LUDLOW TEAM MINISTRY

LUDLOW TOWERS

Ludlow and Ludford Parishes Magazine

December 2013 & January 2014

St. John

St. Giles

St. Laurence

Keeping us together with the news...

(A donation of 50p to cover printing costs would be appreciated)

+ Holy Trinity, Middleton + St. Michael and All Angels, Onibury + All Saints, Richard's Castle + St. Peter, Stanton Lacy + St. Milburgha, Soke St. Milborough + St. Andrew, Ashford Bowdler + St. Mary, Magherheen, Ashford Calbonel + St. Mary, Bratley + St. Mary the Virgin, Bromfield + St. Mary, Cynham + St. Paul, Knowbury + The Heath Chapel + All Saints, Culmington + St. Margaret, Cle St Margaret +
THE PARISHES' OFFICE

2 College Street, LUDLOW, Shropshire. SY8 1AN

Telephone: 01584 872073
e-mail: office@stlaurences.org.uk
website: www.stlaurences.org.uk

The Office is staffed and phone calls responded to each day, but only open to the public on Mondays and Fridays between 10 am and 12.30 pm.

Parishes' Secretary Mrs Lesley Draper  872073
Parishes' Administrator Sue Bremner  872073
Book-keeper Lyddia Pearson  872073

CLERGY  (Days off are shown in brackets)

Rector Designate: The Venerable Colin Williams  (Thur)  872001
Rector's Office direct: (e-mail: rector@stlaurences.org.uk)  875907
Team Vicars
  Revd Maree Wilson  (Thur)  856731
  Revd Kelvin Price  (Fri)  831886
Assistant Priest Revd Prebendary Ann Barge  (Wed)  877307

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

**St Laurence**
- 8.00 am  Holy Communion BCP
- 9.30 am  Parish Eucharist
- 3rd Sunday Sung Eucharist
- 11.30 am 2nd and 4th Sunday Choral Matins
- 3.30 pm 1st and 3rd Sundays Choral Evensong
  (No 3rd service on the 5th Sunday of the month)

**St John**
- 9.30 am  Holy Communion with Hymns

**St Giles**
- 11.15 am  Holy Communion
  - 1st Sunday Family Service
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## CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2013

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>(SJL=St John  SLL = St Laurence  SGL= St Giles  LMC =Ludlow Mascall Centre)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun 01</td>
<td><strong>First Sunday of Advent</strong></td>
<td>08:00 Holy Communion  (SLL)</td>
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<td>09:30 Parish Eucharist  (SLL)</td>
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<td><strong>17:30 – 19:30 Advent Carol Service  (SLL)</strong></td>
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<td>19:00 Baptism of Eleanor Reeve  (SGL)</td>
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<td>Mon 02</td>
<td>15:15 Junior Choristers Tea  (2 College St)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16:30 Junior Choristers Practice  (SLL)</td>
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<td>19:30 – 21:30 Bells Practice  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Tue 03</td>
<td>10:00 – 13:00 St Laurence - Stewards Meeting  <em>(Ludlow Assembly Rooms)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>18:15 – 19:15 Hand bells  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Wed 04</td>
<td>11:00 – 11:45 Holy Communion  (SLL)</td>
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<td>17:00 – 17:30 Evening Prayer  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Thur 05</td>
<td>16:00 Simple Service of Psalms &amp; Silent Prayer  (SJL)</td>
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<td>18:00 – 20:00 Choir Practice  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Fri 06</td>
<td>09:15 – 11:15 Toddler Group  (SJL)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11:00 Bedstone College Carol Service  (SLL)</td>
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<td>17:30 Compline  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Sat 07</td>
<td>19:00 – 22:00 Ludlow Orchestra Concert  (SLL)</td>
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<td><strong>Second Sunday of Advent</strong></td>
<td>08:00 Holy Communion  (SLL)</td>
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<td>09:30 Parish Eucharist  (SLL)</td>
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<td>11:30 Choral Matins  (SLL)</td>
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<td>13:00 Baptism of Callen Gill  <em>(Knowbury)</em></td>
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<td>14:00 Baptism of Leah and Ellie Dallow  (SJL)</td>
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<td>15:00 Baptism of Phoebe Banham  (SGL)</td>
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<td>Mon 09</td>
<td>15:15 Junior Choristers Tea  (2 College St)</td>
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<td>16:30 Junior Choristers Practice  (SLL)</td>
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<td>19:00 – 20:30 Parish Wives Carol Service  (SGL)</td>
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<td>19:30 – 21:30 Bells Practice  (SLL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue 10</td>
<td>14:00 – 15:30 Mothers' Union Carol Service  <em>(LMC)</em></td>
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<td>18:15 Hand bells  (SLL)</td>
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<td>Wed 11</td>
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<td>Wedding Meeting</td>
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<td>Thur 12</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Simple Service of Psalms &amp; Silent Prayer</td>
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<td>18:00</td>
<td>Choir Practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Millenium Green Community Carols</td>
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<td>Fri 13</td>
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<td>Toddler Group</td>
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<td>Sun 15</td>
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<td><strong>Third Sunday of Advent</strong></td>
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<td>08:00</td>
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<td>Parish Eucharist</td>
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<td>12:45</td>
<td>Baptism of Cameron and Madeleine Foster</td>
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<td>Christmas Celebration</td>
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<td>Choral Evensong</td>
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<td>Mon 16</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Joint Carol Service for Culmington Group</td>
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<td>15:15</td>
<td>Junior Choristers Tea</td>
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<td>16:30</td>
<td>Junior Choristers Practice</td>
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<td>Bells Practice</td>
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<td>Tue 17</td>
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<td>Hand bells</td>
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<td>St Laurence’s School Carol Service</td>
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<td>Wed 18</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Ludlow Junior School Carol Service</td>
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<td>Holy Communion</td>
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<td>Thur 19</td>
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<td>Ludlow School Carol Service</td>
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<td>Simple Service of Psalms &amp; Silent Prayer</td>
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<td>18:00</td>
<td>Choir Practice</td>
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<td>Fri 20</td>
<td>09:15 – 11:15</td>
<td>Toddler Group</td>
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<td>10:00</td>
<td>Ludlow Infant School Carol Service</td>
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<td>12:30</td>
<td>Diary Meeting</td>
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<td>17:30</td>
<td>Compline</td>
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<td>Sat 21</td>
<td>11:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>Christian Aid Carols at the Buttercross</td>
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<td>14:00</td>
<td>Wedding of Grasso &amp; Mulligan</td>
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**PLEASE LET THE PARISHES OFFICE KNOW OF ALL YOUR FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS, SO THAT WE CAN ADD THEM TO THE CALENDAR. SEND TO office@stlaurences.org.uk**

