

WEEKLY NOTES

4 December 2005



SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

'Bible Sunday' this year.

The psalmist wrote, 'Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.' Or rather, he didn't; he wrote it in Hebrew. That verse from the vast Psalm 119 tells us about the veneration that the Jews had for their ancient Scriptures. Our translations are a necessity, for few of us have a working knowledge of Hebrew. Even in Old Testament times it was found necessary to translate the Bible into Greek, for the benefit of Greek-speaking Jews in Egypt. (That translation is generally known as the Septuagint, and this is usually abbreviated to LXX in scholarly works.) There was no 'New Testament' as such for quite a way into the Christian era, it took quite a while for the gospels and epistles to be assembled, and a few books hovered on the edge of the canon before being either included or excluded. (For example, Hebrews and 2 Peter in; Didache and The Shepherd of Hermas out.) Jesus' Bible was the Old Testament – the Law, the Prophets and the Writings – and the season of Advent is coloured by the hopes and longings of the people of Israel that the Redeemer would come unto Zion. The distinctive scriptures of Advent are basically Old Testament ones, and the underlying theme is 'Prepare the way of the Lord.' The tragedy of the Jewish people is that they waited and suffered for a millennium, looking for the Messiah; and when he came they missed him. Although we are children of the New Testament, we enter into the expectancy of a world preparing for the Christ of God. New Scriptures will eventually proclaim the Messiah, whom the Jews missed, as the one who delivers by love and sacrifice, and by passing from death to life. We wait, trusting in the Scriptures, for the hope of Israel, the Light of the world, as the purple shades of the Advent dawn move towards the light of Christmas, and 'Jesus who is the brightest light' shines into the world's darkness through the door of the Bethlehem stable.

The Bible Procession at the Sung Eucharist today is a reminder both of what the Scriptures are, and of what they are not. The hymn and the commentary are designed to help us realise the nature of the Biblical writings. Eve Myatt-Price will be glad to enrol into the Bible Reading Fellowship any non-members who are 'pricked in the heart' either by the Procession of the Scriptures or by the Post-Communion prayer at the Sung Eucharist today. Eve is confined to barracks after a short spell in hospital, but please telephone her on 020 8393 4812, if you would like to join the BRF. W.R.H.

The important Report of the Parish Finance Review Group was received by the Parochial Church Council at its meeting last Monday, and its recommendations were accepted. Copies of the Report are available for the general congregation today, and there are forty copies in the Welcome Area. If all today's copies are taken, then other copies will be made available next Sunday. A clearly-presented Statement of our financial position is also in the Welcome Area, on the blue notice-board. The Report is made in the light of the facts disclosed on the displayed Statement.

The Christmas Alone Lunch, organized by 'Churches Together in Ewell' is takes place this year at Stoneleigh Baptist Church. If you would like to go to the lunch, or know of anyone who will be on his or her own over Christmas and would like to go to the Christmas Lunch, please telephone Sally Barnes on 020 8393 3011.

Many thanks to last week's bundlers. The bundles of leaflets for distribution throughout the parish are now available in church, and there is a fair chance that all should go out this year, since they are ready so early, and because there are four full weeks of Advent this year. (This is only possible when Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, as it does this year.) Please try and help in this important task. In addition to giving the details of our arrangements for Christmas, the leaflets also contain a fair amount of general information about life at the Parish Church. Since we can only be reasonably expected to saturate the parish once a year with this sort of information, it is important that every single street is covered in the Christmas circulation, so please help if you can. At the risk of saying the obvious, it ought not to be thought that only one's own street might be covered by a distributor. Indeed, there are several streets in the parish where there is no known member of St Mary's congregation. Some of these might well be covered by the fair number of people who worship at St Mary's, but who live outside the geographical parish.

The hymns. A repeat of a recent notice. Although the hymns are chosen to relate specifically to the season or the occasion or to the readings at a particular service, it is still the case that people's favourites – or new discoveries – can eventually find a slot, though 'next week' is not normally an option. If anyone has a particular favourite hymn, please put the details down on a piece of paper (together with one's name), and put it in the Vicar's tray in the sacristy. So long as the hymn is not beyond the pale it should stand a fair chance of being used at some stage. So far two people have put in requests, and the hymns will come up fairly soon.

