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Dec. 2016/Jan. 2017

Through the Eyes of a Christmas Sun Rise

The C.S Lewis memorial stone in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey has engraved on it the following:

"I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen. Not only because I can see it but because by it I can see everything else."

As Christmas approaches, I find myself intrigued by two things: firstly, the details we have about the birth of Jesus were mainly recorded by someone called Luke who may have been a physician and who was concerned with writing an 'orderly account' of extraordinary events. So those familiar Christmas texts we hear children endearingly say from under tinsel halos are not fairy tales but carefully recorded accounts worthy of serious exploration. That said, the second thing I notice at this time is how the child in me emerges, not because of the parties, the presents and the food, but because of the anticipation in the air, the sense that in a hard-bitten materialistic world something mysterious and other-worldly is approaching, something that defies easy explanation, something that actually doesn't make a lot of sense - unless I see it through certain eyes.

According to Luke, Mary and Joseph's situation wasn't great - they were effectively homeless in a brutally occupied country and about to give birth to an apparently illegitimate child that would have made both of them outcasts even with their own families. Nothing pretty or festive about any of it. One also might say that God's plan to make an impressive appearance among his creatures was going distinctly pear-shaped (any PR company today would ditch the account immediately!) And yet ... a handful of shepherds were seeing something else. And according to Matthew, so also were some wise and scholarly men (we don't know how many), hungry for hope, searching for something they would only know when they found it, but certain it was significant and real. They, and others like Simeon and Anna, were seeing the extraordinary hidden in the ordinary - they were seeing through different eyes, the eyes that CS Lewis refers to. The light that came into their world enabled them to see the rest of the world in another way. For me, the challenge handed down through the centuries is: can I see through those same eyes? Can I see my world and even my own year ahead in the light of a Christmas sun rise? In the light of 'Emmanuel', God with us? Happy Advent.

Richard Everett, playwright and screenwriter.
Visit his website: richardeverett.co.uk

Dear Friends

Reality.

What's the first word that comes to mind when you hear that? Reality shows on TV? Actually they're far from it. Our 'real' world is sometimes not much fun to say the least, but many of us want to hide from it or ignore it. Some people can't however. They are in the middle of it - whether it's family unrest, physical, mental or sexual abuse, poverty, corrupt leadership, deception, fear or violence. Or all the above. Our 'real' world shows us mindless massacres, preventable illnesses and deaths, starvation and cruelty, sometimes on a global scale. We see and hear of 'man's inhumanity to man' (Robbie Burns) wherever we look.

What a great message for Christmas? Actually, yes. We tend to focus on the 'nice' story for the sake of the children, but in reality it's more a story for adults who dearly want to know where God is in the mess we find ourselves in.

The answer Christmas gives is - God is right there in the middle of the mess. Jesus is our 'Emmanuel' - 'God with us'.

God is not set apart from our reality, but right there (here) in it with us; God shares our human life, God knows our human needs and desires, God is vulnerable like we are - vulnerable to other human beings, whether they are the good, the needy or the corrupt. It's all there in the Christmas story and is the real and really good and wonder-full reason to celebrate Christmas.

With my very best wishes for a very happy Christmas and a peaceful 2017; may both be filled with the consciousness of the presence of Jesus our Emmanuel among us.

With my very best wishes

Barbara

Jesus
EMMANUEL
god with us™



All Saints
Christingle Service
will be held on
Sunday
22nd January 2017
at 10 am

Everyone is welcome to this lovely
child-friendly service

During the service there will be a
collection for
The Children's Society
which raises essential funds for
the support of disadvantaged
children and young adults across
the UK who are suffering from
poverty, harm and neglect

COMMUNITY CAROL SINGING - WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER

Come and celebrate the advent of Christmas by
joining in our popular sing around Grayswood.
We will meet outside the school at 6.30 pm and
finish the evening at "The Wheatsheaf".

ALL WELCOME.

(If you can't join us, please open your door and
join in....we are not
collecting money!)

Also, please bring a
torch.

More details from
Angela (652667).



"HERE WE COME A-CAROLING!"

CHURCH SERVICES for DECEMBER and JANUARY

Every Sunday (except Christmas Day): 8am Holy Communion
Every Sunday (except 4 Dec & 29 Jan) the main service is at 10am

DECEMBER**4th NO SERVICE IN GRAYSWOOD**

9.30 at St Bart's: Installation of Rev Mary Bowden as Rector of Haslemere

11th Parish Communion

18th Nativity Service

5pm Carol Service

followed by Christmas refreshments

24th Christmas Eve

4pm Crib service

11.30pm Midnight Communion

25th Christmas Day

10am All Age Celebration

followed by a shortened Communion

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

**JANUARY 2017 HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

1st Parish Communion with a Renewal of the Covenant

8th Morning Worship for the Epiphany

15th Parish Communion

22th CHRISTINGLE SERVICE with Godly Play for all

29th NO SERVICE IN GRAYSWOOD

9.30am United Benefice Service at St Bart's

**ADVENT QUIET DAY**

With the theme "The Scent of Love" will take place at Beacon Hill United Reformed Church, Hindhead, on Saturday 3rd December from 10 am–4 pm

With time for quiet reflection, painting, prayer areas & crafts. All welcome.