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<td>Parish Eucharist (SLL)</td>
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<td><strong>Carols in the Castle</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 23</td>
<td><strong>Nine Lessons and Carols (SLL)</strong></td>
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<td>Tue 24</td>
<td><strong>Christingle Service &amp; Crib (SLL)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Midnight Mass (SLL)</strong></td>
<td>23:15</td>
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<td>Wed 25</td>
<td><strong>Christmas Day</strong></td>
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<td>Holy Communion (SLL)</td>
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<td>Parish Eucharist (SLL)</td>
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<td>Christmas Day Carol Service (SLL)</td>
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<td>Holy Communion (SLL)</td>
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<td>Thur 26</td>
<td><strong>Holy Communion (SLL)</strong></td>
<td>11:00</td>
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<td>Fri 27</td>
<td><strong>Holy Communion (SLL)</strong></td>
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<td>Sun 29</td>
<td><strong>First Sunday of Christmas</strong></td>
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<td>Holy Communion (SLL)</td>
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<td>Parish Eucharist (SLL)</td>
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<td>Joint Eucharist for Ashford Group (Ash. Carbonell)</td>
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<td>Joint Eucharist for Culmington Group (Culmington)</td>
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<td><strong>Baptism of Maisy Griffiths (SLL)</strong></td>
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<td>Carols [tbc] (Ashford Bowdler)</td>
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<td>Mon 30</td>
<td><strong>Morning Prayer &amp; Holy Communion (SLL)</strong></td>
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CLERGY LETTER

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God’ (John 1.1-2.). Familiar words from John’s Gospel and words that we traditionally hear every year in church carol services at Christmas. But does the Christmas message still speak to us and does it have anything new to say to us today?

Some would argue that the Christian festival of Christmas developed from fairly dubious beginnings. The first evidence of the celebration of Christmas was in a church in Rome about 336 AD. It seems likely that it was the feast of Epiphany on 6th January which was combined with the two themes of the Birth and the Baptism of Christ, and which were celebrated together. It was only later that the new feast of the Nativity was celebrated on 25th December. There is a somewhat cynical view that choosing 25th December to celebrate Jesus’ birth meant that a highly successful pagan festival of the mid-winter solstice became Christianised. Although respected scholars may have believed that Jesus was probably born at this time, for many it was simply a perfect celebration in the middle of winter.

We still appreciate all the fun, food, gifts and other festivities at the darkest time of the year, but the build up to Christmas seems to begin earlier and earlier each year. Of all the feasts, Christmas has become more and more secularised and commercialised over the years. This year I saw the first tinsel decorations in a shop at the beginning of October. The Church’s Advent season seems to pass unnoticed to the general public and thus the anticipation and drama of the festival can be somewhat lost amidst the tinsel and glitter.

But it was St Francis, so it is claimed, who introduced the tradition of the Nativity Crib and the Midnight Mass. This association, focused on the poverty of Christ born in a stable, together with the singing of carols is the essence of the festival we appreciate today. ‘And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth’ (John 1.14.)

In these strained economic times perhaps the birth of the Christ child in a basic animal shelter speaks more vividly to us today than ever before. The singing of Carols in candlelight calls to mind, the light of Christ shining in the darkest parts of our war-torn world. We are
reminded that all our longings and hopes for this troubled world are fulfilled through the presence of God, in Jesus Christ. ‘All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it’ (John 1. 3-5.)

In spite of all the commercialisation this Christmas, more people will be supporting charities, caring for others, and providing hospitality in their homes this year. We are reminded that child poverty is on the increase and not just on the other side of the world but right on our doorsteps. As we open our hearts and homes this year, we are reminded that the love of Christ dwells in our midst, through those people around us. Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Revd Maree

A WORD FROM BRIGITTE MALIK

Now I am here: a new face in the Ludlow Team Ministry.
Brigitte is my name, I am German and have been living in Bavaria nearly my whole life – working as a pastor of the Lutheran Church for the last 25 years.

That I came to Ludlow is an ecumenical project. There are strong links between the Anglican Church of England and the Evangelical Churches in Germany. But as we all know: a connection will be tighter if there are links between “real people”, too. I will learn a lot about Anglican spiritual life, you could take part in a Lutheran service and find out the differences – which exist on the surface. But we know that, may the outward appearances be different, we all serve one Lord, our God, who gave us life and shares our lives in Jesus Christ and brings us together in the Holy Spirit.

My husband and me are grateful for the warm and kind welcome. We look forward to live here in this beautiful place with so many friendly people.
FROM THE DEAN

Last weekend the cathedral was surrounded by a village! Yes, tents and other structures in huge numbers huddled round the ancient building and over 30,000 people came and went, enjoying the second annual 'Festival of Food' in the Cathedral Close.

Food producers and companies from throughout the county and beyond displayed and sold their wares and there was a tremendous feeling of local pride and tradition as we were able to see, at first hand, all that our beautiful area of the world can produce and share.

There were celebrities, too - Paul Hollywood and the Baker Brothers performed to packed audiences – and there were specialist talks and lectures on cookery methods and how to make the very best from fresh produce.

