

*Services at St Margaret's, Underriver
December 2006 & January 2007*



Sunday	3 Dec	10:30 11:15	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A Short Service for all God's Children	
Sunday	10 Dec	08:00 11:15	Holy Communion (said) Morning Prayer (with hymns)	BCP BCP
Sunday	17 Dec	15:00	Carol Service	
Saturday	23 Dec	16:00	Nativity Play in the Village Hall	
Sunday	24 Dec	16:00 23:30	Blessing of the Crib First Communion of Christmas	
Monday	25 Dec	08:00 11:15	Holy Communion (said) Festival Family Service	BCP
Sunday	31 Dec	10:30	United Service of Carols and Readings at St Lawrence's	
Sunday	7 Jan	10:30 11:00	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A Short Service for all God's Children	
Sunday	14 Jan	08:00 11:15	Holy Communion (said) Choral Matins (with hymns)	BCP BCP
Sunday	21 Jan	11:15	All Age/Family Service	
Sunday	28 Jan	11:15	Parish Communion (with hymns)	CW
Sunday	4 Feb	10:30 11:00	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A short service for all God's Children	

Details of Combined Services are shown on Pages 2 and 3

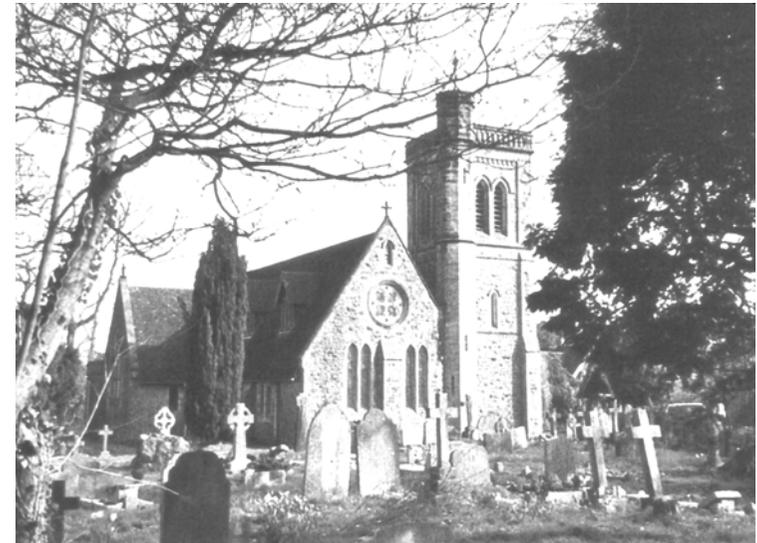
	Both St Lawrence and St Margaret's churches are equipped with an induction loop system for the benefit of those with hearing aids. To use the system, please switch your hearing aid to the "T" setting. St Lawrence church also has disabled toilet facilities.	
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The next issue will be in the Church on Sunday 28 January 2007.
Copy should be sent to the editor to arrive by not later than **08:00 on Wednesday 17 January 2007**
(or e-mail to brian@bsutton0.wanadoo.co.uk)

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*St Lawrence, Seal Chart
Parish Magazine*

December 2006 & January 2007



*May the Joy and Peace of this Glorious
Christmastide be with you now and always*

Priest in Charge

The Reverend Dr Michael Cooke
St Lawrence Vicarage
Stone Street
Sevenoaks Kent TN15 0LQ
01732 761766

Reader

Mrs Gretel Wakeham
The White House
Bitchet Green
Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0NA
01732 761534

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John Morris
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Ivyhatch
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0NJ
01732 810227

Hilary Denby-Jones
Broomsleigh Park
Seal Chart
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0ES
01732 763883