Next Sunday. 'Gaudete Sunday,' when the liturgical colour is rose (blue at 1100 for the Book of Common Prayer Sung Eucharist, when we follow the old English colour sequence.) There will be Choral Evensong at 1830 next Sunday.

Sharing the love of Christ, the Light of the world, with the people of Ewell.

Anthem: Teach me, O Lord.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein is my desire. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way. O establish thy word in thy servant, that I may fear thee. Glory be, &c.
(*Psalms 119: 32-38*)

All stand after the anthem for the Post Communion Prayer: page 422
(the 'Bible Sunday' Collect.)

The Blessing and Dismissal.

Hymn: HCE 68

[Tune: 201]

*Welcome to any visitors or newcomers to St Mary's today.
Please make yourselves known, and join us for coffee in
the church hall across the road between the 0930 and 1100
services.*

1100 'JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.' ALL-AGE SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY PRAISE FOR ADVENT.

1800 Evening Prayer in the Parish Room.

In church this week

Tuesday 1000 Holy Communion
Thursday 1400 Ewell Grove School Carol Service
Friday 1400 Ewell Castle Junior School: Nursery Carol Service

Other events and notices.

Wednesday 1030-1200 Coffee Morning in the Church Hall. A time for drinking coffee, and for relaxation, and pleasant conversation.
1200 Epsom Deanery Clergy Chapter.

The Christmas Market. This pleasant event a week yesterday has raised just about £1200, much the same as last year, and this means that we shall be sending £300 to each of our four chosen charities. Many thanks to all who took part, and especially to Ruth and Frank Stockwell for all their hard work in organizing the event. It is a difficult time of year to do well financially, since so many similar events are taking place, and there are lots of other things to concentrate the mind. In the New Year we shall probably be looking at the whole question of our external fund-raising, and the Christmas Market will obviously be part of any such discussions. Meanwhile, we can recall once again a pleasant and happy occasion in the church and the hall, even though it was a biting cold day. **W.R.H.**

Our prayers today. We pray for our own church and parish, and in the wider Church we pray in the Anglican Communion for the Church in the Province of Hong Kong. In our diocesan prayer we pray for all who serve in the non-stipendiary ordained ministry. In the parish we pray for the parish members of the Bible Reading Fellowship, and for the people who live in Windmill Lane.

SUNDAY SERVICES

0800 HOLY COMMUNION *Common Worship rite*

Order 1: page 167

Collect of the Day: page 377

Eucharistic Prayer A: page 184. Other Advent material: page 300.

The Post-Communion Prayer throughout Advent will be the familiar Collect for the First Sunday in Advent.

0930 SUNG EUCHARIST and THE PROCESSION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Common Worship rite

Wayfarers, Children's Hour, and Crèche.

Order 1: page 167. Collect of the Day: page 377.

Other Advent material: page 300.

Eucharistic Prayer F: page 198.

Setting of the Eucharist: *Plainsong*, Missa Orbis Factor.

Two hymn-books needed today: *A Hundred Canticles for Ewell*, and, for two hymns only, the small words-only *New English Hymnal* (the tunes are well-known). The Bible Procession is on a separate leaflet.

Introit hymn: 12

Introduction and the Prayers of Penitence, *Kyrie eleison*.

(*Gloria in excelsis* is omitted in Advent; it returns at Midnight Mass.)

Collect of the Day: page 377.

Use Readings paper from this point until the Gospel, except for Hymn 5.

Old Testament Reading from the Book of the prophet Isaiah.

Gradual canticle: *A Song of God's Herald*. [Tune: *Un bel enfant*.]

New Testament Reading from the second Letter of Peter.

Hymn before the gospel: 5.

The Holy Gospel reading from St Matthew.

The Procession of the Scriptures. (*This is on a separate leaflet*.)

Hymn for the Procession: Father, in the Holy Scriptures. [Tune: *Ecce sedes* (Auxerre)]

Biddings to pray; then the Greeting of Peace.

Offertory Hymn: HCE 22. Collection. [Tune: 216]

Eucharistic Prayer F: page 198

Turn back to page 178 for the Lord's Prayer, etc

After the Invitation HCE 66 *A Song of the Covenant* [Tune 89 ii]