All this happened, of course, in the very shadow of Hereford Cathedral. One of the conditions of our Heritage Lottery grant, when we were re-furbishing the Close, was that the area should be very much a community facility and not only a beautiful setting for the cathedral church. The Food Festival is just one, but perhaps the largest, example of this partnership. It's a reminder that sacred and secular aren’t – or shouldn’t be – in separate boxes but that one feeds the other. Some of the themes of the festival — sustainability — efficient production — minimisation of waste — these are subjects which should be on every Christian’s agenda.

And of course it is so – for at the heart of our faith is a God who comes among us as a human being – Jesus Christ, who himself found the most spiritual truths not always in the so-called ‘spiritual’ but at the heart of the so-called ‘secular agenda’.

Food, of course, provides one of the strongest and most human links to faith. Just as food was at the heart of the last week’s festival, so it is at the heart of the great and ancient church which brooded over the festival – the food of angels – the bread and wine of the Holy Communion, which provide the very raison d’etre of the cathedral - without that daily celebration of the holy meal we call the Eucharist, the cathedral itself would be but a beautiful shell.
May we all be looking each day, to find ways in which we can link with our communities – often in simple and unsung ways. For in these ways, barriers are broken down and the Kingdom of heaven breaks in.

*Michael Tavinor, Dean of Hereford*

**KEEPING A GOOD ADVENT**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently encouraged us all to step back from the materialism which bombards us in the weeks before Christmas. Traditionally the weeks of Advent have been a time to stop, take stock and pray as we prepare to open our hearts and our lives to the new born Christ. **Here are some opportunities for this which are available in Ludlow this Advent season. They are open to all**

**Advent Quiet Morning - Saturday, 7 December 10.00 - 1.00**
Led by The Revd. Keith Crouch at 6, Summerfields, Fishmore Road
*(you are welcome to bring lunch and stay on)*
Contact Helen or Pat to book a place. *(see below for contact details)*

**Waiting in Advent -** Fridays, 6, 13, 20 December, 12.30 - 1.00
Silent Prayer in St Catherine’s Chapel, St Laurence’s Church

**Advent Night Prayer in Candlelight**
Wednesdays, 4, 11, 18 December at 6.00 pm
St. Giles’ Church, Ludford. Led by the Rector.

**Advent Reflections -** Wednesdays, 4, 11, 18 December
10.30 - 11.00 am at Methodist Church, Broad St.
Led by Neil and Rhiannon Richardson

**A Contemplative Prayer Group** meets every Wednesday at 11.00 am for 30 minutes silent prayer followed by coffee, at the home of Helen Blyth, 6 The Snicket, Portcullis Lane. All welcome.

If you are interested but want to know more about any of the above please contact Pat Helm 01584 318169 *pat@thehelm.me.uk* or Helen Blyth 01584 875041 *helen.blyth@zen.co.uk*
CHRISTMAS 2013 IN LUDLOW:

ST LAURENCE’S:

CAROL SERVICES:
Friday, 6 Dec.   Bedstone College   11.00 am
Tuesday, 17 Dec. St Laurence’s CE Primary School   5.30 pm
Wednesday, 18 Dec. Ludlow Junior School   10.00 am
Thursday, 19 Dec. Ludlow CE School   2.00 pm
SUNDAY, 22 DEC.  7.30 pm  Carols in the Castle – in the grounds of Ludlow Castle
MONDAY, 23 DEC.  7.00 pm  Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight (please be in your seat by 6.40 pm)

CHRISTMAS EVE, TUESDAY, 24 DECEMBER
4.00 pm   Crib & Christingle Service
11.15 pm   Midnight Mass

CHRISTMAS DAY, WEDNESDAY, 25 DECEMBER
8.00 am   Holy Communion (BCP)
9.30 am   Parish Eucharist
11.15 am   Service of Lessons & Carols (Please bring your toys and presents to be blessed)
12.45 pm   Holy Communion (BCP)

ST JOHN’S:
Sunday, 15 December   -   Christmas Celebration   -   3.00 pm
Friday, 20 December   -   Ludlow Infant School Carols   -   10.00 am

Wednesday, 25 December   -   Christmas Day
Christmas Morning Holy Communion   -   9.30 am

ST GILES’:
Sunday, 22 December   -   Communion with Carols   -   11.15 am
(followed by mince pies and mulled wine)

Wednesday, 25 December   -   Christmas Day
Christmas Morning Holy Communion   -   11.15 am
NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

Advent Preachers at St. Laurence’s

We shall this year continue the tradition of inviting guest preachers to deliver the sermon at St. Laurence’s Parish Eucharist during Advent. This year they are grouped under the heading ‘New Voices’. They are all individuals who are new – or, in one case, fairly new – to the pulpits of the Team Ministry. They are as follows:-

Sunday, 1 December – Advent Sunday. Our preacher will be The Revd. Kelvin Price, Team Vicar with particular responsibility for the Ashford Group of Parishes.

Sunday, 8 December – Advent 2. Our preacher will be The Revd. Keith Crouch (the least new of our new voices!) who has retired to live in Ludlow and is a regular member of the St. John’s congregation, as well as active in the wider diocese in the area of accompanying prayer.

Sunday, 15 December – Advent 3. Our preacher will be Eddie Perks, recently admitted as Reader.

Sunday, 22 December – Advent 4. Our preacher will be Pastor Brigitte Malik who has joined us on secondment from the Evangelical - Lutheran Church of Bavaria.

Pastor Brigitte Malik

Brigitte and her husband Christoph have now moved into St. Giles’ Vicarage and Brigitte was commissioned for ministry throughout the Team by Bishop Alistair at a service in St. Giles at 11.15 am on Sunday, 17 November. Whilst Brigitte’s ministry will be chiefly focussed on St. Giles, she will minister throughout the Team and in particular in the town of Ludlow – with special reference to schools and nursing homes. Brigitte offers some personal notes elsewhere in this issue of ‘The Towers’ [Page 8 … Ed.]

