

*Services at St Margaret's Underriver
December 2007 - January 2008*



Sunday	2 Dec	10:30 11:15	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A Short Service for All God's Children	
Sunday	9 Dec	08:00 11:15	Holy Communion (said) Morning Prayer (with hymns)	BCP BCP
Sunday	16 Dec	11:15	Family Service	
Sunday	23 Dec	16:00	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols	
Monday	24 Dec	16:00 23:30	Blessing of the Crib First Communion of Christmas	CW
Tuesday	25 Dec	11:15	Festival Family Service with Hymns and Carols	
Sunday	30 Dec	10:30	Finding our Feet - A United Service for both our parishes	
Sunday	6 Jan	10:30 11:15	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A Short Service for All God's Children	
Sunday	13 Jan	08:00 11:15	Holy Communion (said) Morning Prayer (with hymns)	BCP BCP
Sunday	20 Jan	11:15	All Age Family Service	
Sunday	27 Jan	11:15	Parish Communion (with hymns)	CW
Sunday	3 Feb	10:30 11:15	Sunday Club meets in the Village Hall A Short Service for All God's Children	

For details of joint services, bible study, prayer times, etc., please see Page 2

Advent Desire

Come now, high king of heaven. Come to us in flesh and bone. Bring life to us who are weary with misery. Bring peace to us who are overcome with weeping, whose cheeks are covered with bitter salt tears. Seek us out, who are lost in the darkness of depression. Do not forget us, but show mercy on us. Impart to us your everlasting joy, so that we, who are fashioned by your hands, may praise your glory.

From The Exeter Book, c.950 AD. Author unknown

*St Lawrence, Seal Chart Parish Magazine
December 2007 - January 2008*



*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

Church Wardens

John Morris
Beaconsmount, Pine Tree Lane
Ivyhatch
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0NJ
01732 810227

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

Copy for the next issue should be sent to the editor (or e-mail to brian@bsutton0.wanadoo.co.uk).
to arrive by 08:00 on Wednesday 16 January 2008

The next issue, of the Parish Magazine will be in Church on **Sunday 27 January 2008**

Edited and Typeset by Brian Sutton, 50 The Crescent, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3QY (01732 450873)
Printed by Highland Printers, 23 High Street, Seal, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0AN (01732 762131)

Services at The Church of St Lawrence Seal C.

Sunday	2 Dec	Advent Sunday		
	08:00	Holy Communion (said)		BCP
		Romans 13: 11-14	Matthew 24: 36-44	
	09:45	All Age Family Service (children in church)		
		Matthew 24: 36-44		
Friday	7 Dec	Prayer Time for Both Parishes (Open to all - lasts about 60 mins)		
	14:00	At The Vicarage		
Sunday	9 Dec	Second Sunday of Advent		
	09:45	Family Communion (with hymns) with Sunday School		CW
		Romans 15: 4-13	Matthew 3: 1-12	
Sunday	16 Dec	Third Sunday of Advent		
	08:00	Holy Communion (said)		CW
		James 5: 7-10	Matthew 11: 2-11	
	18:00	Service of Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight		
		(The Collection is for Christian Aid)		
Tuesday	18 Dec	Carol Singing at Foxbury Farm		
	19:00	and afterwards around our parish		
Thursday	20 Dec	Communion at Home for Both our Parishes		
	14:00	At Westover, Mill Lane, Underriver		
Sunday	23 Dec	Fourth Sunday of Advent		
	09:45	Morning Prayer (with hymns)		BCP
		Isaiah 7: 10-16	Matthew 1: 18-25	
Monday	24 Dec	Christmas Eve		
	17:30	Blessing of the Crib and Distribution of Christingles		
	23:30	First Communion of Christmas (with carols)		CW
		Isaiah 52: 7-10 Hebrews 1: 1-4 John 1: 1-14		
Tuesday	25 Dec	Christmas Day		
	08:00	Holy Communion (said)		CW
		Hebrews 1: 1-12	John 1: 1-14	
	09:45	Festival Family Service with Hymns and Carols		
		John 1: 1-14		
Sunday	30 Dec	First Sunday of Christmas		
	10:30	'Finding our Feet' - a United Service for both our parishes with hymns and carols inspired by the Iona Community (see Page 5)		
		At St Margaret's., Underriver		



