

St Mary's Stelling NEWSLETTER

"Kent's most extraordinary Parish Church"

December 2017



Welcome!

We are entering the season of Advent, which is a time of preparation for and anticipation of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We all know about the ridiculous commercialisation which surrounds the Christmas season, and we will all inevitably be busy buying gifts and food. Let's pray that in all the busyness that Jesus is the centre of our attention. Happy Christmas!

Services for December

3rd Holy Communion Revd Chris Duncan
10th (3pm) Christingle Revd Norman Woods
17th Holy Communion Revd Phil Brown
25th (10am) Holy Communion Revd Chris Duncan
31st No Service

Christingle Service

Revd Norman Woods will lead the **Christingle Service** on Sunday 10th December (3pm), so we encourage all children and parents to come along. Norman has promised something special, including making your own Christingle, so please come along. The collection from the service will be given to the Children's Society.

Sponsored Sleep-Out!

Nearly all the sponsorship money has now come in. With Gift Aid, the total amount for Catching Lives is over £3,000, which is wonderful and has certainly far exceeded our expectations.

The event set out to raise the plight of the homeless, show our concern and empathy for individuals affected by homelessness, and also to raise some money to help the homeless through the great work of Catching Lives. I think we have achieved these objectives, and I am also very pleased to say that several people have been inspired to find out more

about volunteering to work with Catching Lives.

Thank you to all of those who 'slept out', worked so hard to raise sponsorship, sponsored someone, attended the worship, or helped in any way. It is much appreciated. You can read the fuller report which Julia and I have written in this month's Parish mag.

Finances

The good news is that we have now received the refund of Parish Share for 2017, an amount of £3,400. The not-so-good news is that our Parish Share apportionment for 2018 is £11,062 - this represents a 24% increase on the equivalent figure for 2017, and is unaffordable and unsustainable. With the support of the PCC, I have advised the Diocese on behalf of Stelling and Upper Hardres that we will pay the proposed Parish Share for one year only, with the proviso that the Deanery/Diocese review their strategy for 2019 and future years to create an affordable and sustainable position for our Churches. Chartham support our stance about the need for support and a change of strategy, but are unwilling to apply the above proviso. I would be very happy to explain the detail of how Parish Share is made up and apportioned etc if anyone is interested!

Prayer Corner

This Advent, as we wait for the Light of the World, we pray that the love of God would bring light in the lives of our family and friends.

God of light and hope, hear our prayer.

This Christmas, as we remember that there was no room at the inn, we pray for all who are homeless, and those who work to shelter them. As we remember those who journeyed

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to the stable, we pray for all who are seeking you, and those who are leading the way. Wherever the world is in darkness Lord, let there be light. Amen.

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