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We are always looking for good articles to put into this newsletter, so if you have come across anything which you think might be of interest to others, personal reflections, poems, etc, please let me have them before the next deadline, which is:

Monday 1 February 2010, for distribution end February

Articles may be edited due to space restrictions.

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The Church in Great Notley

All ages welcome
Come and join us as we praise God together



Dec 09 – Feb 10

We are five denominations working together:
Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic
and United Reformed Church

Ministers

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www.greatnotleychurch.org.uk

Mission statement

The aim of this church is:-
*To show the love of Jesus in word and action
so that others may come to know him as Lord and Saviour.*

Sunday Services for Dec 09 - Feb 10

(In the Community Centre)

All are welcome to our Sunday morning services at **10.30am. Holy Communion (HC)** is on the 2nd Sunday of each month, and we have **All Age Worship (AAW)** on the 4th Sunday.

Dec 6	10.30am Val Spouge, with Accord & Advent music
Dec 6	6.00pm Rev Mike Shrubsole with Advent readings
Dec 13	No morning Service but Carol Service at 3.30pm
Dec 20	Rev Beth Bendrey with our Nativity Service HC
Dec 27	Rev Mike Shrubsole AAW
Jan 3	10.30am Methodist
Jan 3	6.00pm (to be advised)
Jan 10	Rev. Mike Shrubsole HC
Jan 17	Rev Beth Bendrey
Jan 24	Rev Mike Shrubsole AAW
Jan 31	Rev Beth Bendrey, a joint service with Black Notley (at Great Notley)
Feb 7	10.30am Marion Rollins
Feb 7	6.00pm Rev Beth Bendrey
Feb 14	Rev. Mike Shrubsole HC
Feb 17	Ash Wednesday
Feb 21	Rev Beth Bendrey Lent 1
Feb 28	Rev Mike Shrubsole Lent 2 AAW

Special dates for your diaries.....

Sunday 13 Dec – NO MORNING WORSHIP - instead OUR FAMILY CAROL SERVICE - followed by mince pies
3.30pm in the Community Centre
Rev Beth Bendrey and Rev Mike Shrubsole

Sunday 20 Dec – NATIVITY & FAMILY COMMUNION
10.30am in Community Centre
Rev Beth Bendrey

Thursday 24 Dec – CRIB SERVICE
4pm at Black Notley
Rev Beth Bendrey

Thursday 24 Dec – MIDNIGHT MASS
11.30pm at Black Notley
Rev Beth Bendrey

Friday 25 Dec – CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP
Christ Church Coggeshall at 10.00am
Rev Mike Shrubsole

**Friday 25 Dec – SAID SERVICE
HOLY COMMUNION**
8am at Black Notley
Rev Beth Bendrey

Friday 25 Dec – CHRISTMAS FAMILY COMMUNION
10.30am at Black Notley
Rev Beth Bendrey

A Greeting from Beth

As I write this, I have been with you for seven weeks, and am gradually putting names to faces. These early days for me have been taken up with getting to know people from here and from Black Notley, and many thanks to you all for your welcome at the church and in your homes, when I've managed to pop round and visit. From my first church council meeting when people were wondering whether the final amount for the building would ever be found, we have come to the fantastic position of having enough to actually begin the build. So the New Year will offer us some exciting challenges. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to join us on the Away-Day in January as we begin to prepare for a new era in the church. The season of Advent is all about getting ready: preparing the way for the kingdom of God. So it's a great time to pray that we too will be ready for all that God might have for us in this year ahead.

With best wishes for a very Happy Christmas.

Great Notley Away Day: 'A vision for Great Notley'

Sat 23 January 2010 10am-4pm
(All details to be confirmed.)

- Opening worship
- A Vision for the Building
- A Vision for Mission
- Lunch
- A Vision for Prayer
- Tea and Feed-back session
- Closing Worship

Do let Beth & Mike have your comments! This is only a suggestion at this stage and could be held on a Sunday afternoon instead of Saturday, if better.

Letter from Revd. Mike Shrubsole

Dear Friends

I'm back from my sabbatical! And I think I should begin with some thanks. Thank you to all those who helped to make my sabbatical possible. In the first place, thank you for being part of a church structure which has agreed to provide for its ministers to take sabbaticals. Secondly thank you to all those who have had to undertake extra duties whilst I have been away. I know certain folk are very glad I am now back at work, picking up my usual responsibilities again.

