

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

WEEKLY NOTES

24 December 2006

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sponsor's Note. Remembering my grandson, Mark Nicholas Saunders, who would have been twenty-seven now. J.M.S.

It is not often that this Sunday is also Christmas Eve, but when it is we are in an odd state devotionally. In the morning it is not Christmas, no matter what is starting to hot up in the local hostelrys and elsewhere, and we are not singing carols, but we know we are almost there. The Sunday Eucharist, in its rare rose *décor* hints that the dawn of Christmas is breaking now, and in a way this makes the Advent prayer 'Come, O Lord' even more insistent. The hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' really belongs to this end of Advent rather than at the beginning, and the prayer is made in this versified form of the Advent Antiphons for the coming of the Lord, who is Wisdom, the Lord (Adonai), the Rod of Jesse, the Key of David, the eastern Morning Light, the King of the Nations, Emmanuel ('*God with us*'), born of the Blessed Virgin. We are singing it in full today. However, as soon as the Sung Eucharist is over we can start the fun: we decorate the church and festoon the tree, we eat mince pies and set up the crib. Yet the morning of the Fourth Sunday in Advent always has a flavour of its own, whether or not it is Christmas Eve; right up to the last moment we are reminded that the reason for the incarnation was and is the sober reality of a world constantly standing under the judgement of God, and of its desperate need of a Saviour. The Star of Bethlehem shines in the darkness to herald the sudden warmth of the Sun of Righteousness upon a world touched on Christmas Day by the power and mystery of God incarnate, amazingly revealed in the Child in the manger. As the American Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote in his famous carol,

'The dark night wakes, the dawning breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.'

Our prayers today. We pray for our own church and parish, and in the worldwide Church we pray today in the Anglican Communion for the Church in Brazil. In the diocese we pray for the Lord Bishop himself, Bishop Christopher, in his pastoral and apostolic ministry. Within the parish we pray for the many who will be attending our Christmas services here, even though they are not members of the regular congregation, and also for the people who live in Hampton Grove.

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

SUNDAY SERVICES

- 0700 MATTINS** Psalm 122.
- 0800 HOLY COMMUNION** *Common Worship rite*
Order 1 in traditional language: page 207. Collect of the Day: page 451.
Eucharistic Prayer A: page 216; Advent Preface: page 300.
- 0930 SUNG EUCHARIST** *Common Worship rite*

Children's Hour. Crèche available, if needed. Order 1: page 167 . Collect of the Day: page 378 Other Advent material: page 300 . Eucharistic Prayer F : page 198

Setting of the Eucharist: *Victoria*, Missa O Magnum Mysterium

The hymns are either from *A Hundred Hymns for Ewell*, or printed on the readings paper. We are using the whole of the hymn *O come, O come Emmanuel* at the Gradual today; it is a versified form of the Advent Antiphons, sung before the Magnificat at Evening Prayer at this time of year. Because it is long it will be sung in the Gradual slot *and* after the second reading as well. We shall *sit* throughout this hymn today; no need to stand when the servers move into position. All stand at the end for the announcement of the Holy Gospel.

Introit hymn: HHE 64 [Tune:NEH 157]. *The Gospel reading today is about the Visitation.*

Black book, page 167: Introduction, Prayers of Penitence, and *Kyrie eleison*.

Collect of the Day: page 378.

Readings on the blue paper.

Old Testament Reading from the Book of the prophet Micah.

Gradual canticle: HHE 23: verses 1-4.

[Tune: NEH 11]

New Testament Reading from the Letter to Hebrews

Hymn: HHE 23: verses 5-8.

[Tune: NEH 11]

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

The Profession of Faith. During Advent we are using alternative forms of the Creed. Today we shall use the form on page **148**, with its Advent prayer, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' *After the Creed, all sit.*

Advent course of sermons: 'CHRIST THE REFINER' '

Today *Wendy Varney* will be speaking on the title:

Christ, the Refiner of our relationship with God.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in his mighty power:
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day:
That having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
You overcome through Christ alone,
And stand entire at last.

The Greeting of Peace.

Offertory hymn: NEH 33 [omit v.6] (*on reverse of readings paper*); Collection

[Choir use version of *Corde natus* in 'Carols for Choirs 1.']

Eucharistic Prayer F: page 198; Advent Preface: page 300. Then page 178.

Hymn at the Invitation: NEH 3 (*on reverse of readings paper*) [Second tune]

During the Communion: *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God).

Anthem: Ne timeas, Maria.