Mike Beazley

Mike Beazley has indicated that after three years’ service as St. Laurence’s PCC Treasurer, he will not be seeking re-election to that position after next April’s Annual Meeting. We are enormously
indebted to Mike for all his hard work in those three years and he will be a hard act to follow. A small group has been commissioned to work as a matter of urgency on defining what we are asking of Mike's successor and searching out that successor.

Elizabeth Nixon
Our thanks are due to Elizabeth Nixon who earlier this year volunteered to cover much of the day to day work of St. Laurence's Gift Aid Secretary. Since January, Elizabeth has continued the constant process of updating records in line with HMRC’s requirements and recording all data in connection with the claiming of Gift Aid on donations given to the work of St. Laurence’s. This has been a mammoth task, not least in getting to know the computer software, and Elizabeth has willingly spent many hours on this. We are indebted to Elizabeth for the patient way in which she has worked to streamline the systems required to introduce the new Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme and for the work she has done to encourage all who pay tax to Gift Aid their donations for the additional benefit of St Laurence's. The work which Elizabeth has done has enabled us to bring the supervision of Gift Aid back 'in house' without it being too much of a burden on our paid staff.

Louise Griffiths
The Churchwardens express their thanks elsewhere in this issue to Louise Griffiths, who is stepping back from overseeing flowers at St. Laurence's at the end of 2013 [Page 19....Ed.]. I am glad to add my own thanks and appreciation for all that Louise has done. We plan to make a presentation to Louise. If anyone would like to contribute to that, please would you pass your contribution to the Parish Office with cheques made payable to St. Laurence's PCC.

Neville Bowker
We were all saddened by the death of Neville Bowker in November. Neville had been a much-loved member of St Laurence’s for a good number of years, and we all miss him. The prayers of all at St. Laurence's are with Joan and with Caroline and Jonathan and all the family at this sad time.
Shaun Ward
Congratulations to Shaun Ward on whom the degree of MSc will be conferred in December, following an important piece of research on his part in the area of Church conservation.

St. John’s Patronal Festival
The people of St. John’s will be keeping their Patronal Festival at 9.30 am on Sunday, 12 January. As is the tradition, this service will be shared with St. Laurence’s and there will be no separate 9.30 am Parish Eucharist at St. Laurence’s on 12 January.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
The 2014 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity takes place as always from 18-25 January. On Sunday, 19 January, the three Anglican churches in Ludlow are invited to join in the exchange of members of congregations as follows:-

St Laurence’s will send representatives to greet the congregation at the Baptist Church
St Giles will send representatives to greet The Friends
St John’s will send representatives to greet Ludlow Methodist Church
Ludlow Methodist Church will send representatives to greet St Giles
Living Waters will send representatives to greet St Laurence’s
The Friends will send representatives to greet St John’s

And most importantly of all……
I send all who read ‘The Towers’ my good wishes and prayers for a blessed and joyful keeping of Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Colin Williams

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

What big difference there is between giving advice and lending a hand.

“Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.” 1 John 3:18 (TLB)
FROM THE REGISTERS

Baptisms / Services of Thanksgiving

20 October Scarlett Ava Jones St Giles
27 October Annabelle Janet Joan Hirons St John’s
27 October Amelia Ann Marie Crowther St Giles

Weddings / Blessings

19 October Ashley Griffiths & Claire Matthews St Laurence

Funerals / Thanksgiving Services

14 October Ann Player Hereford Crem.
21 October Eric Stewardson St John’s
22 October Kenneth Pridday Wyre Forest Crem.
31 October Neville Bowker St Laurence
2.11.13 Alice Lewis ‘Vi’ St Giles
5.11.13 Susette Wish St Giles

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NEWS FROM ST JOHN’S

Since the end of October, most of the nave of St John’s has been out-of-bounds because of the risk of falling plaster from the ceiling. This has necessitated services being held in the chancel, with extra seats supplementing the choir stalls. The Parent and Toddler Group has had to be temporarily re-located, firstly for two weeks to the Bishop Mascall Centre, then to St Laurence. The parents are keen to get back to St John’s where they feel at home and where the location and space are ideally suited to the group’s activities. Many thanks to Sue Thomas for enabling the group to continue by taking the numerous toys and equipment to the other venues. Close inspection of the ceilings to determine the work which needs to be done has yet to take place. The first attempt to get a cherry picker into the church to facilitate the inspection failed because it was too big to go through the doors, so other options are having to be explored. All
this means that our programme of events over Christmas and beyond is likely to be affected but we are determined to carry on in a spirit of optimism despite the obstacles which have come our way.

Our planned programme is as follows:

2 December at 7.30pm: A practice will take place for 'The Living Nativity'.

Wednesday, 4 December: Coffee Morning at 4, Coach House Fields, Livesey Road.

Sunday, 15 December at 3.00 pm: Christmas Celebration with choir, carols and Ludlow Concert Band.

Sunday 12 January at 9.30am: St John’s Patronal Festival. We welcome friends from across the parish and beyond to join us in a celebration of the life of our Patron Saint and a token of our fellowship.

JF

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NEWS FROM ST GILES

We welcomed Rev. Brigitte Malik and her husband Christoph to St Giles’ church in November when she was inducted by Bishop Alastair at our morning service. The service was followed by a Bring and Share lunch to get to know Brigitte and Christoph better, which was a great success.

During October several members of the congregation got together to thoroughly clean the church and Garden House. This involved two husbands of members climbing tall ladders to reach the cobwebs which had gathered on the ceiling and the high windows. Many thanks go to them and also to all who worked so hard cleaning and polishing to make St Giles’ a really pleasant place to worship.