I plan to find opportunities to share with you some of the important experiences that my sabbatical opened up to me. In the near future, I want to plan an occasion when I can share some of my slides of Israel and talk about what I experienced and learnt there, both about the past and the present of that land. I also want to plan another occasion to share the work I have been doing on climate change and the need for carbon reductions and the involvement and responses that churches could be making. This too is an important issue for our world today and for the way we plan for the future. What kind of a world do we want our children and grandchildren to inherit and how will we ensure that they get it? These events need to be planned into the church diary so that we can have firm dates to announce soon. I hope some of you would like to come along and see what I have been getting up to on my sabbatical.

But whilst I was away things have not stood still. As my sabbatical came to an end it was good to welcome a new member to the church's Ministry Team. In the same way that I serve two churches at Coggeshall and Great Notley, Rev Beth Bendrey has been called to serve two churches at Black Notley and Great Notley.

We are planning to share most duties and responsibilities in the life of the church at Great Notley. For example, this month it is my turn to write this opening letter for the magazine.

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Letter from Mike Shrubsole ... *continued*

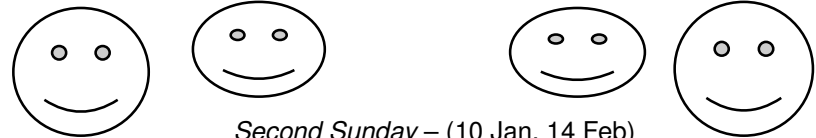
Beth and I will be having a weekly meeting to compare our diaries and make plans for the coming week. I hope that over time you will find we have some complementary skills to offer and that between the two of us the ministry to the church will be enriched.

Another major advance has been the way in which our building plans have now almost come to a final conclusion. Earlier in the year we issued a contract to Mr Steve Denton to be our Employer's Agent, believing we were very close to being able to sign the contract to begin building. Steve's main task was to oversee the completion of paperwork with the contractor, ensuring everything was correct. At the beginning of September 2009 we assessed that we only had a financial shortfall of approximately £50,000. It seemed a small enough gap to think that it could be closed. A final appeal was met magnificently through generous giving by local church people, and through grants and gifts from our supporting churches. The responses came fast and were generous. Over £64,000 of new money was found within a month! Magnificent! Praise the Lord! An enormous 'Thank you' is due to all those of you who were able to make a response at that time. Finally, after 12 years we can afford to build.

Actually, we are still seeking further funds. Yes, we do have enough money, but it is only enough to finish the building to a sensible basic standard. So, for example, we can't yet afford all the furniture and equipment we would like to put in the new church. So if anyone is still able to offer a financial gift to help finish things off better, do please contact either of our two treasurers. Church Treasurer: Mrs M Ouwehand, tel: 348682. Treasurer of the Friends of the Church in Great Notley: Mrs B Barltrop, tel: 330093. It is not too late to join in.

The Church in Great Notley Junior Church

providing a caring and nurturing environment for you and your children at worship each Sunday. The provision follows a monthly pattern.



Second Sunday – (10 Jan, 14 Feb)

a **Junior Church session** led by our leaders in an adjacent room. This allows parents time and space to enjoy worship which concludes with Communion .

*The fourth Sunday is **All Age Worship**
(27th Dec, 24th Jan, 28th Feb)*

the children will be encouraged to be more involved throughout the service and there will be a craft activity linked to the theme.

First, third and fifth Sunday – toys for toddlers are provided at the back of the hall and in addition we will have a pack of simple colouring and activity sheets accessible to children

A special invite to all families – something for everyone we hope you will make a special effort to join in on

Sunday 13 December 3.30pm FAMILY CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Celebrate the Christmas Story in words and music
(please note no morning worship)
led by Rev Mike Shrubsole and Rev Beth Bendrey

Sunday 20 December 10.30am CHRISTMAS NATIVITY SERVICE

A retelling of the Nativity Story and Family Communion
Led by Rev Beth Bendrey

For more info, call Louise Shrubsole on Br 562617

The Work of a Lay Hospital Chaplain

If you have ever been a hospital patient, you may have been visited by a Chaplain, but did you know that supporting the hospital Chaplains there is a team of a hundred volunteer Ward Chaplains in our hospitals? This is the case within the Mid Essex Hospital Trust as I discovered when I was introduced to hospital chaplaincy four years ago. I was interested to know more and, after a period of 5 months' training, was accepted to join the Broomfield Hospital Chaplaincy Team.

As Chaplains, we provide pastoral care and spiritual comfort to patients of all faiths and none, and this work is considered by the Hospital Trust to be an important part of the patients' healing process. Each Lay Chaplain is given their own ward to visit each week, where they offer pastoral and spiritual care, if requested, to staff and patients alike. Therefore, the most important attributes of a Chaplain are: to have sensitivity, a good listening ear, to remember the confidential nature of the role, and not to be judgemental.

