

St Mary the Virgin
EWELL PARISH CHURCH
Tel. 020 8393 2643
www.stmarysewell.com

WEEKLY NOTES

17 December 2006

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

'Gaudete' Sunday.

'Gaudete' Sunday gets its name from the opening words of the Epistle for the day: 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' There are several Sundays which have a Latin tag of some sort or other. (*Quasimodo* Sunday, just after Easter, is another of this ilk.) A medieval Czech carol, '*Gaudete, gaudete*', enjoyed much popularity some years ago, and seems to be making a come-back. There is a note of devotional anticipation in the air, as the more serious themes of Advent start to give way to that annual joyful expectancy within the Christian community, as we await once more the birth of the Christ-child. The words 'once more' are important, for Christ's birth is an eternal event. It is rooted in a moment of world-history, but because it is of eternal efficacy it avails for us all in every generation, and in that sense each and every day is really a Christmas Day. 'Once more' is important because once a year we focus on the mystery of the incarnation, and look to the Babe of Bethlehem as the world's true hope for all human history. So this Sunday bids us rejoice, because the Lord is at hand. When St Paul wrote those words he was thinking of the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time, but the coming of Christ – like the incarnation itself – is also an 'eternal event.' He came, he comes, and he will come. That is why the Advent hymns and scriptures hold the past and the future in balance, whilst all the time living in the reality of an eternal presence of the living Christ, who constantly comes to us in word and sacrament and in so many other ways. The unusual liturgical colour of rose which is used on this day is rather like the morning light of early dawn; a colour of hope because a new day is about to unfold. There will be a point at which the sun will rise, and for Christians at Christmas this will be the Sun of Righteousness, who rises (as we read in Malachi and sing with Charles Wesley) with healing in his wings.

Our prayers today. We pray for our church and parish, and in the worldwide fellowship of the Anglican Communion we pray today for the Church in Bermuda. Within the Diocese of Guildford we pray for continuing good relationships between the different faith communities in the diocese, and for the bridge-building work of the Diocesan Inter-Faith Adviser (the Reverend Andrew Facey, Vicar of Christ Church, Epsom). Within the parish we pray for the young children being baptized at the Sung Eucharist this morning, and for the congregation of Christ Church, Ewell, formerly known as the Staneway Chapel, and for the people who live in Glyn Close.

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.

SUNDAY SERVICES

0700 MATTINS

Psalm 40

0800 HOLY COMMUNION

Common Worship rite

Order 1: page 167.

Collect of the Day: page 378

Other Advent material: page 300.

Eucharistic Prayer A: page 184 [omit responses in *red* brackets].

0930 SUNG EUCHARIST with HOLY BAPTISM *Common Worship rite*

There is a special service-paper for this service today, and only the usual green hymn-books (NEH) are needed as well.

Setting of the Eucharist: *Stanford* in C

Anthem: A Song of Peace. *Stanford*

Hymns: 12, Benedictus, 443, 170, 18, 408.

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 SUNG EUCHARIST *Book of Common Prayer rite*

Setting of the Eucharist: *White* in E flat

Creed: *Merbecke*

The hymns are all from the small *red* hymn-books today.

Note: In the Book of Common Prayer scheme of things this particular Sunday has a particular concentration on the ordained ministry within the Church, and this comes out in the Collect of the Day and particularly in the Epistle, with its reference to the 'stewards of the mysteries of God'. The hymn at the Gradual is appropriate to this theme. The following week includes the Advent 'Ember Days', traditionally a time of prayer for vocations to the Sacred Ministry, and until recent times it was a regular time for ordinations. With different patterns of training these days, the traditional Ember Days are generally not observed, but generally there are local arrangements near ordination times, particularly near the festival of St Peter and Paul in June, when most ordinations nowadays take place.

At *Book of Common Prayer* services at St Mary's the old English scheme of liturgical colours is followed, and so the colour at 1100 today is blue.

Sermon by *the Vicar*

Introit hymn: AMR 50

Then green Prayer Book: page 31

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy): page 33

Greeting and the Collect of the Day

(There is a separate leaflet for the Collect and Readings)

The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4: 1-5. *Stewards of the mysteries of God.*

Gradual hymn: AMR 473

The Holy Gospel: St Matthew 11: 2-10. *Jesus speaks about John the Baptist.*

Nicene Creed: page 34.