Services for December 2006 and January 2007

Sunday	3 Dec	Advent Sunday Holy Communion (said) 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13 Luke 21: 25-36 09:45 All Age/Family Service (children in church) Jeremiah 33: 14-16 Luke 21: 25-36	BCP
Sunday	10 Dec	Second Sunday of Advent Celebrating completion of the Restoraion Work 10:30 Family Communion (with hymns) (with Sunday School) 1 Chronicles 29: 10-16 Luke 3: 1-6	CW
Tuesday	12 Dec	Communion at Home for both our Parishes 10:00 At Thrums, Vine Lane, Hildenborough	
Sunday	17 Dec	Third Sunday of Advent 08:00 Holy Communion (said) Philippians 4: 4-7 Luke 3: 7-18 18:00 Carol Service (Collection is for Christian Aid)	CW
Sunday	24 Dec	Fourth Sunday of Advent Christmas Eve 17:30 Blessing of the Crib & Distribution of Christingles 23:30 First Communion of Christmas (with carols)	CW
		Isaiah 52: 7-10 Hebrews 1: 1-4 John 1: 1-14	
Monday	25 Dec	Christmas Day 09:45 Festival Family Service John 1: 1-14	
Sunday	31 Dec	First Sunday of Christmas 10:30 United Service of Carols and Readings (see also note on page 11)	
2007			
Sunday	7 Jan	The Ephiny of our Lord 08:00 Holy Communion (said) Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12 09:45 AllAge/Family Service (children in church) Matthew 2: 1-12	BCP

See also Page 7 for details of Services for

Road to Joy

Face each day with love and laughter,
Chase away all doubt and fear,
Always keep your chin up smiling,
Do not shed a single tear.
Keep your thoughts both bright and cheerful,
And all worries send to flight,
Never entertain depression,
Keep the lamp of love alight.



Church Flowers for



4 Dec	Sally Hands	1 Jan	Jean Stirling
11 Dec	Sally Hands	8 Jan	Jean Stirling
18 Dec	Sheila Jackson	15 Jan	t b a
25 Dec	Sheila Jackson	22 Jan	t b a
		29 Jan	t b a



St Lawrence Sunday School PROGRAMME UNTIL MARCH 2007



Sun 10 Dec	Sunday School	Lesley & Elspeth
	Good News from the Angels	
Sun 24 Dec	Crib/Christingle Service [17:30]	
Mon 25 Dec	Christmas Day Family Service	
Tues 9 Jan	Planning Meeting	
Sun 21 Jan	Sunday School	
	Samuel (1) - the birth and Call of Samuel	Hilary & Helen
Sun 18 Feb	Sunday School	
	Samuel (2) - Samuel anoints Saul	Lesley & Beryl
Sun 4 Mar	Sunday School	Elspeth & Celeste
	Timothy - His mother and grandmother	
Sun 18 Mar	Mothering Sunday	

**Our Sunday School meets in St Lawrence School at 09:45 on the dates shown
All children are welcome — Bring Mum or Dad as well!!!**

For further information, contact Hilary Darque (453929) or Beryl Storey (451510)

ointment' (John 12: v3).

9. Mint (Mentha) The Bible states that Mint was paid to the Pharisees as a tithe; proof that this herb has been held in high regard for centuries: 'But woe to you Pharisees! For you the mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God; these you ought to have, done, without neglecting the others'. (Luke 11: v42).

10. Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis) Rosemary signifies love, friendship and remembrance. Sir Thomas More wrote in 1607 'it is the herb sacred to remembrance, and, therefore, to friendship; whence a sprig of it hath a dumb language that maketh it the chosen emblem of our funeral wakes and in our burial grounds'. It used to be commonplace at weddings and funerals; a rosemary branch with silk ribbons was presented to wedding guests as a symbol of love and loyalty, whilst a sprig would be tossed into a grave as a sign that the departed would not be forgotten.

11. Rue (Ruta graveolens) Bushes made of Rue were once used to sprinkle holy water at the ceremony proceeding High Mass. It is associated with sorrow and repentance, hence the names 'Herb of Repentance' and 'Herb of Grace'.

12. St John's Wort [Hypericum perforatum] St John's Wort was traditionally used to ward off witchcraft and magic, and has thus been long associated with Christian and Pagan festivals. It is said that it flowers on St John the Baptist's Day on 24 June, and that red spots appear on the leaves on 29 August (the day St John was beheaded).

13. Thyme (Thymus) Thyme was one of the first herbs to be used as incense, and was often sprinkled on church floors in the Middle Ages to eliminate unwanted odours.

14. Vervain (Verbena officinalis) Also called 'Herb of Grace', this pretty plant with its tiny lilac flowers was found at Mount Cavalry, where it staunches the wounds of Christ.