First time patients can find their new environment very strange and a patient awaiting surgery can feel very apprehensive, worrying about practical matters such as loved ones at home or pets. Some patients do not receive visitors and just want to chat and, when appropriate, the Lay Chaplain will offer to pray with a patient or even contact their minister or religious leader.

There is a chapel for prayer and reflection, and on Sundays bedside Communion is available from a team of Eucharistic Ministers from the local churches. This is another rewarding role.

As volunteers, we are encouraged by the Trust Chaplains who provide ongoing training and support. If you like to know more about becoming a Lay Ward Chaplain or a Eucharistic Minister, please ring Pastoral Care & Chaplaincy at Broomfield Hospital on 01245 514069. **(Rosemary Freeman)**

Simplify Christmas? If you want a really simple Christmas this year, you may find visiting www.simplify.org.uk to be of interest. It is a Christian site which offers a variety of ideas.

The word became flesh....

He leapt
from the eternal now
into the womb of time
where the future lay curled up,
waiting to be born.

In this birthing, infinite
became finite, immortal
was clothed in mortality

for the first time he knew pain
passing through the birth canal,
blinking, saw light through human eyes.
Mouth at mother's breast felt comfort,
tasted human love in milk,
and, hunger satisfied, slipped
into the benison of sleep.

(Val Spouge)

Christ became what we are that he might
make us what he is - *Athanasius*

THE BIG SING

On Sun 13 Sept, eight of us from Great Notley joined fellow Christians from Halstead, Braintree, Broomfield and Chelmsford on a coach trip to the Royal Albert Hall for a recording of BBC's 'Songs of Praise' programmes. Traffic problems meant we picnicked on the coach whilst viewing the Tower of London, the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey! On arrival, we found the stage already decorated with Christmas trees and tinsel as the first recording was to be the Christmas show for broadcasting 13 Dec! As you will probably be watching the broadcast, I won't give too much away but we sang mostly traditional carols. Very strange to be singing them so early! The host was Aled Jones, and the conductor Paul Leddington-Wright and there was quite a bit of repartee between them.

We sat right up 'in the Gods', and I don't think the camera took any shots of us. There were fewer cameras than I thought there'd be – one on a track in front of the stage, and hand-held one diving in and out of the orchestra, and two on booms to record some of the audience. Several things had to be repeated as they had not been recorded satisfactorily, including a performance by one of the soloists, as a whole verse had been missed out! At times, Aled would request a round of applause for recording. Another surprise was to see a man arrange the feet of some choir members before they were recorded.

At the end of this recording, there was a short interval so that Christmas could be 'removed', ready for the recording of two "Big Sing" programmes. These were a mixture of traditional and modern hymns, some very rousing.

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St Nicholas

(continued from p10)

Perhaps it was on account of St Nicholas' generosity that in recent centuries children began to write little notes sometime before 6 December, to tell him about the toys they specially wanted. These notes were then left on the windowsill at night - or else on a ledge in the chimney.

But St Nicholas Day chanced to lie in the magnetic field of a much more potent festival.... and after awhile his activities were moved towards Christmas. Then in Bavaria the children still left their notes on the window sill, but they addressed them to Liebes Christkind - Krishinkle as they knew him - and the saint's part in the matter was simply to deliver the letters in heaven.

The most popular result of the cult of St Nicholas has been the institution of Santa Claus. He is based on Nicholas' patronage of children and the custom in the Low Countries of giving presents on his feast. Santa Claus has reached his zenith in America, where the Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam (New York) united to it Nordic folklore legends of a magician who both punished naughty children and rewarded good ones with presents.

Wise men?

I was telling my three boys the story of the Nativity and how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus.

Clearly giving it a lot of thought, my six-year-old observed, "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought nappies!"

St Nicholas

Father Christmas seems to be as old as Europe. Once he was Woden, lashing his rein-deer through the darkness of northern midwinter. Then he encountered the Church, and She transformed him into a saint, the much-loved Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (in south-west Turkey) in the fourth century. St Nicholas became the patron saint of children, and was given 6 December as his day.

Since the 6th century St Nicholas has been venerated in both East and West, though virtually nothing is known of his life. Some believe he may have been one of the fathers at the Council of Nicea (325), imprisoned during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution.

According to legend, Nicholas was an extremely generous man. He revived three schoolboys murdered by an innkeeper in a tub of pickles. He rescued three young women from prostitution by giving their poverty-stricken father three bags of gold. (Hence the use of three gold balls as the pawnbroker's signs.)