The P.C.C. met recently to find volunteers to take over some of the maintenance work of the church which Peter and Veronica have undertaken for several years and done so faithfully and well. They are likely to leave us in the near future once the house is sold and go to Winchester to be near their daughter. We would like to thank them very much indeed for all that they have done for St Giles’, to wish
them both well and to say we will miss them very much.

Several members of our church meet at the beginning of each month to have lunch together in one of the local pubs. If you would like to join them for good fellowship together then please give your name to Phil Ross (873389) about a week beforehand.

We have much appreciated having a paper called The Link with gospel messages on one side and news pertinent to St Giles’ on the other. This was on trial for a month but it has been well received and so will continue. Thank you, Barbara, for introducing it.

Christmas services at St Giles’ will be announced on the Christmas services sheet in all the churches nearer the time. Our Prayer Fellowship will meet on Monday, 2 Dec. and again on Monday, 16 Dec. both at 3 Greenacres at 10.30 a.m. We start our meeting again on Monday, 6 Jan. at the same time and place.

The Bible Study Group meets fortnightly on Tuesday evenings. For details please contact Phil Ross (873389).

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all readers of “The Towers” a very happy, blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year from St Giles’.

Margaret Wright

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CHURCHWARDEN’S CORNER

This has been a busy autumn for events happening in St Laurence’s church. No sooner had the enjoyable and successful "Young at Art" event finished a book signing event with Sally Vickers was hosted. This took place on 20 September and was of some personal interest as I had read her book "The cleaner of Chartres" during the summer. Our family has also visited the town of Chartes on several occasions and been into the wonderful cathedral.

The harvest supper on 6 October was enjoyed by just over 50 people from our congregations. It was good to enjoy each other’s company without having to worry about fund raising.

A new event to the church was held on 11 October, Bodenhams’ autumn fashion show. This proved to be a successful and enjoyable
event with much hilarity, particularly Shaun’s night attire. It was good to see a lot of different people from the wider town community not only enjoying the event but taking part as models too.

On 14 October the Boyen Ensemble again delighted a full house in the church. On 18 October a reading of T. S. Eliot’s Murder in the Cathedral was held. This proved to be effective and the lighting evoked the atmosphere of a 12th century cathedral, particularly as Canterbury is not one of our largest cathedrals.

The Whitland choir gave an excellent evening’s entertainment on 26 October, which the audience enjoyed even singing a couple of hymns in Welsh with the choir.

Finally on 2 November Ludlow Choral Society joined forces with the Birmingham Choral Society for a big and rousing performance of the Messiah. All seats were sold so the church was packed. I felt the evening went very well and I’ve heard very good reports about it from people in the audience.

These events do not happen by magic so I’d like to take this chance to thank all those who organised the events and the people involved before and on the night, not least Paul our verger and his erstwhile assistant Jonathon. Thanks are due to Hugh Cullen and his staging team, bar staff, stewards on the door, people working in the shop and selling cushions and also to Sue Bremner (our office administrator). If I’ve left out anyone please accept my apologies and my thanks.

Our next event at the time of writing (apart from church services, one of our biggest being the Remembrance Sunday service) will be the Medieval Bazaar on 23 November. Thank you to all those who offered to help. Let’s hope that when you are reading this that we’ve had a successful fund-raising event and have all enjoyed doing it.

You should receive this edition just as Advent begins. Could I therefore put in a plug for the Advent Carol Service. This is always a very special service to prepare for Christmas. Please do come along if you can, the service is at 5.30pm on Sunday, 1 December. The choir, director of music and clergy put a lot of time into preparing for this service to ensure that we give of our best to God and all present.
Finally I along with Jane, Maureen and Brian wish you all a peaceful Christmas and send our warmest wishes for 2014.  

Jim Hooper

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FLOWERS AND FLOWER ARRANGING

A new strategy:

The great debt of gratitude that we owe to Louise Griffiths and her creative team of flower arrangers in St Laurence’s was reported in the October Towers. Sadly, Louise has decided after many years of devoted church flower arranging, to relinquish her role after Christmas 2013. I am sure that everyone will wish to join me in thanking Louise most sincerely for her dedicated contribution to this aspect of the church’s life.

Elizabeth (Liz) Gardner, a member of the team, has agreed to take on the role of coordinator for the flower arrangers and, again, we are most grateful for this valuable offer of help. In order to prepare for future flower arranging, Liz has asked me to call a meeting for all flower arrangers, past, present and possible future, in St Catherine’s Chapel on Monday, 9 December at 10.30 am.

A new arrangement for donating to flowers and pew sheets was described in the November Towers when the suggested donation to a general Flower Fund was reduced by 50% to £20. However, Liz has recommended a further refinement to this plan, which she has used previously. Here is how Liz’s plan will work, which I suggest that we put into operation immediately:

Money may be donated for the Christmas flowers in memory of a loved one (no specific amount) using a donation form available at the back of the church;

All the names of those commemorated will be put into a suitable frame and placed at the foot of a pedestal;

The Christmas flowers will be bought from these donations – normally red flowers with plenty of greenery;

Any money left over from Christmas will be held in the reserve Flower Fund. Between Christmas and Easter people are invited to continue to contribute to flowers (as with pew
sheets) again using the donation form. However, there are only a few opportunities for church flowers at this time - Lent intervenes.

At Easter, and subsequently, the same method will apply as at Christmas. People are invited to make donations - again no specific sum – and the names of loved ones will be commemorated appropriately. Any reserve after flowers are purchased will be spent on Oasis, florists’ tape and wire.

This method of funding flowers is self-generating. It means that supplies can be bought when needed. Careful accounts will be kept. Please help us to build up the St Laurence's Flower Fund. Thanks to everyone who helps us in this way.

Jane Robinson, churchwarden

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LIFE & LEARNING @ LUDLOW

The Life & Learning programme continues in the New Year with two very special events.