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



Church Flowers



Sunday	2 Dec	Pat Edghill	Sunday	6 Jan	Jean Stirling
Sunday	9 Dec	Beryl Storey	Sunday	13 Jan	Kate Clark
Sunday	16 Dec	Kath Clarke	Sunday	20 Jan	Kate Clark
Sunday	23 Dec	Kath Clarke	Sunday	27 Jan	Kate Clark
Sunday	30 Dec	Jean Stirling	Sunday	3 Feb	Kate Clark



St Lawrence Sunday School



Sun	18 Nov	"Lost and Found People"	Helen and Celeste
Sun	9 Dec	Preparing for Christmas	Hilary, Lesley & Beryl
Sun	20 Jan	Jeremiah (1)	Elsbeth & Celeste
Sat	2 Feb	FUN AFTERNOON (2 pm - 4 pm in the Village Hall)	
Tue	5 Feb	Planning Meeting	
Sun	17 Feb	Jeremiah (2)	Lyn & Helen

**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)

ST LAWRENCE CHURCH AND VILLAGE CONTACTS

**Priest in Charge - St Lawrence Church - Revd Dr Michael Cooke - 761766
Reader - St Lawrence Church - Mrs Gretel Wakeham - 761534**

Churchwardens	John Morris	810227	Seal Parish Council		
	Hilary Denby-Jones	763883	Chairman	Robin Watson	833930
PCC Hon Secretary	Richard Glencross	761202	Vice-Chairman	Edward Oatley	465905
PCC Hon Treasurer	Tony Webb	xd	Clerk	Lorna Talbot	763488
Electoral Roll	Clive McLintock	452964	Ward Councillors	Peter Granville	763832
Covenant & Envelopes	John Morris	810227		Chris Sutton-Mattocks	762013
Organist	David Walton	02075 374227	St Lawrence Village Hall Management Committee		
Choir Director	John Morris	810227	Chairman	Peter Granville	763832
Bellringers Hon Secretary	Elsbeth Cooke	761766	Secretary	Peter Wharton	810388
Sevenoaks Deanery Synod	Tony Webb	xd	Treasurer	Marie O'Connor	xd
Sunday School	Hilary Darque	453929	Bookings Secretary	Janice Brooker	760843
	Beryl Storey	451510	St Lawrence Village Association		
Magazine Editor	Brian Sutton	450873	Chairman	Graham Moynes	760640
Church Flowers	Jean Stirling	810258	Secretary	Carol Smith	763561
Memorial Flowers	Annie Scarsi	810864	Cricknet Club Contact	Graham Cook	761827
St Lawrence CE Primary School			Badm'ton Club Contact	Ian Lister	762416
Headteacher	Alison Saunders	761393	Bowls Club	Peter Granville	763832
Chairman of Governors	Mrs Sarah Hudson	810050	Drawing Classes	Stephen Rose	761049
Clerk to Governors			Pilates	Moirra Clark	453271
St Lawrence Pre-School	Mandy McCracken	847990	Tennis Club Contact	Gretel Wakeham	761534
1 st St Lawrence Brownies	Janet Boswell	01959 523953	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators		
			Stone Street Contact	Janice Brooker	760843
S'oaks District Councillor	Cnelr Peter Coates	762129	Seal Chart Contact	Nicola Mitchell	764202



A Wonderful Promise
Two thousand, seven hundred years ago,
God spoke to the prophet Isaiah,
He had an important message to tell,
About a coming Messiah.

A Saviour would be born one day,
The greatest King of all,
Born in a lowly stable,
And laid in a cattle stall.

Christingles
Make a 'Christingle' this
Christmas to
celebrate the birth of
Jesus Christ our
Saviour and Light
of the World.



He'd teach us about God our Father,
Of how he loves us so,
He'd open the way to be friends with God
And show us the right way to go.



