

**St John's Merrow
Parish Magazine
Christmas Extra 2018**



One of the angels painted on the East wall of the Chancel in St John's Merrow

Christmas and Angels

Christmas without angels – impossible! Messengers from God to his people on this earth with important news to share:

The angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus and an angel visited Joseph in a dream to reassure him about marrying Mary. Jesus was born in a stable – no room at the inn - an angel told a group of shepherds about Jesus and where they would find him. Then a great company of the heavenly host arrived praising God.

'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

*The shepherds hurried off to find Jesus
and then told everybody about him.*

Now it's up to us to do the same and tell everybody.

'Twas the month before Christmas and all through the land
Shop keepers were praying, hand upon hand
That cards and that presents, paper and string
That foods and bottles and all manner of things
Would appeal to the masses and be purchased in haste
And discarded on Boxing Day, treated as waste

'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the land
The children were praying, hand upon hand
That dad wouldn't notice, that mum wouldn't see
That auntie and grandma (with the bone-y old knee)
Would forget all the bad things that young people do
But remember the good times as if they were true

'Twas the day before Christmas and all through the land
Mothers were praying, hand upon hand
That the shopping was finished, the cleaning was done
The sherry was opened, ready for fun
The turkey was stuffed, the vegetables peeled,
The tree fully dressed, the presents all sealed

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the land
The parents were praying, hand upon hand
That the babies and toddlers would sleep through the night
That teenagers would keep to their word and not fight
That granny and grandpa sober would stay
And that great uncle Ernest would last through the day

'Twas the morning of Christmas and all through the land
The vicars were praying, hand upon hand
That all of the people, all through the land
Would offer a prayer, hand upon hand
To thank God for Christmas, the birth of his son
The bringer of jollity, joy and of fun
The reason for celebrating all the above
The meaning of giving, the giver of love

© Paulene Lambert

Christmas message from Rona

A very merry Christmas to you all, and to your families and friends. It is my first one here in Merrow, and the S-Bs hope it will be the first of very many. During this year we have seen many changes in the Church; and I am grateful to one parishioner for pointing out that they were changes *for you*, not necessarily *for me!* What I have set out to do this year is to pick up on Bishop Andrew's words at my licensing service: 'can you become a community which can say
**'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in Merrow,
as it is in heaven.'**

So we are using new hymn books, and new Eucharist service books, we have engaged in new ways of exploring our spirituality, formed Bible Book Clubs, been on a retreat and added fun in there as well with the Merrow Community Gospel Choir. There is much to do to continue to be '*a community growing in faith*' as our strapline now says. I would like to encourage you to reflect on your part in bringing God's kingdom here in Merrow as it is in heaven.

Part of that Kingdom is recognising and accepting that for many people, Christmas is a difficult and sad time and may not be the jolly time of the films and advertisements. Yet, as Christians we believe that the Christmas Story has a message for **everyone**.

That message is that God loves us so much, that the only way he could show us was to come to earth as a baby.

He came into a dark world, he brought light.

He came into a troubled world, and he brought peace.

He came into an angry world, and he brought love.

And in Christmas 2018/9 he still does.

May the light, the peace and the love of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.

With love from, Rona



Christmas Greetings

from our **CHOIR**

Dear Everyone,



We send our Christmas greetings to the Congregation and will hope to see you in Church.

The Church choir continues to meet to practice every Friday evening and sing at the Services. We are a close and dedicated group who enjoy singing to the glory of God, and enjoy each other's company while we are doing that.

You would be most welcome to come and join in.

From the Merrow Bell Ringers

We hope you have enjoyed hearing the church bells ring for services and other occasions throughout the year. We have enjoyed ringing them for you.



We have two new recruits who learnt during the year in order to ring on Remembrance Sunday as part of the "Ringing Remembered" Initiative, and will now be joining us for service ringing.

The Merrow band is a friendly team and are always looking for new members to join with the ringing and social events.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all
a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Jane, Tower Captain

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From the Magazine Team

We wish all our readers a Blessed and Happy Christmas and send very best wishes for the New Year.

The editor looks forward to lots of extra contributions of articles, 'thoughts' and short (and suitable) jokes, letters and comments during 2019 **PLEASE!** *Barbara* [barbara.lawrence@virginmedia.com]

This different 'take' on 1 Corinthians chapter 13
Was posted on Facebook during the Christmas season 2013
By a friend of Rev. Elizabeth Brown

*If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights, and shiny glass balls but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

*If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals, and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

*If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home, and give all that I have to charity but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

*If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties, and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on love, I have missed the point.

*Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired.

*Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens. Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

*Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust. But giving the gift of love will endure.

An Alternative Twelve Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my true love said to me
I've bought a big fresh turkey and a proper Christmas tree.

On the second day of Christmas much laughter could be heard,
As we tucked into the turkey, a most delicious bird.

On the third day of Christmas came the people from next door,
The turkey tasted just as good as it had the day before.

On the fourth day of Christmas came relations young and old,
We finished up the Christmas pud and had the turkey cold.

On the fifth day of Christmas outside the snowflakes scurried,
Oh we were nice and warm inside, we had the turkey curried.

On the sixth day of Christmas, the Christmas spirit died,
The children fought and bickered, we had turkey rissoles fried.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love he did wince,
When we sat down at table he was offered turkey mince.

On the eighth day of Christmas the dog had run for shelter,
He'd seen our turkey pancakes and the glass of Alka-Seltzer.

On the ninth day of Christmas by lunch time Dad was blotto,
He knew the bird was back again, this time as risotto.

On the tenth day of Christmas we were drinking home-made brew,
As if that wasn't bad enough we were eating turkey stew.

On the eleventh day of Christmas the Christmas tree was moulting
With chilli, soya and oyster sauce the turkey was revolting.

On the twelfth day of Christmas we had smiles on our lips,
The guests had gone, the turkey too, we all had fish and chips!

BAD Parrot

A young man named John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary.

Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to 'clean up' the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even more rude. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer.

For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute.

Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behaviour."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude.

As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behaviour, the bird spoke-up, very softly, "May I ask what the turkey did?"

[Many thanks to Marilyn for this one. – ed.]

Christmas Cracker Jokes ~ Oh Dear!

☺ What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?

Claustrophobia!

☺ What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party?

Freeze a jolly good fellow!

☺ Why does Santa have three gardens?

So he can 'ho ho ho'!

Extra, Extra, Read all about it!

And in case you are wondering, '**IT**' is the
Wednesday Morning Coffee Club

which is open to anyone in the community.

You are assured of a warm welcome between 10.15 and 11.30 each Wednesday of the school term - meeting again in 2019 on 9th January. We have teams of hostesses who will serve you with hot drinks (at a nominal cost), and over forty of your neighbours waiting for you to join them for social chatter.

They all join me in wishing you peace, joy and happiness for the Christmas season, and expressly wish for that particular cup to flow over into 2019.

Paulene



The Work of Christmas *Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.