Victoria

English version: Fear not, Mary, for you have found favour with the Lord. Behold, you shall conceive in the womb, and bring forth a son, and he shall be called the son of the Most High. [St Luke 1: 30,31]

After the anthem all stand for the Post-Communion Prayer: page 376.

The Mutual Salutation, The Blessing and Dismissal.

Carol: People, look east. (*On reverse of readings paper*) ...and 'Sleigh Ride.'

Welcome to any visitors or newcomers to St Mary's today. Please make yourselves known, and join us for coffee in church today after the 0930 Sung Eucharist.

'People, look east' and 'Sleigh Ride' really ought to drop more than a hint that we would like as many helpers as possible for this annual enacted parable of welcome for the Christ-child, as we prepare the church for Christmas. Because it is Christmas Eve this year Mattins will have been said earlier in the morning, because people will quite reasonably want to be home a bit earlier today than is usually the case when we do this. It is a natural and homely piece of enacted incarnational theology, and there is a basic informality to what we do, and it is meant to be a pleasant and happy time. Whilst there are specific things needing to be done, there is also the chance for people to go out into the churchyard and cut holly and other greenery, or generally take part in putting lights, tinsel and the like all around the church. There are also sacristy jobs of one sort or another, like changing the altar linen, filling cruets, and folding service-papers. No-one need feel that there is no job to do. Coffee is available, and there will be mince pies at some point. Everything can start more or less as soon as the Sung Eucharist is over. If anyone is still here at 1200 we shall finish with the Angelus.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

1600 THE ARRIVAL AT BETHEHEM SERVICE.

This is an all-age service of Christian Family Praise, and the service includes THE BLESSING OF THE CRIB. There is a special leaflet for this service. Please note that this has become a very well-attended service in the last few years, and early arrival is advised.

o/c Evening Prayer will be formally recited in the Choir.

The church will be re-opened at 2230.

2315 Choir Carols will be sung before Midnight Mass.

2345 PROCESSION AND MIDNIGHT MASS OF THE NATIVITY.

Setting of the Eucharist: *Mozart*, Coronation Mass (K.317).

Anthem: Tomorrow shall be my dancing day. *Gardner*

Preacher: *The Reverend Dr Patrick Miller*

There is a special leaflet for this service.

0800 HOLY COMMUNION (Mass of the Dawn) Common Worship rite

Order 1: page 167.

Collect of the Day: page 381.

Eucharistic Prayer B: page 188; Christmas Preface: page 302.

1000 SUNG EUCHARIST AT THE CRIB (Mass of the Day). Nave Altar.

Common Worship rite

Setting of the Eucharist: *Millington*, Missa Alme Pater

Preacher: *The Vicar*

There is a special leaflet for this service.

1200 HOLY COMMUNION at the Nave Altar by the Crib. Details as at 0800.

Ewell Parish News for January is available today.

In church this week. Tuesday **St Stephen's Day** 1000 **Holy Communion**

The flowers last Sunday were sponsored by *Edna Attwood* to celebrate the 90th birthday of her sister **Babs Peerman's** birthday. We send our good wishes to Babs at the Beaumont Nursing home.

The funeral of the late **Howard Ward** is on Friday 12 January in church at 1200.

Sermons and services. My thanks to Wendy Varney and Iain McKillop for some thought-provoking words during the Advent course on *Christ the Refiner*. Those who have seen the Sacristy Rota will notice that there is a long run of the letter 'V' in the preacher column in the early part of the year. This is because I plan to give a course of sermons on *The Lord's Prayer* at the Sung Eucharist. It is not really convenient to give a course on all the Sundays of Lent, because Mothering Sunday generally complicates things, and the Passion reading on Palm Sunday also precludes a full-length sermon. The course will run *into* Lent, finishing on Lent 3. A note in the January *Ewell Parish News* tells of the varied programme of services next term at 1100. It merits a serious look. W.R.H.

Rotas. The remainder of these are available today, and may be collected from the Welcome Area, or, in the case of the Sacristy Rota, from the table next to the sacristy door. Please make any necessary swops; and any doubts to me. W.R.H.

Texts of the Sunday Readings. These are also available today, and they go as far as Palm Sunday. As usual, they are on the left window-sill in the Parish Room. Readings for Mattins in Year C are also on separate papers. These will be found on the *right* window-sill in due course; a few more need to be done.

Next Sunday. Morning services are as usual, but the choir will be having its post-Christmas break. There will not be evening worship next Sunday.

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