Details from revrdillon@btinternet.com

**Beat the January Blues**

The Club will be hosting another "Meet the neighbours....." coffee and cakes morning on **Saturday, 21st January (11-12.30)**, which will also be an informal opportunity to meet the new mayor, Mr Sahran Abeyundara, together with the councillors who represent Grayswood – Melanie Odell, Liindz Peel and David Round – a chance to chat about the work of our Town Council.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS REQUESTS FOR THE FOOD BANK
to be collected from All Saints Church on 12th December

Just before Christmas, the food bank will be distributing special Christmas packs to struggling families who are referred to us by the usual agencies.

We would be very grateful for donations of the following items to include in these packs:

Mince pies (not home-made, please, as they need to have a sell-by date – and please ensure that the sell-by date is after Christmas Day, thank you)

Christmas Puddings (4 helping size)

Small Christmas cakes or Stollen

Packets of Fancy Biscuits

Chocolates

Packets of nuts, Pringles etc.

Christmas Crackers



*Thank you so much
 or your ongoing support this year,
 which is greatly appreciated*

Contacting All Saints

Do contact us if you would like us to pray for you. Phone any number below, send an e-mail, write the name in the book at the back of church, pop a note into Church House, or ask someone to pass a message on. A first name is all we need and confidences are ALWAYS respected.

Sacred space: The church building is open every day from about 9am until dusk in winter, about 6pm in summer. It's a peaceful place to think, meditate, dream, pray.

Contacting All Saints:

Barbara Steele-Perkins is officially on duty all day Sunday and Thursday, and Monday and Friday mornings. She also does some teaching for the Diocese. She responds to answer-phone messages every day except Tuesday and will get back to you as soon as possible.

tel: 656504 e-mail: barbarasteeleperkins@tiscali.co.uk

Fi Gwynn works part time in a voluntarily capacity for the church, as an Ordained Local Minister. Fi's day off is Friday.

email: revfigwynn@gmail.com

Janet Fry, our church administrator, works in **Church Office** (in Church House) which is usually open Mon, Thurs and Fri mornings from 9am-12 noon. At other times you can still leave a message.

tel: 656504 e-mail: allsaintsgrayswood@gmail.com

If you would like someone to visit you - for whatever reason please contact Barbara or Janet (details above).

You are promised complete confidentiality.

**For more information, please visit the church website on :
www.grayswoodparish.org**

Useful Numbers

Village Hall Bookings:

grayswoodvh@outlook.com

Grayswood Club 07748 065 821

Grayswood School 642086

Grayswood Nursery School 658931

Wheatsheaf 644440

RETRO EVENING

at Grayswood Club

on Saturday, 21st January at 7.30 pm

Events in December and January**In the Village Club:**

Book Club: Tuesday 13th Dec and 10th Jan, 8 pm

Gardening Club: Christmas Supper on Saturday 17th Dec, and Gardening Quiz on 5th Jan, 7.45 pm

Quiz Night: Thursday 26th Jan, 7.45 pm

In the Village Hall:

WI: Wednesday 14th Dec and 11th Jan, 7.30 pm

Grandparent/Parent

Toddler Group: 9.15-10.45 am Wednesdays (term time). Details from Jane White, 643891

77 Lower Road:

Good Book Morning: Monday 25th Jan, 10.30 am

VILLAGE PRAYER

In December we remember those who live in Prestwick Lane, Clammer Hill Road, Paddock Way and Muddy Lane, and in January those living in Holdfast Lane, Three Gates Lane and Highercombe Road.

Home & Vintage Sale
Saturday 10th December 10-3pm

Start your Christmas with at an enchanting winter fair in Grayswood Village Hall.

Whilst you shop to the sounds of Christmas carols and the aromas of cinnamon and spice, you will find yourself surrounded with beautiful things to get you and your home ready for the festive season, including Christmas decorations, fresh flower wreaths, gifts for that someone special, and lots of vintage treasures.

Our cosy candlelit tea room will be serving mulled wine and mince pies, as well as the traditional tea and cakes.

There will be a treat on the door for children and there is a lovely playground to keep them busy whilst you shop. Plus the Village Green for your four-legged friend to run around on. Dogs on leads are very welcome inside and also get a treat on the door!

£1 entry ~ under 14's free