

CHURCH NEWS

DECEMBER 2006

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Tel: 872209

My dear friends,

One job which I always find both boring and time consuming is that of transferring information to my new diary ready for another year. Having finally finished, I am now ready for 2007 – and wonder what it has in store for me, and for all of us. We can, doubtless think of special occasions. For the church these include the great festivals as well as things like Ash Fete weekend (June 23rd/24th) and our parish weekend (Oct 6th/7th). As individuals it will include birthdays and anniversaries – some of sadness and some of joy. I have no idea how the year will progress, however. I cannot prophecy international events, or weather, personal triumph or tragedy. My diary is nearly empty and so much of what will happen is yet unseen.

We stand on the verge of another Christmas. The shops have been advertising the commercial side of the festival for weeks now. It is, I am told, far and away the biggest money earner for shops and pubs and so many services. How strange to make so much fuss over the birthday of someone who so many will not even give a passing thought on the day itself! Yet it IS HIS birthday. He who was born among us, for us. Born in poverty to make us rich, born to die that we might live. Do remember Him this festive season.

I know not what 2007 will hold for you or for me. I cannot foresee the heights of joy or the depths of despair that we may face. All I know is that He will be there with you and for you. When you weep He will weep with you, when you need a friend He will be there. Is it a sign of my age when I remember an advertisement for cigarettes which said that 'you are never alone with a *****'? Whatever the year has in store for you and yours you will never be alone for He will always be with you.

Yours very sincerely,
(and wishing you all a happy Christmas)

John A Peal

SERVICES AT ST. PETER & ST. PAUL'S ASH

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
8.00	Holy Communion	Every Sunday in month
10.10	Junior Church meets in Ash Village Hall, age 3 and over	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays during term time
10.30	Family Worship	First Sunday in the month
10.30	Family Eucharist	2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays

SERVICES AT ST. PETER'S RIDLEY

<u>Time</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>When</u>
9.15	Parish Communion	Every Sunday in the month
6.30	Evening Prayer	Second Sunday in the month only

diary dates

Full details can also be found on the website.

Dec.	2 nd	Bring and Buy	- see below	10.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.
	7 th	Flower Evening at Ash Church	- see below	8.00 p.m.
	10 th	Ridley Carol Service		6.30 p.m.
	12 th	Ash School in church		10.00 a.m.
		Prayer meeting at the Rectory		7.15 p.m.
		Ash P.C.C. Meeting with members of the Ministry Team		8.00 p.m.
	14 th	Ash Church Choir practice		8.15 p.m.
	17 th	Ash Carol Service		6.30 p.m.
	18 th	Ash Church Standing Committee		8.00 p.m.
	19 th	Carol Singing in Trafalgar Square	- see below	
	24 th	No 8.00 a.m. Service		
		Christingle Services		2.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m.
		Midnight Mass		11.30 p.m.
	25 th	Services at usual Sunday times		
	31 st	Join us in Ash Church as we ring in the New Year		11.30 p.m.
Jan.	9 th	Ash P.C.C.		8.00 p.m.
	10 th	Covenanting Churches committee meeting		8.00 p.m.
	18 th	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. United service at Hartley Roman Catholic Church		8.00 p.m.

FROM THE REGISTERS

HOLY BAPTISM

Nov. 19th Rhianna Jeanne Munn

FUNERAL

Oct. 27th Violet Patricia Cummins aged 91

ASH CHURCH YOUTH CLUB

On November 1st, Inspired by the O'Neil-Byrne's original idea, a few of us took to the streets to share with some of the people of New Ash Green our 'Reverse Halloween'. We carried a large basket of 'goodies' (thanks to Marion) around to households in the Punch Croft area. When we explained who we were and offered them sweets instead of asking for them, faces lit up, and almost everyone accepted with pleasure! We were also able to give people a sheet with information about St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, which no one refused. Actually we did quite well out of the evening too: one or two households still had sweets left over from the night before, and were quite keen that we should relieve them of the burden, so we came home with almost as many - possibly slightly more - than we had started out with!

Now we have nearly reached the end of the autumn term programme, but there is some excitement still to come ...

December 6th Carol singing at Turner's Oak
Meet in the S. Car Park, outside the Kebab shop ***at 7.30 p.m.***

December 13th Carol singing at Hanover Court
Meet by the Dentist's forecourt ***at 7.00 p.m.***
This will be followed by our usual Christmas food and DVD
(Parents, please note we will finish late that evening)

December 20th Final Rehearsal for the Christingle Services.
Please will all ACYC members make a big effort to be there.

December 24th Christmas Eve
2.00 p.m. Christingle Service: led by ACYC
4.00 p.m. Christingle Service: led by ACYC

We begin our next term on Wednesday January 10th, meeting in Ash Village Hall from 7.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m. Anyone at Secondary School is welcome to join us.

JUNIOR CHURCH NATIVITY PLAY

This year the Nativity Play is called **The Good Shepherd** based on a story by Dr. Ralph Wilson, called God's Shepherd, adapted by Mavis Hearn.

Please come and watch the play and support us.

The play will be held on Sunday 3rd December at the 10.30 Family Service. There will be a dress rehearsal starting at 9 a.m. sharp on 3rd December. Please make sure that your child has their costume as well as sensible shoes and a coat for the walk down to the hall for a comfort visit. All parents/carers have had a note about what to wear.