**Ethical Issues and the Financial Crisis**

On **6 February 2014** we are most fortunate to be able to welcome the Revd Dr Edmund Newell. Now Principal of the educational charity and conference centre Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park, he was Sub-Dean of Christ Church, Oxford from 2008 until 2013, having previously been Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral where he was the founding Director of the St Paul's Institute. Before ordination, he studied Economics and Economic History at University College London, and was a student and Research Fellow in Economic History at Nuffield College, Oxford.

Against the background of the financial crisis which has enveloped this country since 2008 and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s call not just for a change in the regulatory regime but for a change of culture which encompasses “a ruthless honesty and a deep willingness to be made very uncomfortable indeed through listening to things one does not want to hear”, Dr Newell will reflect on issues raised by
the financial crisis, and engage us in thinking and discussing morality in finance and business.

**Not What We Might Think: The Bible’s Teaching about God**

Then, over the course of four Lent talks on 13, 20, 27 March and 3 April 2014, we are delighted that the Revd Dr Neil Richardson has kindly offered to contribute to our programme. Prior to his retirement as a Methodist minister, Dr Richardson served as Principal of Wesley College, Bristol and President of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain. These days, he is known to many of us locally through his preaching, and he continues to devote time to exploring and writing on the contemporary relevance of the Bible.

In this course of his four lectures, Dr Richardson will be covering:

- **13 March: Creative God/God of creation** - We start here, not just because the Bible does, but because creation is the theme of the whole of Scripture, not just the first two chapters. And creation is about far more than the origin of the universe anyway.

- **20 March: Destructive God?** - Richard Dawkins and others have written blistering criticisms of the God of the Bible. What are we to say? Did God really inflict plagues on the people of Egypt, order the massacre of the Canaanites etc etc? How are we to understand the dark side of God in the Bible?

- **27 March: Unpredictable God** - C.S. Lewis’ book ‘Surprised by Joy’ captures an important characteristic of God in the Bible, and especially the gospels. It may be hard for the Church to be surprised by God, but perhaps it ought to be.....

- **3 April: Crucified God** - As befits a course in Lent, we end here, taking a fresh look at what the gospels and St Paul are really saying about the death of Jesus and its significance. It's not always what we think.....

**Reservations**

Both events are likely to be ‘sell out’ occasions, so those wishing to attend are encouraged to book well in advance. The booking form is contained with the Life & Learning programme available from the Welcome Desk or at [www.stlaurences.org.uk/lifeandlearning](http://www.stlaurences.org.uk/lifeandlearning).
Any enquires to the Parish Office (01584 872073) or to Barry Forrester (01584 878872).

ST NICHOLAS

Feast Day 6 December

St Nicholas was the bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor, in the fourth century. Lots of stories are told of his kindness and generosity. He is the patron saint of Russia, children, scholars, merchants and sailors.

One legend tells of his secret gifts to three daughters from a poor family. It is said that he threw 3 purses of gold down the chimney where they landed in the girls’ stockings which they had hung up to dry in front of the fire. This is supposed to be the origin of hanging up Christmas stockings.

Over time the name of St Nicholas changed to Sinterklass and thus to Santa Claus in the Christmas celebrations.

TALE OF THE INNKEEPER

I am old, so old and weary- my eyes are growing dim
Yet I dream of the fateful evening when I had no room for Him. The earth was hushed, expectant, and a burning star hung low For the Son of God’s arrival - but how was I to know?

When Joseph came a knocking, shabby and poor, And Mary’s eyes were pleading – still I closed the door. If Angels had carried the message, if the heavenly host had said ‘The Kingly child is coming’, I would have found a bed.

When I heard the Angelic Chorus and saw the shepherds who came Gladly to kneel and worship, sick was my heart with shame. I am old, so old and weary and this is my earnest plea, That the loving Christ of Christmas will find a place for me
A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN!
"Good news! - wonderful, joyous news for all people.
A Saviour has been born.
He is Christ the Lord."

Mouse Makes

- Make this crib box to hang from the Christmas tree.
- Punch out the 3 holes and hang 30cm of thin pleats and thread through the holes.
- Cut out the straw (or use a piece of thin card)
- Fold in the middle to make two sides
- Punch holes in the two sides of the box and thread through the holes.

"Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men on earth who please Him."

Announce the birth of Jesus
- Luke chapters 1 and 2

Happy Christmas!
Eight days after he was born, Mary and Joseph named their baby with the name the angel Gabriel had given them. It was a special name for a very special baby. the name JESUS which means GOD IS SAVIOUR

Corporate Communion:
Wednesday 4th December at 11.00 am and
Wednesday 1st January at 11.00 am,
both in St Laurence’s, Ludlow.

Team Branch Events are our Carol Service on
10 December and our Annual New Year Lunch on 14 January 2014.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in 2013 by donating
to the “Make a Mothers’ Day Appeal” on Mothering Sunday in
remembrance of their own Mothers. Also for the support that we
received for our Fundraising Event in aid of AFIA (Away From It All)
– holidays for those families less fortunate than ourselves, and for
Pat Baulch’s Coffee Morning for the Mothers’ Union Literacy
Projects in Africa. Thanks to your generosity you helped us raise
over £800.

Members of our Team Branch join me in
wishing everyone a happy and Blessed
Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Barbara Penson
Branch Leader

BRING YOUR CHRISTMAS STAMPS...
As last year I am collecting your used postage stamps for EMBRACE
(formerly - Bible Lands Society). Please help their work in Jerusalem.

There is a box in the SHOP in front of the Cash Desk all year round now
- but Christmas stamps are particularly welcome. Thank you.