And **JESUS** was born in a stable:
The Messiah, the Saviour, the King,
The Mighty God, the Prince of Peace,
God's Son, **OUR** Saviour and friend!

Read the message God gave Isaiah in
Isaiah 9 verses 1-7

There are other names and titles for Jesus in the Bible.
Look up the references to find out what they are.

___ **M** ___ John 1:29 ___ **G** Revelation 17:14
___ **OO** ___ John 10:9 ___ **I** ___ John 8:12
___ **A** ___ John 14:6 **S** ___ **P** ___ John 10:11
V ___ John 15:1 **W** ___ John 1:1

The orange = the world
The candle = Jesus,
the light of the world
The red ribbon
= the blood of Jesus
when he died for us.
The fruit and sweets
= God's goodness and
provision.

'Christingle'
means
Christ-Light

Sunday	6 Jan	The Epiphany of our Lord 08:00 Holy Communion (said) 09:45 Ephesians 3: 1-12 Matthew 2: 1-12 All Age Family Service (children in church) Matthew 2: 1-12	BCP
Tuesday	8 Jan	Prayer Time for Both Parishes (Open to all - lasts about 60 mins) 10:00 At The White House, Bitchet Green	
Sunday	13 Jan	Second Sunday of Epiphany 09:45 Family Communion (with hymns) 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9 John 1: 29-42	CW
Saturday	19 Jan	Taizé Service 19:00 A quiet reflective service for all Sevenoaks Churches using songs and chants from the Taizé Community in France	
Sunday	20 Jan	Third Sunday of Epiphany 08:00 Holy Communion (said) 09:45 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18 Matthew 4: 12-23 All Age Family Service (with Sunday School) Isaiah 9: 1-4 Matthew 4: 12-23 18:30 United Service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at Christ Church URC, London Road, Sevenoaks.	CW
Thursday	24 Jan	Prayer Time for Both Parishes (Open to all - lasts about 60 mins) 14:00 At Shepherd's Cottage, Heaverham Road, Kemsing	
Sunday	27 Jan	Fourth Sunday of Epiphany 09:45 Morning Prayer (with hymns) 1 Kings 17: 8-16 John 2: 1-11	BCP
Saturday	2 Feb	Children's Fun Afternoon 14:00 In the Village Hall	
Sunday	3 Feb	Sunday next before Lent 08:00 Holy Communion (said) 09:45 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17: 1-9 Exodus 24: 12-18 Matthew 17: 1-9	BCP

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



The Vicar's Page

“What’s in a name?” A lot, when it comes to the Wonderland, which we call Christmas.

Happy aspects, like family get-togethers, presents, parties – also, sadly, stress and pain - are part of the true Christmas experience. But let’s not deceive ourselves that most of what passes today as the Christmas festive spirit is the Real Thing. From its own name, true Christ-mas has two essential ingredients:-

One is Christ, God of God, Light of light, existing in glory before this world ever came in to being. The Word of God who for the love of this crazy world became flesh: was conceived by God’s Holy Spirit, and was born. More: he, God, also lived a full human life, including dying in a unique self-sacrifice so that the whole cosmos might share in the divine relationship.

The birth of God as a Baby in Bethlehem, all according to God’s age-old plan (Micah 5:2) and specific instructions (Matthew 1:21), speaks of an event so amazing that it’s little wonder that people often settle for just one aspect of the Incarnation: (from the Latin “in-carne” = “in flesh”)

The bigger story, though – the whole life - should make us pause. New Year may beckon, and secular thoughts turn to the Sales and holidays in the sun, but the present of God is for Life and is life-long, and it cost God dear.

Which is why **Christ-mas is also about mas**, i.e. Mass - the Lord’s Supper through which the family of God meet together and remember the death of Christ – even at Christmas. Celebrating the Incarnation is incomplete unless all of human life is there, including suffering and mortality. Therefore, in its Christmas season the Church rightly also marks specific events like the martyrdom of St Stephen (26th), and the Massacre of the Innocents (28th). In short, Christmas is about the stresses and end of life, as well as its beginning with joys and hopes. I wonder – might this be the year when many more of us make our Christ-mas Communion , and so enter more deeply into the fuller mystery of what God did and does in his Incarnation.