15. Wormwood (Artemisia absinthium) Wormwood is one of the bitterest herbs known, and when mentioned in the Bible it is associated with bitterness, sorrow and suffering. According to legend Wormwood grew up in the trail left by the serpents tail as it slithered out of the Garden of Eden, acting as a barrier to prevent its return. Consequently, snakes are not supposed to enter a garden where Wormwood grows.

Brian Sutton

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97 at The Church of St Lawrence, Seal Chart



Friday	12 Jan	Prayer Time for both our Parishes At Garden Cottage, Bitchet Green	
Sunday	14 Jan	Second Sunday of Epiphany Family Communion (with hymns) 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 John 2: 1-11	CW
Saturday	20 Jan	Taizé Service A quiet and reflective service using songs and chants from the Taizé Community in France	
Sunday	21 Jan	Third Sunday of Epiphany Holy Communion (said) 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a Luke 4: 14-21 09:45 AllAge/Family Service (with Sunday School) Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Luke 4: 14-21 18:30 United Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (see detail on page 7)	CW
Thursday	25 Jan	Prayer Time for both our Parishes At the Vicarage	
Sunday	28 Jan	Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Morning Prayer Ezekiel 43: 27-44 Luke 2: 22-40	BCP
Sunday	4 Feb	Third Sunday before Lent Holy Communion (said) 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 Luke 5: 1-11 09:45 AllAge/Family Service (children in church) Isaiah 6: 1-8 Luke 5: 1-11	BCP
Tuesday	6 Feb	Prayer Time for both our Parishes At The White House, Bitchet Green	

BCP = Book of Common Prayer, a service using traditional (17th C) language and form

CW = Common Worship - a service using contemporary (21st C) language and form

· the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

From the Vicar

Happy Birthday, Jesus! Many Happy Returns, Jesus!

When we think about it, however, the way here on earth your birthday is celebrated is a bit strange. No, I'm not referring now to the consumerism and consumption – for, at the time I write this, there is still time for folk to buy presents from Present Aid (catalogues at the back of church) - but more to the fact that when people think of you at Christmas it's your actual *birth* that is celebrated.

Normally when we celebrate a birthday it is to do with our current age (e.g. 60) and how over the years we've grown (or begun to shrink!) whether in wisdom, stature or capability. Or, we mark the birthday by doing something special (cake and candles, certainly – but maybe, as in my recent case, even dumper truck racing!). But for you, Jesus, it's your being marked as a baby in a manger – yet probably when you think about what happened then, your family's memories are a bit mixed. Greatest joy that you were born safely, but sadness over the appalling circumstances: you were probably cold, and you were certainly far from home and neighbours, and I doubt there were the kind of midwives present we thankfully usually have access to. And as for many happy returns, the rest of your life had a pretty big downside too - you grew to be a “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”.

Two of the reporters did record great celebrations both in heaven (the angels) and on earth (the shepherds) – but, rather surprisingly to us, the two best-known others who recorded your history don't mention your birth at all! John starts with you before the beginning of creation (“In the beginning was the Word (that's you!) , and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1) – and after this prologue he skips to you being about 30 years old. Which is also the age where another Gospel writer Mark starts! Unusual!

I wonder if by over-concentrating on you as a new born we may be missing much of the point of your birthday. Might it be that the real birthday is as much something to do with *our new-birth-day* – your being born in us? Something which some of the carols do indeed recognise, as in

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!*

Elsbeth joins me in wishing you and all our readers a very blessed Christmas,

Michael

These notes were provided as a guide to the herb garden and are reproduced here for your enjoyment, particularly for the keen gardeners, with the kind permission of Reverend Nigella Tyson, Vicar of Eardisland.

1. Aaron's Rod (*Verbascum thapsus*) Also known as ‘Great Mullein’, this tall imposing plant with long spires of yellow flowers has soothing and antiseptic properties. The name is an illusion to the blossoming rod that Aaron placed before the arc.

2. Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*) Known in Latin as ‘herba angelica’ or angelic herb, one legend says its name refers to an angel who dreamt that angelica could cure the plague. Renaissance doctors knew it as ‘the root of the Holy Ghost’ because of its numerous virtues and its ability to cure any malady. Angelica was also thought to provide protection against witches, spells, and evil spirits.

