

This Week at St Mary's

10th January 2021

POSITIVE FOR CHRISTMAS

Your likely reaction on reading this title may be to assume this means I, or someone else tested positive for Covid, such is our present conditioning. That's not what I am writing about - although for some, Christmas 2020 will forever be so remembered. I'm going to highlight some wonderful positives which St Mary's enjoyed - there are others which could have been included.

On the Saturday before Christmas the children gathered in the church for a Christingle celebration. Everyone realised how much we had missed being together. It was very moving to see the children again - all of them, and indeed more. The quality of the unaccompanied singing (outside) was of course top drawer. Everything had been beautifully organised as families on their tables made up their Christingle oranges, which I was then asked to light. When can we do something similar again, the parents asked?

We had duplicate Carol Services so that in addition to Christmas Eve, there was one on the Sunday before. That service for me had particular resonance. Being present in the beautifully candlelit church with utterly amazing music and the familiar readings allowed a release of emotion, of so much that had built up. It was as though God was letting the occasion take it all.

Two opportunities for anyone to join singing carols (outside) had been arranged. Doing so on Christmas morning in glorious crisp sunshine I will never forget. Joanna arrived as the singing was starting and heard the sound from near Weekday Cross. It was wonderfully simple, we lit the final candle on the advent ring, we remembered the words of the angel to the shepherds and had a couple of prayers. Unselfconsciously we sang wonderful and familiar carols - in public and loud. Out came praise to God, for His great gift of Christ.

Tom Gillman

NIGHT WATCHMAN'S NATIVITY

This Contemporary Gospel setting of the Nativity, so the Narrator explains, is told from the angle of the *minimum-wage guys who were hired to look after the sheep by the real shepherds who were nicely tucked up in their beds. These Men of the Night were the social rejects, the disgraced, the drifters, the foreigners, unwelcome in synagogue or home.*

This production (still to be found on Sky Arts catch up) sees the shepherds without their flowing robes, crooks made of hazel wood, snow-white sheep - a beautiful story, a fairy tale.

No surprise that the night watchmen were scared when the bright angel appeared. They'd spent their lives avoiding the light, hoping the bad things everyone said they'd done, the bad people everyone said that they were, wouldn't be seen by all the everyones. Hoping to avoid the judgment thrown in their faces all their lives. But the angel didn't come to bring judgment. He told them not to be afraid, told them he had good news, that they were going to be the ones to give that news to everyone else. Other than sheep, they'd not been given much responsibility. The angel told them about the saviour, a baby born in a barn in Bethlehem that very night ... and then, then came the singing, the music, the deafening sound of ten thousand voices in harmony, noble and strong and crushingly beautiful.

It didn't take long to find the family. They knew all the animal stalls in town, because they'd slept in them. So there they were, the mother, the father and the infant whose first night on earth was in a rough sleepers spot in Bethlehem. Unused to love, they walked into a wall of it. But in their breathless tears there was joy, and peace and love, they were worthy to be loved, to be respected, to be free.

BARBARA DAVIS' FUNERAL is on Friday 15th January at St Mary's and will of course be subject to Covid limitations, therefore by invitation only.

CALLED TO SERVE - 4 evenings designed to allow people to hear God's voice for where we are called to serve be it workplace, church, or community, by licensed or ordained ministry, chaplaincy, mission or otherwise. 25 Jan, 1, 8, 22 Feb 7.30-9pm on Zoom. Contact: kate.hurst@southwell.anglican.org

DAN CLARK - CONGRATULATIONS. Rosemary and Mike's son was awarded an OBE for services to Clinical Engineering. Dan is Vice President of Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, on behalf of which he has led locally and nationally, working with the Cabinet Office, the NHS and others to establish a national technical due diligence team evaluating non-standard ventilators and infusion devices brought in rapidly to support the NHS Covid-19 patient surge.

THE MEADOWS FOODBANK - this week they welcome toiletries, washing up items, pasta sauce, sugar, tinned veg & meat. Contact Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com

GIVING MONEY - Best done online via **Donate button** on the website. Preferable from St Mary's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest St Mary's PCC 560061 00834602) For **one-off donations**, cheque, cash yellow envelope, in chest by South Porch Door.

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

**St Mary's is usually open for private prayer and reflection
11.30-2.30pm each weekday - please call to confirm if visiting
as arrangements could be changed at short notice.**

***All public worship has been cancelled until further notice.
St Mary's will livestream 11.00am Sunday Service - please see
our website and follow the link, including for Order of Service***

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR
Estelle Barks, John Bowers, Harry Palmer, Mike Ridley

Email admin@stmarynotts.org Web stmarysnottingham.org
Facebook Instagram Twitter [@stmarysnotts](https://www.instagram.com/stmarysnotts)
Office Mon-Fri 10-3pm 0115 958 2105
Rev'd Tom Gillum 07825 041 432 tom.gillum@stmarynotts.org