Elsbeth joins me in wishing us all a Festival richly blessed by God himself.

Michael

Aches & pains	mild, usually legs	sudden, whole body, joints
Coughing/sneezing	nasal congestion	coughing usual, sneezing rare
Course of illness	rapid recovery	unwell for one to two weeks

The average person catches 200 colds in a lifetime – that is two to four years of being a snivelling wreck. Young people (15 to 24) are most likely to go to bed with their symptoms; people over 65 just carry on.

Research also reveals that what women always suspected is true: men DO fuss more about their colds than women, and say they are less able to cope.

Chicken soup, high in protein and vitamins, helps ease the symptoms. But any hot drink will raise the temperature in the nose and mouth, and thus help to kill off viruses, which like steady temperatures.

Before you catch anything this winter, take as much exercise as you can, of the sort that makes you breath deeply. It stimulates the lymphatic system which is the body’s ‘highway’ for immune cells. Every little helps!

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**St Lawrence Church Choir
invites you to**

COME CAROL SINGING

on Tuesday 18th December

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)

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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 19th 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 20th January - this year at Sevenoaks United Reformed Church (Christ Church) on London Road. 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.

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'Singing the Gospel' – then and now

2008 sees the centenary of the death of Ira Sankey, the American singer/evangelist, who with his colleague Rev Moody took the Western world by storm in the late 19th Century. In the UK they filled many of the largest halls (including the Albert Hall) many times over with their powerful blend of preaching and songs. Ira Sankey said that his task was to 'Sing the Gospel'. Many of the tunes are still well known today.

In the late 20th Century, there came another singer in the tradition of Ira Sankey, but singing her own compositions in a style more suited to today's audience. That singer is the well-known and loved Marilyn Baker, who has become Britain's top-selling female gospel singer.

On January 12th (3pm) at the Drive Methodist Church there will be a celebration of the work of Ira Sankey, when many of his most famous songs will be sung, together with the opportunity to listen to the songs of Marilyn Baker sung by the artiste herself. Admission free. Retiring collection for the church's centenary Project.

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What is the difference between colds and flu?

Feel terrible? Sickening for something? Can't decide if you've got cold or flu coming? Here's a handy guide:

	COLDS	FLU
Onset of symptoms	gradual	sudden and rapidly worsening
Sore throat	scratchy	extremely sore
Temperature	small increase	high – up to 41C (104F)
Headache	minor	severe

Gift Day - From the Churchwardens

The total received in our annual appeal has reached £9700 after taking account of the tax refund that we will be able to claim. This is an outstanding result and we extend our thanks to all the parishioners and friends of St Lawrence's who have contributed. The money raised in this appeal is vital to our ability to maintain not only the fabric of our lovely building but also the important work of the church in the parish and beyond. Once again our sincere thanks.

John Morris Hilary Denby-Jones

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Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18 - 25 January 2008

**The theme for 2008 comes from the USA
"Pray without ceasing"**



**TAIZE WORSHIP - A time of meditative worship together:
Saturday 19th January 2008, 7pm at St Lawrence Church, Seal Chart**

**UNITED SERVICE
Sunday 20th January 2008, 6.30pm at Sevenoaks URC (Christ Church)
(with United Choirs) Speaker: Revd. Tony Cross**

**LUNCHTIME PRAYERS
Wednesday 23rd January 2008, 12.30pm at Vine Evangelical Church**

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

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Finding your Feet

Are you running, walking or limping towards 2008? Find your feet for the New Year! Do join us for an all age service for both our parishes, with hymns, carols and inspiration drawn from the Iona community at 10:30 on 30 December at St. Margaret's, Underriver All are welcome!

Gretel Wakeham

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Remembrance Sunday Collection

The St Lawrence Church collection on behalf of the Royal British Legion on Sunday 11th November totalled £247.10.

A donation of £360 will be made to the Royal British Legion (after allowing for income tax recoverable and an additional contribution from PCC Funds of £43.20). This compares to £340 in 2006.