3. Costmary (*Chrysanthemum balsamita*) This plant has a soft balsamic odour, and its long pale green, leaves were once used as bookmarks, hence the reason it is sometimes known as ‘Bible-leaf’. The leaves used to be chewed or nibbled to revive people fainting with hunger during long sermons. Apparently the more Costmary growing in the parish gardens the more boring the clergy!

4. Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) Fennel seeds (‘meeting seeds’) were chewed at prayer meetings in America to help the congregation fend off sleepiness and hunger during long church meetings.

5. Hyssop (*Hysopus officinalis*) Hyssop is also called the ‘Holy Herb’ and is mentioned in the Bible for its cleansing properties: ‘Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean’. (Psalms 51: v7).

6. Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium coeruleum*) No longer used medicinally, this attractive flower got its name from the arrangement of its leaves: ‘And he [Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it’. (Genesis 28: v12).

7. Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) This pretty little herb was once used for stuffing mattresses and the name may have originated from the legend that it was one of the herbs used to line Jesus' cradle at Bethlehem.

8. Lavender (*Lavandula officinalis*) Lavender is often mentioned in the Bible by the name used at that time - Spikenard: ‘Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the

News from our School

As always, St Lawrence School is a busy little community. We are, of course, starting the long run up to Christmas and preparations are already under way. As in previous years, we will be putting on a concert which will be a Nativity with a difference! We will also have our annual



Carol Service which will be a traditional blend of readings and carols. The orchestra have already started practicing some of the old favourites!

If you have passed the school in recent weeks you cannot fail to have noticed that we are undergoing a major building project. The converted air raid shelter adjacent to the school is being extended to create a hall and administration area. This was, of course, the project which had to be delayed while we were under threat of closure from KCC but it is now progressing with a vengeance and is extremely exciting. It will make a tremendous difference to the life of the school.

The building work is providing considerable entertainment for the children, many of whom will spend their playtime watching the builders at work with some fascination but it is also providing the staff with some challenges in the day to day running of the school. However, the builders are being very accommodating and in true St Lawrence style, everyone is pulling together and ensuring that we continue to deliver a high quality education to our children.

Sport continues to be a focus of our school and we are grateful to Mrs Medhurst whose enthusiasm keeps it at the forefront of our curriculum. She recently arranged for us to play a football match against Shipbourne School. The match was played in tremendously good spirits and ended in a 4-4 draw. Tomorrow we play them at netball.

Alison Saunders

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The Church Herb Garden

Whilst on holiday recently, I visited the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Eardisland in Herefordshire and, after spending some time in the lovely 12c. church, was able to enjoy a small corner in the churchyard. What could be nicer than stepping through the gate to be greeted by the scent of growing herbs and the sight and sound of bees and butterflies at work? The area is an informal mix of plants that are mentioned in the Bible or historically associated with the Church.

St Lawrence Parish Magazine 2007 - Subscriptions

May we remind you that Parish Magazine subscriptions for next year are due in January. It is a great help if everyone pays up promptly!

It is pleasing to say that there will be no increase in the cost which remains at

£5.00 if received via a distributor or collected from the church;

£7.50 if received by post.

Would anyone wanting to change over their arrangements please let me or their distributor know.

Many thanks. Rosemary Attenborough 01732 761516
: Coldhanger
Seal Chart
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0EJ

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Communion at home, a Lift to Church, or Confession

Four seasonal reminders:

- (a) During Advent, there is an opportunity to share in Communion as a small group in the comfort of a home. We look at the readings for the previous Sunday, and we'll spend longer than is usually possible in church praying for world and local situations. The service lasts no more than 60 minutes and could be an oasis of peace in a busy week! 10am, Tuesday 12th December, at Thrums, Vines' Lane, Hildenborough (Arthur Rucker's home).
- (b) If you, or someone you know, is unable to get to church over the Christmas period and would like to receive Communion at home, I will be delighted to bring Communion to you. Please just ask!
- (c) If you'd like to get to church, but can't, **please** do ask. We can surely find someone who would very happily give you a lift.
- (d) If you or anyone has a concern or guilt which is troubling you, do know that your vicar is here to listen in confidence – and, if it is your wish, to offer after confession God's Absolution.