The Christmas Party will be on Sunday 10th December starting at 10.10 a.m. to 2.45 p.m. More details to follow.

CHRISTMAS "BRING AND BUY"

SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER @ 64 REDHILL WOOD

10.30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Again this year you will be able to buy gifts, cards, wrapping paper, gift tags and many hand crafted items. There will be a raffle for a Christmas hamper and other Christmas items and tombola with all prizes having a Christmas theme.

Sale items can be given before (please see Ann or Pauline) or on the day. SMALL items, in good condition, suitable for Christmas gifts would be most welcome as well as bottles of wine, homemade cakes, pastries or sweets, jam and mincemeat or anything connected with Christmas.

If you haven't been before please come along and bring a friend. Children are most welcome and a good time is guaranteed. Ploughmen's lunches (£3.00 each) will be available from 12.00 pm with tea, coffee and mince pies throughout the day. Entrance is free but donations are welcome and all proceeds will go to the Church.

If you are unable to come but would like to donate maybe a bottle of wine or homemade cake or buy raffle tickets please see Ann or Pauline.

Transport will be available on the day from Turners Oak, Hanover Place etc. Please ring Ann on 873385 to arrange a time.

A FESTIVE EVENING OF FLOWERS IN ASH CHURCH

On **Thursday 7th December at 8 p.m.** we are planning to give you ideas for Christmas arrangements and gifts. No entrance fee but donations towards the new church room and the Lions Hospice. During the evening we will have a glass of something with some nibbles and a raffle. Transport will be available to and from church for anyone who needs it. Ring : Ann 873385 or Pauline 873148 Please join us and bring your friends.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER – 8 p.m.

We will be joining the choir again this year to sing in Trafalgar Square. I have booked the coach to leave N.A.G. North Square bus stop as usual. This year it will be at 6 p.m. and the cost is £6 per seat. Please let me have your names if you would like to join us.

Ann Aves 873385

ASH CHURCH DIRECTORY - 2007

It is nearly two years since we last updated the Church Directory and there have been a few changes since then. Ian Nurdin has undertaken to issue a new version, which it is hoped to be ready by the end of this year.

Ian will be at the back of Church after most 10:30 services for the next few weeks, please take a couple of minutes to check over your entry, and ensure that all of your details are correct. It would be especially helpful to have e-mail addresses and postcodes – but no obligation! Please feel free to contact Ian if you won't be in Church, and he can check your entry for you. Better still – send him an e-mail, and at the same time why not ask to have your next issue of “Church News” sent to you electronically, thus helping save a few more trees!

Many thanks for your help; Ian looks forward to hearing from you soon.

Ian Nurdin – Tel. 01474 873414 e-mail: ian_nurdin@hotmail.co.uk

Hazel Marsh would like to thank everybody for their good wishes during her recent illness and to pass on special thanks to Marion and Shirley who gave her so much help

New Address: Keith and Loulette McDowell have moved to 39 Knights Croft, New Ash Green, DA3 8HT. Their telephone number remains the same.

The next Church News will be a Jan/Feb edition which will be produced during the third week in January.

Please continue to pray for our Link parish of St Paul's Marlborough, Zimbabwe

Tearfund reports the following:

A year on from the food crisis which hit southern Africa, and the situation has improved for many parts of the region. In 2005 erratic rainfall left some 11 million people in need of food aid. This year the rains have been much better, resulting in better harvests.

Regular droughts, soaring levels of HIV and International Monetary Fund pricing policies mean that families in southern Africa struggle to make ends meet on a daily basis. And every time there is a bad harvest, the people who are already vulnerable suffer most.

In Zimbabwe the picture is still bleak. Farmland is being grossly under-used as a result of farm invasions and a lack of agricultural knowledge and investment. Hyper-inflation makes it very difficult for people to afford seed and fertiliser even when they are available.

The Government has launched another purge of homes in the capital Harare. Four hundred people - including children - were made homeless when truckloads of police attacked homes in the Glen Norah suburb of Harare with crowbars last week, and set them on fire.

Last year 700,000 people were made homeless across the country, as the Mugabe government launched an assault on what it described as 'illegal' housing. The government's urban slum demolition drive began in 2005 and drew international condemnation. The president said it was an effort to boost law and order and development; critics accused him of destroying slums housing opposition supporters.

Authorities said that people whose homes were destroyed should return to their rural villages of origin. But while many have done so, the descendants of migrant workers from Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia have nowhere to turn.

Tearfund's Zimbabwe Desk Officer Nick Burn says, Tearfund deplores the latest series of clearances of informal housing that continue to traumatise vulnerable families and put children at risk by making them homeless in winter. Despite universal condemnation of Operation Murambatsvina last year, the government continues to show a cynical disregard for basic human rights by inflicting more suffering on its people.'

Tearfund currently works extensively in Zimbabwe through many church-based partners. It has mobilised 600 churches to care for up to 70,000 orphans. It works with an additional 100 churches enabling them to reach out to local people living with HIV/AIDS. Its partner River of Life also runs a national programme teaching basic farming skills that enable people to get the best yield from their land, surviving even in drought years.

Please pray for this situation and those made homeless through it, that their lives would be rebuilt, and that churches will be able to support them. Please also pray that international politicians would bring pressure to bear on the Mugabe government to stop demolitions.

Praise God that there were good harvests this year across much of the region....and pray for greater political stability in Zimbabwe.