 and enjoyed it but I STILL DIDN'T GET IT!! I

always thought that I was living like a Christian anyway with decent morals and standards but one thing was missing. I DIDN'T BELIEVE! I felt that I was far too practical and sensible to believe that God existed. I did sometimes envy people that had faith and thought how good it would be to have comfort from knowing that God was there.

*I still
didn't get
it*

In the summer I went with my partner to Lark/Spark in the park (not sure which one) at Sidcup. It was the last day of the Christian gathering and I looked around me at all of the people enjoying themselves and rejoicing in their faith

and love for God. I had never felt so alone and sat there and shed a few tears. Around that time I also met a young couple called Darrell and Rachel who invited me to a Christian group called Stepping Stones, which is held at St. Johns Church in Welling. A short while after that my relationship ended. I was very hurt and had a real heavy heart. I still didn't feel a connection with God. I was waiting for the big gesture to come or the bolt out of the blue but decided to ask him to help me to get over the way that I was feeling and to take the pain away. I prayed to God from the bottom of my heart. By the next day something had changed in me. The pain was replaced by feelings of Love, Contentment and Peace. I had received the relief I had asked for

regarding my situation and God had answered me. HE WAS THERE FOR ME. After that I couldn't deny his existence. Emotional pain like that doesn't heal overnight without some sort of intervention! I also received great

*I would
100% recom-
mend The
Alpha
Course,
whatever stage
you are at*

support from the people at Stepping Stones and by worshipping with them and praying together my faith has grown.

I returned to work after the weekend with a healed heart and a spring in my step. I obviously still had moments of sadness but continued to pray and that helped so much. I have since joined a church and have re-done the Alpha Course. I chose to go to Bishop Ridley to do my course and I am so glad that I did. I have enjoyed it so much and feel very welcomed there and the people that I have met I would now call friends. The couple who led our group, Jackie and Laury are inspirational people who I feel lucky to have met. I could ask either of them any question and they would try to answer it.

The DVD you watch every week featuring Nicky Gumbel explains all about Christianity in a

simple, uncomplicated way. You are invited to say a prayer that invites Jesus to come into your life and you have to believe that he died on the cross for you and took away your sins. I said that prayer and that's when I felt that I could call myself a Christian. Life as a Christian still has ups and downs but with God in your life the downs are easier to bear.

I would 100% recommend The Alpha Course, whatever stage you are at with your journey, you will learn about life and God and make a few friends too!



Working together for a safer London

Here is a summary of the latest news from Police in Bexley
The Metropolitan Police Safer Transport Command (STC), British Transport Police (BTP), and Transport for London (TfL) are continuing to crack down on pickpockets on public transport in the Capital. The Bexley Safer Transport Team officers conducted hi-visibility patrols on London buses and at transport hubs, engaging with members of the public and offering crime prevention advice.

Here are some tips to remember when travelling:

- Keep your possessions with you and out of sight at all times
- Never keep your wallet or mobile phone in your back pocket
- Keep your handbag diagonally over your shoulder
- Try to have your ticket, pass or change ready in your hand so your purse or wallet is out of sight
- Stay alert, especially in large crowds, and be aware of the activities of people around you
- If you think you may have

lost your property, speak to a member of staff or visit www.tfl.gov.uk/lostproperty

- Report stolen property to a police officer or to a member of staff (reporting an item as being stolen if it has been lost is a criminal offence)
- If you see anything suspicious report it to a police officer or member of staff

Court to seize nearly £5,000 from drug dealer

A convicted drug dealer who made more than £8,000 from his crime, has been ordered to repay almost £5,000 through the Proceeds of Crime Act following a successful application made by Bexley Borough Police Financial Investigation Unit. Jay Carrigan was caught when police



searched his home in Sidcup and discovered bags of cannabis and cash. He was later ordered to pay £4,800 out of the money he had made from supplying drugs plus £500 costs. In the last two years Bexley's Financial Investigation Unit have uncovered over £220,000 of assets which have subsequently been forfeited by criminals in Bexley.

Day of action to target uninsured drivers

Police in Bexley seized five vehicles in a second day of action to crack down on uninsured drivers on Tuesday 15th November. This was part of a coordinated series of operations across the capital and involved all 32 London boroughs. Across London 400 vehicles were seized. The day of action follows a commitment by Commissioner Hogan-Howe to target criminals and disrupt their activities. Uninsured drivers are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, five times

more likely to be involved in collisions and less likely to have vehicles in a road-worthy condition.

Officers stopped 140 vehicles and 15 drivers were issued with Fixed Penalty Notices.

The penalty for driving a vehicle without insurance is six penalty points and a £200 fine and can even lead to a driving ban. To find out more, or to report dangerous or illegal road users, visit

www.met.police.uk/roadsafelondon

Metropolitan Police Commissioner launches major crack-down on neighbourhood crime

As part of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner's 'war on crime' a major operation, cracking down on neighbourhood criminals, was held on Thursday 24 November.

Operation Hawk saw up to 4,000 Safer Neighbourhoods officers and PCSOs, supported by specialist colleagues including the

Dogs Unit and Territorial Support Group, carrying out robust and visible operations in a decisive day of action across London's 32 boroughs.

Officers in Bexley are responding directly to community intelligence to target drug dealers, perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and other criminals, who impact on communities. Borough Commander Dave Stringer said "The residents in all wards across Bexley are likely to see more operations like this from their Safer Neighbourhoods teams. They will continue to address local crime and safety concerns to make Bexley even safer."

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe said: "Operation Hawk is another way to tackle criminals decisively and directly. It's all about responding to local concerns and acting on them to crack down on crime rapidly and effectively.

"Operation Hawk is a

renewed emphasis on Safer Neighbourhoods teams making the most of local intelligence and acting on it. To help us do this, we need to encourage communities to talk to us and report concerns, but then we must reward this trust, by delivering swift results and telling people what action we have taken.

"This is Total Policing at its best, working directly with the people we are here to protect."

In Bexley 14 operations were carried out, officers executed 3 warrants, seized a quantity of drugs, illegal fruit machines and took uninsured vehicles off the roads.



Happy Christmas from the editorial team: Les Brett, Allison Caddock, Kim Charlwood and Gary Bisson