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St Lawrence Parish Magazine 2007 - Time Table

For your information, the following is the timetable for the Parish Magazine during the coming year.

Month	Last Date for Copy	In Church for	Month	Last Date for Copy	In Church for
Jan	No Magazine		Jul	13 Jun	24 Jun
Feb	17 Jan	28 Jan	Aug	18 Jul	29 Jul
Mar	14 Feb	25 Feb	Sept	15 Aug	26 Aug
Apr	14 Mar	25 Mar	Oct	19 Sept	30 Sept
May	18 Apr	29 Apr	Nov	17 Oct	28 Oct
Jun	16 May	27 May	Dec/Jan	14 Nov	25 Nov

Please may I have copy by not later than 08:00 on the dates shown, remembering, of course, how unreliable our postal deliveries are becoming, so the earlier, the better. If you can e-mail your copy to me, this is the best way. My e-mail address is on the back of each issue.

Needless to say, I will welcome any and all the contributions you send me. New contributors are always welcome.

May I take this opportunity to extend my grateful thanks to all who have contributed this year, to Julian Gilchrist for his very speedy service in printing the magazine, to Felicity Corbally and, until her death, Jill Weston and also to Felicity's other helpers for collating and stapling, to Philip Attenborough until his death who organised the distribution and to Rosemary Attenborough who has taken on this responsibility. Finally I must thank our distributors who collect the cash and deliver copies to their subscribers each month. *Ed*

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This year's Parish Christmas Card

We are very grateful to those children from St Lawrence School who responded to the invitation to provide the picture for the joint parish Christmas card. As last year (when the pictures came from St Margaret's parish) it was difficult to select the winning design – but in the end we chose that by Jenny Maycock, who is a pupil in Year 6. Thank you! We are sure everyone is delighted.

Two Opportunities for Carol Singing

Friday 1st December

Sevenoaks and District Christian Aid Committee

invites you to sing carols in Central Sevenoaks

This is a Special Late Night Christmas Shopping Evening.

We shall meet in Bligh's Court (beside Monsoon) at 6.30 pm and sing for about an hour.



Bring music for harmonies. Words of carols will be provided.



Tuesday 19th December

St Lawrence Church Choir will be singing carols around the parish.

6:45 for 7.00 pm **St Lawrence Christmas Lights Switch-on**

at Foxbury Farm

7.30 pm Bitchet Green

8.00 pm Chart Farm (approx times)

Please come and join us for all or part of the evening.

Words of carols will be provided. Bring a torch/lantern

We shall be collecting for **Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust (SAYT)**

Let's take these opportunities to spread the good news about what Christmas really celebrates

New Year's Eve!

United Service of Carols and Readings

Sunday, December 31st at 10.30a.m.

Do join us for carols, hymns and readings with a New Wine theme.

A time of contemplation and celebration!

Gretel

Special Collections at St Lawrence's Services

Thank you to all who contributed to the special collection on **Remembrance Sunday** for the Royal British Legion. The total collected was £272.45 – but because of Gift Aid the parish will be able also to add £63.88, making a total of £336.33.

Please note also that the collection (but not any 'orange' church envelopes) at our **Carol service** will be given to Christian Aid, and at the **Crib service** to Demelza House, the children's hospice in Sittingbourne (see 'Christingles', above). The collection on Christmas Day is for our church.

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 <p>SAYT www.sayt.org.uk Registered Charity No 1090595</p>	<p><i>Quiz Night</i> in aid of <i>Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust</i></p>	 <p>SAYT www.sayt.org.uk Registered Charity No 1090595</p>
<p>on</p> <p><i>Saturday, 3rd February 2007,</i></p> <p><i>7pm for prompt 7:45pm start</i> <i>at Sevenoaks Community Centre</i></p> <p><i>Tables of 8 - Ploughman's Supper - Licensed cash bar</i></p> <p>Can we raise a St Lawrence Team to have fun and help raise money for SAYT?</p> <p>Details from Michael Cooke (Tel 761766) or Sue Baldwin (Tel 459075)</p>		

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The Four Stages for Modern Man