Elizabeth Nixon
LUDLOW UNDER PRESSURE - ONE YEAR ON

The CTAL AGM on 7 November was preceded by an open meeting which brought people up to date with developments since the publication of the report. The bad news is that in spite of efforts by those in power to suggest that the recession is passing and things will in time return to 'normal' that is not the general experience. Cuts in benefits and services are having a serious impact on those who have been dependent on support from the state and we face the prospect of a more widespread reduction of public facilities as Shropshire Council prunes its budget and outsources more of its services. Parts of the welfare state, which has been the great achievement of the post war period, are being dismantled and services handed over to commercial interests who are concerned to make a profit. It is disturbing that some of those major companies are exposed as 'cooking their books' in order to meet targets and fulfil their contracts. It is almost impossible to draw services back into public control once privatised. Experienced staff have gone and there is no structure to manage such services. Many of our schools with academy status are out of the control of a democratically accountable education department. More prisons are managed by the likes of the discredited SG4 who may now be bidding to take over 70% of the probation service's work in addition to its many other worldwide activities. Compassion and hope grounded in faith is the christian response but also a proper sense of outrage at increasing inequality, injustice and hardship.

The good news is that there is a rising tide of local concern to look for ways to relieve hardship and provide support to those in particular need. We are blessed with outstanding organisations such as the Furniture Scheme and Shropshire Housing. The Rockspring Centre and the Foyer are hubs from which there is growing outreach into the community. Church groups and others are lending their support and the meeting reflected a real commitment to become involved. The food parcel scheme with a threefold increase in demand over this past year is generously supported by church members. Another scheme is also in hand to provide emergency payments for fuel. That is based at the Baptist Church. The Quakers are working at developing a local fund somewhat along the lines of a Credit Union. The successful Young at
Art exhibition at St Laurence’s was another spin off. Members of the Methodist Church have come up with the plan for a pool of volunteers who would be available to help struggling families with managing their budgets and cooking. Over time this could grow into a scheme which could meet a wide range of needs. So if anyone wonders what they can do to help take a form from the back of the church. Some made a commitment straight away at the meeting. There are also copies of the update paper presented at the meeting.

In the past CTAL might have been unkindly dismissed as a talking shop but here it is leading the way and translating concern into action - the Church reaching out to the wider community it is here to serve.

Michael Day

MORE BETTING SHOPS IN TOWN?
The relaxation of planning controls is intended to help 'revitalise' high streets. Ladbrokes claim that their own plans to open more betting shops are however being frustrated. Their press director complained that 'the company has concerns about a repeated negative narrative among certain local authorities around betting shops that is driven by a religious or moral agenda based on the misleading use of data'. Rather reassuring to know that such considerations might have some influence.

MJD

CTAL NEWSLETTER

Churches Together Around Ludlow (CTAL) has recently issued a Newsletter containing many interesting articles and reports. It is well worth a read. You can find it on line at the CTAL Website:

ctludlow.org.uk

If you prefer to have a paper “hard copy” please contact the Church Office or this Editor who will arrange to print one off for you.

JB
Would You Like to Volunteer for Hands Together Ludlow?
a practical response to the CTAL Ludlow Under Pressure Report

Hot Pot Pilot Scheme is the initial activity
from 2hrs/month

offer on line at CTAL Web site -
CTAL Ludlow - CAN YOU HELP US?
http://www.ctludlow.org.uk/can_you_help.html

or to the marked tin on the wardens' chest in St Laurence's
or cardboard box at Wesley's Café, Ludlow Methodist Church.

For more information see the Outward Concern Notice Board
or contact organisers:
David Harlington davidharlington45@gmail.com 01584 879614
Cathy Pritchard catherine.pritchard@rocketmail.com 01584 856580

VISIT TO LANGWASSER NOVEMBER 2013

Although we were only a small group of seven from Ludlow, nothing
had been spared by our Langwasser hosts to ensure for us a warm
welcome and a rewarding visit. John and I were fortunate to stay with
the same young couple who had hosted us ten years ago, and with
whom we had remained friends. Rainer and Andrea are just a little
older than our own children but as with other people we met, our
friendships crossed generations. We recognised many who had made
that brief visit to Ludlow in the summer, and also some 'veterans'
from ten years ago. It is tempting to write about the social aspects of
our visit, but space will not allow. Instead I focus on aspects which we
found particularly significant.

Nuremberg has to live with its association with the Nazi regime and
the infamous trials. To this end, a magnificent but harrowing
'Document Centre' has been established in one wing of Hitler's State
Palace where photographs and interactive displays poignantly record
the atrocities of the past. Much of the architecture remains intact for an expected thousand year Reich, some of it so grandiose that it was never finished. Built in the heavy Neo-Classical style, beloved of totalitarian regimes and designed by Albert Speer, it stands as an enduring testimony to its past – and the modern day citizens of Nuremberg don’t know what to do with it. The Colosseum, [bigger of course than that in Rome], houses the stalls of the Christmas Market for eleven months of the year. Anyone can rent a storage space, but few, if any, want to. With foundations going down an astonishing 20 metres and more, it is virtually indestructible. Therein lies a dilemma. The people of Nuremberg are, not surprisingly, unwilling to spend millions of euros to maintain this and the other buildings in the complex [like the vast sports arena from which Hitler delivered his rallying speeches]. And yet, should they be allowed to decay slowly? Our knowledgeable and objective guide, the daughter-in-law of Marga Bechstein, [well known to many of the ‘old’ Langwasser group and host to Colin and Judy], encouraged us to consider the messages the architecture was proclaiming to the individual and its importance in the context of National Socialism. The impact of the architecture was overpowering yet seemingly out of control.

In contrast were the two church services we attended; one on the Sunday in the main church of Langwasser at which Juergen preached, and the other on Reformation Day in a neighbouring church. What was evident wherever we went was a strong community feeling and the apparent opportunity for people to make their own contributions irrespective of which particular church they attended. Maybe this perceived inclusiveness is due to the way in which Holy Communion is shared within a standing semi-circle and the practice of joining hands after everyone has received it. Maybe too, it is because church buildings are part of larger complexes housing nursery facilities, meeting rooms, kitchens and the pastor’s house. The buildings, dating from the 60s, were designed to focus on the needs of the community with fitness for function in mind. We were left pondering how possession of such buildings might impact on our vision for our own churches in the future.