Tony Webb

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Lent House Groups

Would you like to know more about the Lord's Prayer – praying it, meaning it, living it? Then consider joining an inter-church House group in February and March 2008. The local organisers will be drawing on the highly acclaimed "York Series" – and sign-up lists will be available by the first week of January. Don't delay! Courses begin w/b 11 February.

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St Lawrence Village Association

Please come and join us for the Christmas tree lighting and carols with the St Lawrence Church Choir at the junction of Church Road and Stone Street at 7p.m. on Tuesday 18th December. We will be providing mulled wine and mince pies and it will be a great opportunity to get together with your neighbours from Stone Street, Bitchet Green and Seal Chart. Wrap up warm!

J aqui Moynes

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Not enough sleep

If you don't get enough sleep this month, there's one bright side to it: people who get TOO much sleep may be cutting their lifespan by several months.

In the recent first clinical study on the effects of sleep on mortality, published in the journal Sleep, it was found that men who slept more than eight hours a night were 24 per cent more likely to die early, and women who sleep longer than eight hours a night are 17 per cent more likely to die early.

Of course, between your job and your family and the strain of getting ready for Christmas, you might be dreaming of even seven hours a night!

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Special Collections at St Lawrence's services

Please note 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', page 10). The collection on Christmas Day is for our church.

➤ The common witness of Christians and church organisations as we work together in our wider community.

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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! Time/Date/venue: 2pm, Thurs 20 December at the home of Neil and Jennifer Fair (Westover, Mill Lane, Underriver).

(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.

Michael Cooke

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This year's Parish Christmas Card

We are very grateful to all those children from St Margaret's church's Sunday Club who responded to the invitation to provide the picture for the joint parish Christmas card. As last year (when the pictures came from St Lawrence's parish) it was difficult from so many good ones to select the winning design – but in the end we chose that by Madeleine Wells, aged 8. (Even for Christmas, note the graves – drawn without knowing the themes of the Vicar's letter.) Thank you! We are sure everyone is delighted.

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Service Times: Sincere Apologies from last Month

We are so sorry that the times of two important services last month (Remembrance Sunday and 25th November) were wrongly printed. We know that a good number arrived early for the Remembrance service and were disappointed. We apologise profusely. Although very rare, it is inevitable that occasionally such errors will occur. If you see a time which doesn't look right, please either phone the vicarage, or check the outside church noticeboard, or (if you have internet access) visit our website www.sealstlawrence.org.uk These latter will always be most up-to-date!

Services in December and January

Please note (and also see Page 5)

- (a) Our monthly **Sunday School is on 9th** (not 16th) - Yes, the *second* Sunday in the month, because on the third it's our Carol Service.
- (b) Normal 9:45am service of Morning Prayer on **23rd December**.
- (c) We are delighted to be welcoming **Fleur Parratt** as our preacher and helper at our service of healing on **Sunday 13th January**. As many will remember, Fleur was with us for six weeks last Easter as a Reader-in Training, and since then has been involved in a healing course run at her home parish, St Matthews' in Southborough. It will be lovely to have her with us again, and to catch up on her news.

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From the Registers

21st October - Holy Baptism of **Georgia Alice Brown**, infant daughter of Craig and Marie of Flaneswood.

4th November - Holy Baptism of **Ena Grace Amelia Clarke** of Bitchet Green, and infant daughter of Alastair and Louise.

4th November - Holy Baptism of **George John Brown** of Stone Street, 4-year old son of Paul and Liz.

We wish all three families great joy in the new life begun in the Lord.

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Christingles on Christmas Eve (5:30 pm service)

As in previous years we expect this candlelit service to be amongst the most popular of the Christmas season. The main event is the Blessing of the Crib, but as in past years we shall also be following the Moravian custom of children building a Christingle and lighting its candle. But this year, unlike previous years, we are not offering any collecting tube – but we still ask everyone to please still continue to mark Advent by laying aside a daily gift and bring the resulting money to the service – the collection will be for Demelza House Hospice for Children

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Prayer Points for this month

➤ Those who are alone or have no family with whom to share Christmas - and for those who provide shelter and friendship.