1. You believe in Santa Claus
2. You don't believe in Santa Claus
3. You are Santa Claus
4. You look like Santa Claus

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Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District

**Week of Prayer for
Christian Unity**

18 - 25 January 2007

**The theme for 2007 has been chosen by
Christians in South Africa**

"He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak"

LUNCHTIME PRAYERS

Thursday 18 January 2007, 12:30pm
at The Sevenoaks URC - Littlecourt Road
Refreshments available afterwards

TAIZÉ WORSHIP

A time of meditative worship together:
Saturday 20th January 2007, 7pm
at St Lawrence Church, Seal Chart
(from A25 heading East, take second right - Church
Road - about 1.3 miles after leaving Seal Village)

UNITED SERVICE

Sunday 21st January 2007, 6:30pm
at St Mary, Riverhead
(with United Choirs)

*Come and join in these events
as a celebration of our unity*

Celebration Service: 10:30 am, 10th December

We are now able to confirm the time and date for our celebratory service to mark the end of the restoration and reordering works on our church. Please do plan to come and join in what we hope will be a great occasion. We shall welcome as our Rural Dean as our preacher, and after the service there will be the opportunity to learn and see what has been accomplished. Suitably celebratory drink and cake will also be served. We are issuing invitations to many outside the parish who have been with us on this journey since the fire in May 2005 – people like the professionals (builders, cleaners, glaziers, carpenters, stone masons), and of course all individuals who have contributed either their good wishes or in other tangible forms. Thank you, one and all, but do come too on 10th!

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Christingles on Christmas Eve (5:30 pm service)

As in previous years we expect this service to be amongst the most popular of the Christmas season. To help *both* to gauge numbers of children who will be present (think of the people who will be preparing the required number of ingredients for the Christingles), *and* to encourage a worthwhile gift to the charity the service supports (Demelza House Hospice for Children) please could parents/guardians let the vicar know how many children will be coming - and please do collect from the vicarage a labelled 'Smartie tube' (or equivalent) to aid in the collecting. The idea is that the tube's contents are enjoyed, and then brought, well filled with coins to the Christingle service and offered there as the child's gift to the collection.

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December Sunday School is on 10th (not 17th)

Yes, the *second* Sunday in the month, because on the third it's our Carol Service. And the time is 10:30am because it's also our celebratory re-opening service (see elsewhere).

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St Lawrence 2006 Gift Day Response

The response to the appeal for donations to support the work of the church has been outstanding with (so far) £6,375 having been given by parishioners and friends. Much of this sum is eligible for Gift Aid tax reclaim, and so brings the total amount for the parish up to £7,974. Thank you, one and all!

Christian Aid Table Fair

Here's an opportunity to have a post-Christmas clear-out and benefit Christian Aid at the same time, so make a note of the date in your diary now. On **Saturday 3rd February 2007** at Christ Church URC Hall, Sevenoaks from 10 am to 12:30pm there will be a Table Fair (this is like an indoor boot fair). You can rent a table for £10 which goes to Christian Aid, but you keep the proceeds of your stall. There will be refreshments and lots of stalls to browse round. Further information will be available in January from Elspeth Cooke (01732 761766)



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Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

As in previous years, St Lawrence's is privileged to host a Taizé-style of service on a Saturday evening - this year on 20th January at 7 pm. If you haven't been to this kind of reflective service, we invite you to try! It's a time of quiet reflection using a simple form of song, repeated several times so that anyone can within a moment be gently singing too.

The major united choral service for all churches in the Sevenoaks area is at 6:30 pm on Sunday 21st January - this year at St Mary's Church, Riverhead. There will be a united choir drawn from all the churches – and anyone else who'd like to sing - so singers look out for details in the church weekly pewsheets. Details of all events this week are shown on page 7.

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Usual Sunday Attendance at St Lawrence's

This year our averages for a 'normal' Sunday in October are 28 adults and 4 children – down slightly after several years of year-on-year growth. As ever, averages don't tell the full story: because of our different service pattern each Sunday, some people only come to one service, and not another: not everybody wishes to receive Communion, and it's highly unusual to find children at a Matins service! Also with small numbers statistics are even more unreliable.

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For unto us a child is born, unto 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: v6