Offertory Hymn: AMR 49

Collection

After the hymn, all kneel for the Prayer for the Church (page 36), the

Prayers of Penitence, etc., and for the Prayer of Consecration

Hymn at the Consecration: 416 [Choir: 0EH 335, i.e. with Amen]

During the Communion: O Lamb of God (page 44)

Anthem: Thee we adore, O hidden Saviour. *Holman*

[Words of hymn 385.]

After Communion:

The Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Thanksgiving: page 44

The Blessing Hymn 269.*

[* *Note:* It may be useful to compare this original version of the last hymn with the revised version at No.7 in the green hymn book, which is now more commonly used.]

A reminder that there is not an 11 o'clock service next Sunday, because the General Decoration of the Church will begin as soon as the 0930 service ends.

1800 Evening Prayer

In church this week

Tuesday 1000 **Holy Communion**
1930 for 2000. 1930 for 2000. **Evening Fellowship Group** in the Parish Room. Further information from Iain McKillop (Tel. 01932 341687).

Other events and notices.

Monday Holy Communion to the housebound. (See note below.)
Wednesday 1030-1200 Coffee Morning in the church hall. Tea-drinkers should not feel excluded. A pleasant and relaxing time with familiar and friendly company. It is an open occasion; anyone can come. There will not be a Coffee Morning during Christmas week; it resumes on the first week in January.

The Christmas leaflets. At the time of compiling these Notes only a few streets remained uncovered, and I am immensely grateful to all who have taken part in the general distribution throughout the parish. It would be marvellous if every street were to be covered this year. We still have several posters hanging around; could these also go today? We could certainly do with some more in the High Street shops and offices.

Holy Communion to the housebound takes place on Monday. I suspect that there may be some who are not on the regular list, but who might wish to receive their communion at Christmas. If anyone knows of someone in that category, please check it out, and if necessary let me know by telephone this evening, or by 1000 tomorrow morning. W.R.H.

Choir Club. We received some more board games last week. Very many thanks to those who have helped the club in this way. We could still do with a few more. Any offers please to Julie Ainscough, David Crick or the Vicar.

Damian Merciar (PCC and Mattins) is looking for somewhere to lodge a number of storage boxes, mainly containing books, during a house sale / move. The commercial storage systems are considerably pricey, and are not really an option. If someone, living alone perhaps and without all rooms in regular use, has a spare room where such things could be deposited for a while, Damian would be glad to hear of it. He can be contacted on 07980 807884.

The Rose vestments used today at the Sung Eucharist are, as many know, the gift of Barbara Cannon in memory of her husband Frank. They are a delightful, if somewhat unusual colour. (One of the books on this sort of thing stoutly declares that care should be taken that rose-coloured vestments should not be 'an effeminate pink.') Last Sunday a matching set of pulpit and lectern falls was blessed at the end of the Sung Eucharist, and so the complete *décor* (if that's the right word) is in use today. In some places the rose-coloured vestments and hangings, which are normally only used on two Sundays in the year, are also used on Christmas Eve when that day falls on a Sunday. Since that happens this year, we shall do the same, and so we shall have the rose vestments again next Sunday morning. They re-appear on *Laetare* Sunday, the Fourth Sunday in Lent, more commonly known as Mothering Sunday.

And about next Sunday. It is always difficult to know what to do about Christmas Eve, when it falls on a Sunday. Anyway, here are the arrangements for next Sunday morning. The two celebrations of the Eucharist are at the usual

times, *but there will not be Mattins at 1100*. Most people will have good reason to want to be home a bit earlier this year, and so the **General Decoration of the Church** will begin as soon as the Sung Eucharist is over. Sunday morning coffee will be in the Welcome Area, not in the hall. There will be coffee and mince pies to sustain the decorators. Our simple rule here is that people just decorate the place with greenery and 'other suitable trimmings,' by and large not according to any great plan. There are usually other preparatory jobs to be done as well, so there is plenty to do. There is always a lot of holly in the churchyard, so if anyone brings any scateurs they can be put to good use. I have frequently said that our decoration of the church is an enacted parable of welcome, so I hope many will stay on next Sunday and help to make St Mary's look the wonderfully festive place that it always seems to be over Christmas. W.R.H.

Christmas begins liturgically next Sunday afternoon, with *The Arrival at Bethlehem Service*, which begins at 1600. This service includes the Blessing of the Crib. Other Christmas services are listed on the Christmas leaflet or on the various posters, and do not need to be reproduced on the Weekly Notes today.

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