Christmas and St Luke's Gospel

It is to St Luke's wonderful gospel that many Christians turn as the year draws to a close and Christmas approaches, for it is to St Luke that we owe the fullest account of the nativity.

Luke alone tells us the story of Mary and the angel's visit to her, and has thus given the Church the wonderful Magnificat of Mary.

Luke alone tells us the story of Simeon's hymn of praise, thus giving us the wonderful Nunc Dimmittis. Imagine an Anglican evensong without the Nunc Dimmittis.

Luke alone tells us the story of how the angels appeared to the shepherds and how the shepherds then visited the infant Jesus. So – imagine Christmas cards and nativity scenes every year without the shepherds arriving to visit baby Jesus. Imagine school nativity plays without our children dressed as shepherds or sheep. So – thank you, Luke!

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Headlines of the Year... that didn't quite make it

- Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted
- Drunk Gets Nine Months in Violin Case
- Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim
- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge
- Children Make Nutritious Snacks
- Include your Children when Baking Biscuits

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Magazine Subscriptions to be £6 (or £9 if posted)

Despite subscriptions to this magazine not covering its costs, we have held the price constant for a number of years. But now, because of ever rising costs, the annual subscription (11 copies, including one double issue) for 2008 for copies hand-delivered (or collected from church) needs to be £6.00. With the additional rise in postage, the corresponding cost for posted issues will be £9.00. We are sorry for these necessary increases, but trust we all understand the need.

To help Rosemary Attenborough, who keeps track of subscriptions, could we please ask that we all pay our annual subscriptions soon – either to the person who distributes, or directly to Rosemary (her address is Coldhanger, Seal Chart, Sevenoaks, TN15 0EJ). In this Christmas/New Year season of good will to all, please let us all resolve to do the Christian thing and save us all having to chase for subscriptions!

Michael Cooke

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Parish Magazine 2008

May I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all who have supported the production and distribution of the magazine this year, to Julian Gilchrist for his very speedy service in printing the magazine, to Felicity Corbally and Gretel Wakeham for collating and stapling, to Rosemary Attenborough who has organised distribution, and to all those who distribute the finished job to our subscribers. Above all, may I thank all those who have contributed copy, and here I must mention the staff at the Parish Pump Website who have provided a wealth of additional material. Regretably, the artist who has drawn the Mousehole page that I have included each month, is giving up and this issue contains her last contribution.

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

Issue	Copy by	In Church on	Issue	Copy by	In Church on
January	No Magazine		July	Wed 18 Jun	Sun 29 Jun
February	Wed 16 Jan	Sun 27 Jan	August	Wed 16 Jul	Sun 27 Jul
March	Wed 13 Feb	Sun 24 Feb	September	Wed 20 Aug	Sun 31 Aug
April	Wed 19 Mar	Sun 30 Mar	October	Wed 17 Sept	Sun 28 Sept
May	Wed 16 April	Sun 27 Apr	November	Wed 15 Oct	Sun 26 Oct
June	Wed 14 May	Sun 25 May	December	Wed 19 Nov	Sun 30 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. If you can e-mail your copy to me, this is the best way. Needless to say, I will welcome any and all the contributions you I receive. *Ed*

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Another Couple of Saints

Eloi – a patron saint for the euro?

It's nearly six years since Europe switched over to the euro. (January 2002) So this is a good time to remember Eloi, bishop of Noyon, who was born in Gaul, and started out as a goldsmith. He entered the service of Bobon, the royal treasurer. He went on to become master of the mint for King Clotaire 1 of France. His reputation was based not only on excellent design, but also on economical use of materials. Not a bad example for the makers of the euro!

Eloi's craftsmanship and friendship with the king made him very wealthy. He gave much of his money to the poor, built a number of churches, ransomed slaves, and founded a convent in Paris and a monastery in Solignac.

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.)

Over the centuries many, including children, sailors, unmarried girls, pawnbrokers and moneylenders have claimed him as their patron.

Perhaps it was on account of S 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 - Krishkinkle 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.

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