

This Week at St Mary's

8th January 2023

CHRISTMAS IN UKRAINE

It felt encouraging that the Russian Patriarch Kirill called for a truce from the fighting in Ukraine for this, their Christmas weekend. Mistrust between the warring nations is such that it seems impossible.

75% of Ukrainians identify with their Orthodox church. A considerable number of Russians do also. Stories of hope have been coming out of Ukraine with people crying out to God in the terrible suffering and finding the presence of Christ in wonderful ways.

Orthodox (eastern) Christianity lays great emphasis on the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus. Not to say we don't in the west, but historically the Crucifixion and Resurrection for us have been central. Orthodox Christians emphasise that because of the Incarnation, everything is different. God, through assuming humanity, makes it possible for man to participate in divinity. (NB many Anglicans would definitely go along with this.) The door is open for the Christian to strive to acquire Godly virtue, all has been made possible for us. As St Basil stated: "We are to strive to become little gods, within God, little Jesus Christs within Jesus Christ".

Let us pray for our Ukrainian and Russian sisters and brothers over this weekend as they celebrate the incarnation. Even in our secular culture, many in the west still find the celebration of the birth of Christ brings us together in rich ways. Let us pray that the warring nations know true Godly virtue, the mind, the heart and the way of Jesus Christ. Let us pray for peacemakers working behind the scenes that their voices be heeded.

As it needed a miracle of the Holy Spirit 2000 years ago for God's presence to come to our planet, our deepest longing is that God does the same in our time, the urgency for which can hardly be in doubt.

Tom Gillman

LAST WEEK AT ST MARY'S

Wednesday - BBC East Midlands feature on the repairs to Gable End Wall so that our bells be rung in time for the King's coronation.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001grth> 15.27 in.

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

SERVICES

10.45am SUNG EUCHARIST FOR EPIPHANY (BCP)

also Audio Broadcast live via our website
(follow the link, including for Order of Service)

6.30pm EPIPHANY PROCESSION

6.15pm WEDNESDAY EVENSONG

12.45PM THURSDAY COMMUNION

6pm THURSDAY EVENING PRAYER ON SKYPE

EXPLORING FAITH GROUP - Exploratory meeting (with Tom) after both services this Sunday. Otherwise, please contact Tom if interested.

WORKPLACE WEDNESDAY at St Mary's, each week, a third space to work away from home & the office. 9 to 12pm, no fee or booking.

INSIGHT MEETING Wed 18 Jan 12-1.30 on **Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers**, with Rev'd Liam O'Boyle. At St Mary's, with light lunch - email lensimmonds@gmail.com for numbers.

MEADOWS FOODBANK needs UHT milk; pet food; items for Christmas - biscuits for cheese, nuts, mince pies, Christmas puddings and cakes, biscuit boxes, chocolates. Tues 5.30-7.15, Fri 10-12, Sat 11-1pm NG2 2JD

DONATIONS - Options for making a donation. **Online banking** (NatWest 56-00-61, St Mary's PCC a/c 00834602); cash or cheque in the donations chest; the **card reader**; via the **website**, or **standing order**, using **Gift Aid** if you are a UK tax-payer.