

NEWSLETTER

December 2024



from the Church of St.
Michael's Bray



The Parish Church of Bray with Braywood, Holyport & Moneyrow Green, Fifield, Touchen End and Oakley Green

website: www.braystmichael.co.uk



“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” John 1.5

Dear Friends,

The season of Advent and Christmas brings to our minds the events of 2,000 years ago in the Middle East, the events we remember at Christmas happened in Israel. This Christmas the country where these events happened is at war. Each carols we sing and each reading we hear may mention Israel. The phrase “peace on earth” takes on a special meaning.

Amid the wars and rumours of wars and with the political and economic changes of our current times, is there something about Christmas that can still bring comfort and joy? We may not be able to see it clearly but if we pause, take a deep breath, and remember “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” then we get in touch with the deeper sense of what Christmas is about.

When the world (and sometimes the Church) seems to be in a dark place, when other things are taken away, space is made to allow us to become aware afresh of the deeper truths that underpin Christmas. Peace and good will to all, the message of salvation; forgiveness, and healing, “light shining in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.”

Perhaps the well-known Christmas Carols sums it up...

“But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring; –
Oh hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When Peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

— *Sears, Edmund H.*

So I wish you a very happy Christmas, may it hold even more meaning this year as we pray for peace on earth.

The Revd Canon Ainsley Swift



CHRISTMAS EVENTS AND SERVICES

- **Saturday 7th December** at 3.00 pm **Christingle Service** - For children of all ages! The Christingle oranges will be distributed.
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- **Sunday 8th December** at 3.00 pm **Community Carol Concert**
Music at Bray's annual festive offering showcases all the talent within our community, featuring St Michael's Choir & Community Choir, Windsor Community Orchestra (directed by chorister Sean Douglas) and seasonal solos and readings. Free entry with collection in aid of Thames Valley Adventure Playground and Music at Bray.
Mulled wine and mince pies served afterwards

- **Sunday 14th December CHRISTMAS with CANTORUM at 5.30pm** A candlelit concert to get you into the Christmas Spirit with carols old and new for all the family. Directed by our Director of Music, Oliver Gooch, renowned chamber choir Cantorum present Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, gems from Judith Weir, Jonathan Dove and John Rutter and plenty of familiar seasonal favourites including audience participation carols. Adults: £20 Young people under 18 £10 Accompanied children free of charge with tickets. Ticket price includes programme, drink and mince pie. Event ends by 7.30pm Tickets available on the door, or here: <https://thelittleboxoffice.com/cantorumchoir/book/event/204316>

- Sunday 22nd December** at 4.00 pm **Traditional Carol Service** with St Michael's Choir - Carols and Lessons

- **Sunday 24th December** at 3.00 pm **Blessing of the Crib service** - for Children of all ages! Carols and stories around the crib, about 40 minutes
- **Sunday 24th December** at 11.30 pm **Midnight Mass with carols and choir**
- **Sunday 25th December** Christmas Day 8.00 am Communion (about 30 minutes, quiet and reflective) and at 10.00 am **Christmas Communion with choir and sermon** (bring your Christmas present to show everyone)!



ADVENT VIRUS

WARNING.....WARNING!!

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner **Hope, Peace, Joy and Love**. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of **The Advent Virus**:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Thanks to everyone who donated Advent Calendars for Foodshare



We collected 75 and Foodshare were absolutely thrilled!

CONTACT LIST

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