Finally, we are all indebted to Juergen and Penny, without whose initiative this visit would never have taken place.

Sheila French
LANGWASSER PRAYER

Judy Hamer writes:  I have collected the following short prayer from the Martin Niemoller church in Langwasser.

‘Gib uns Ohren die horen
und augen die sehen
ein breiten Herz andere zu verstehen.
Gott gib uns Mut
unsre Wege zu gehen.’

The translation is:

Give us ears that hear
and eyes that see and
an open heart to understand others.
God give us courage
to go on our way.

Judy Hamer

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IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THIS CHRISTMAS WE SHOULD
“SHOW SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AWARENESS IN OUR
CHOICE OF CAROLS AND NURSERY RHYMES”

Now, there’s a thought…..

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe -
She had so few children she didn’t know what to do:
“I've got seven bedrooms and only two nippers;
I've got to downsize to a pair of cheap slippers.
But who will want to live in my beautiful shoe
With its upstairs and downstairs super ensuite loo?
It's far too big; you can hear the Crack of Doom
When HMG and DWP decide to tax your room.
My lovely old shoe has been empty so long
The Council has flogged it for a very sad song”  (Ian Barge)

30
CTAL / CHRISTIAN AID CAROLS AT THE BUTTERCROSS - 21ST DECEMBER

The next Christian Aid event, following the successful harvest collection, (thank you – you gave £184.00), the next important date is 21 December – Carols at the Buttercross, from 11.00 am – everyone is invited to participate.

As always we then have an on-street collection around the town. We hope that people, whilst spending more than usual on feasting and gifting, will think about those whose lives are stricken by poverty – the causes are multifarious, both natural and man made. Worldwide, the people affected feel powerless. Money given to Christian Aid can help them to take control of their lives – even if only in small ways.

St Laurence’s rattles the tins for 2 hours during the day. Those doing so will be standing at one of 5 points around the town, for one hour. It can be very wet, very cold, and/or quite icy – but only for an hour, not for a lifetime. This is an opportunity to think about our brothers and sisters, who are in great need. Please contact me if you are able to help.

Lent. Soup lunches - please make a note in your diaries now. The first soup lunch will be on 7 March. I anticipate that St Laurence’s will be hosting on 21 March. Of this, more later!

And a second reminder! Christian aid week 2014 runs from 11 -17 May. Similarly, more to follow.

Claire Wilcox tel: 877199

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS AT ROCKSPRING

via Ludlow Baptist Church.

Hampers are made up for people in distress or need at Christmas. In the past year 45 hampers were given out. A greater need is expected this year, but we can only meet this need with help from other people and organisations.

Donations of either food or money are welcomed. Money can be
Food donations should consist of:
- Christmas puddings
- Christmas cakes
- Mince pies
- Biscuits
- Sensations / Pringles crisps
- Nuts
- Chocolates

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SELL-BY DATES ARE EARLY IN 2014, PLEASE. DONATIONS NEED TO BE IN THE CHURCH BY DECEMBER 15TH AT THE LATEST.

There is a large box labelled “Donations for Christmas hampers” in the corridor of Ludlow Baptist Church, which is accessible during Rockspring Centre’s opening hours.

Many thanks for all you can give to help ease the heartache of a difficult Christmas season for so many people for so many reasons.

From Ludlow Baptist Church may we wish you a joyful and blessed Christmas 2013.

Ludlow Baptist Church

SOUTH SHROPSHIRE INFORMATION

There is a lot of useful information about Ludlow in the run-up to Christmas - such as details of free parking on “Tinsel Tuesdays” - on the South Shropshire website:

http://www.visitsouthshropshire.co.uk/news-article.php?id=2009

Well worth catching up with…

Sue Bremner
FORTHCOMING

Will you be on your own at Christmas?
Then you are invited to -

LUNCH ON CHRISTMAS DAY

At The Ludlow Mascall Centre, Lower Galdeford,
Ludlow from 11.00 - 3.30.

We welcome people of all ages who might be alone on Christmas Day
The cost is £7.00 although if this is a problem we can help.

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Further details or to make a booking
Contact :- Maurice and Brenda Coleman
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We've got online carol-singers again!
Thank you to all our contributors.

COPY FOR THE FEBRUARY TOWERS TO THE OFFICE
PLEASE BY 7 January 2014

Material arriving after the preferred date cannot be guaranteed to be included. **Material arriving after the final date will definitely NOT be included until the following month:**

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Please send articles by email to office@stlaurences.org.uk

Please send information about events and subjects that you would like to appear in the magazine. We ask contributors to limit their articles to:

**No more than two A5 pages or 650 words** *(Gill Sans 12pt)*

There may be special circumstances when more space is required but we ask that you please check with the Editorial Committee and request larger space **at least two weeks ahead of the submission date** to determine if sufficient space will be available in that month’s issue.

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**TOWERS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

The present members of the Towers editorial committee are:

Sue Bremner - Parishes Office 872073
Diana Thomas - Tallis House, Overton 878719
John Burley - ‘Burleys’, 72 Dahn Drive, Ludlow 873155

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**EDITOR’S NOTE**

*Opinions expressed in contributed articles in this magazine are those of the contributor and do not necessarily represent the position or opinions of the PCC or the Editorial Committee.*
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Mr Brian Gardner, 29 Lower Broad Street, Ludlow  318020
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Tower Floodlighting  Forms at St Laurence Shop
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Hello! - Can you read me? – over!

The Editorial Committee are always pleased to get your feedback and comments on the magazine, and appreciate your comments and constructive criticisms so we can try to do better!

Please contact Sue Bremner at the office on 872073 with your thoughts and comments. Thank you!!

LARGE PRINT

Copies in large print are available from Sue Bremner at the Parishes Office – 01584 872073.