Another story tells of St Nicholas' connection with the tradition of the Christmas Stocking. He wanted to help a poor family whom he knew, but he did not want them to know it was him. So, he climbed up on their roof on Christmas Eve and dropped some coins down the chimney. The next morning the coins, to the great surprise of the family, were found in the stockings of the ladies, who had hung them to dry by the fire the night before. Every year after that they put their stockings out, in the hope that some more money would fall into them. They told the story of this amazing appearance to their friends and neighbours, and the custom caught on.

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THE BIG SING

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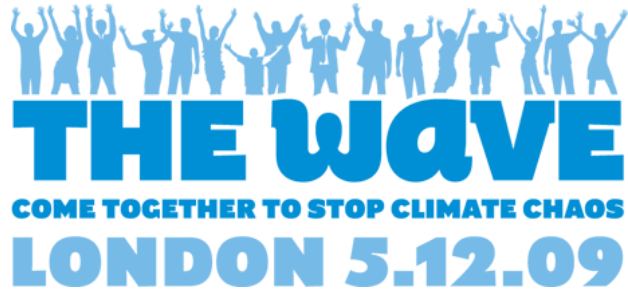
Again , there were soloists, mostly the same as in the Christmas programme but, of course, they had to be introduced and interviewed again for the new broadcasts.

Again, I don't want to give too much away, but during this session, there was the highlight of the evening for most of us – a rendering of "I'll Walk with God" from the Student Prince, sung by 'The Soldiers', three serving Army personnel who have done a tour of duty in Afghanistan. They received a standing ovation and, most unusually, Aled asked them to sing it again as an encore.

After nearly three and a half hours of singing, it was over, and we made our way back to the coach. The traffic jams had mostly evaporated and we came back through Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square, arriving home at midnight, very tired but greatly enriched from the experience. If you have the opportunity another year, I can heartily recommend it. Our thanks are due to Esther and Ian Hume of Christchurch, Braintree for organising the trip.

If you are reading this in the Church Magazine, then the first 'Big Sing' programme will have been shown by now (due on 25 October) but the Christmas 'Big Sing' is due to be shown on 13 December. The other 'Big Sing' will be aired sometime in June 2010. (*John Warboys*)

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,
the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of
Peace. Isaiah 9:2.6

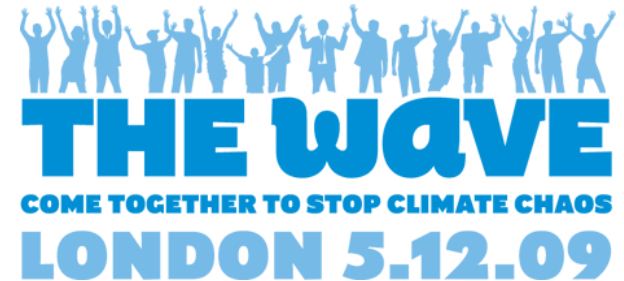


On Saturday 5 December, the UK's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change, is planned to flood the streets of central London, ahead of the crucial UN climate talks in Copenhagen.

An ecumenical service will be held in Central Hall, Westminster, by the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster. The Wave, a carnival-style street procession beginning at 12noon from Grosvenor Square in London, is being organized by the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition. The SCCC represents 11 million members across 100 UK organizations, including the Women's Institute, the RSPB, Unison, Christian Aid, Cafod, Tearfund, Woodland Trust, to name just a few. The demonstration will finish at 3pm when The Wave encircles the Houses of Parliament.

It is expected to be the largest demonstration in support of climate justice the UK has ever seen. Tens of thousands of climate justice campaigners are expected to participate.

Part of a global series of public actions, The Wave will call on world leaders to take urgent action to secure a fair international deal to stop global warming exceeding the danger threshold of 2 degrees C.



According to Christian Aid, "climate change is already depriving poor people in many developing countries of their livelihoods. Christian Aid believes that it must urgently be tackled, in order to help achieve a world free of poverty. Our new drive, Poverty Over, explains what we believe needs to be done – and can be done – to end global poverty.

Christian Aid is calling on Gordon Brown to press rich countries at the crucial UN climate change summit in Copenhagen in December to commit to at least 40 per cent reductions in carbon emissions by 2020. It also wants the UK government, along with other industrialised countries, to commit to providing more than 110 billion Euros a year to developing countries, along with technology transfers, to enable them to develop in a low carbon way and adapt to climate change. Together with faith-based development agencies in a number of other European countries, we have launched a climate justice campaign called Countdown to Copenhagen."

Join The Wave - the UK's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change.

DRESS CODE – BLUE!

visit www.the-wave.org.uk or tel: 020 7324 4622