



THE LOOP

The Monthly Newsletter for the Parish of Isle of Dogs December 2009

CAROL SERVICES FOR 2009

CAROLS HAVE BECOME PART OF OUR CHRISTMAS IN CHURCH, BUT IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO: EVEN OUR CHRISTMAS HYMNS SET TO A WIDE VARIETY OF TUNES AND METRE ARE A RELATIVELY RECENT ADDITION TO THE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS. BEFORE THEY BECAME POPULAR (AND ACCEPTED) THE NORM IN CHURCH WAS TO SING METRICAL SETTINGS OF THE PSALMS TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF TUNES. THOMAS HARDY REMEMBERS THOSE TIMES IN HIS NOVEL UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

CAROLS WERE FOLK MUSIC, AND NOT CHURCH MUSIC. THEY OFTEN WERE WRITTEN TO DANCE TO AS MUCH AS TO SING. OLD CAROLS OFTEN ADD ELEMENTS OF LEGEND TO THE STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH, LIKE THE WAY THAT GOD'S CREATION DEFENDS THE VIRTUE OF MARY IN THE CHERRY TREE CAROL, BENDING A CHERRY TREE BEFORE HER, SO THAT SHE CAN EAT CHERRIES FROM ITS TOPMOST BRANCHES. MUSICOLOGISTS AND COMPOSERS LIKE RALPH VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS FOUND A RICH SOURCE OF CHURCH MUSIC IN THESE SIMPLE, FAITHFUL AND SOMETIMES ECCENTRIC PIECES OF FOLK MUSIC.

THE ANNUAL SERVICES OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS THAT ARE PERFORMED IN CHURCHES AND COLLEGE CHAPELS UP AND DOWN THE LAND SHOW OFF THESE OLD CAROLS AT THEIR BEST, SUNG SWEETLY BY CHOIRS, PERHAPS IN NEAR DARKNESS. THE WORDS THAT ARE SPOKEN ARE AS SIGNIFICANT AS THE WORDS THAT ARE SUNG – READINGS WHICH DESCRIBE THE INTENTION OF GOD TO REDEEM HIS WORLD, THAT TRACK THE HOPES OF THE PROPHETS, THAT DESCRIBE THE COMING OF JESUS.

THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF READINGS, THE ONE USED AT KING'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE, ENDS WITH THE READING OF THE START OF ST JOHN'S GOSPEL 'IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD...' WE SHALL BE HEARING THIS PATTERN OF READINGS ON THE 20TH DECEMBER WHEN OUR OWN CHOIR SINGS A CAROL SERVICE AT 6.30PM.

BEFORE THEN, STILL IN THE FAMILIAR CAROL SERVICE 'MOULD' BUT WITH DIFFERENT READINGS, WE HAVE A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR ADVENT ON TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER, LED BY THE GENTLEMEN AND LADIES OF CLARE COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE. YOU MAY WELL BE ASKING WHAT THE CONNECTION WITH CLARE IS; EACH CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE HAS BEEN GIVEN A LONDON BOROUGH TO GET INVOLVED IN, ESPECIALLY IN SCHOOL WORK. TOWER HAMLETS HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO CLARE COLLEGE, AND MEMBERS OF THE CHOIR ARE ALREADY WORKING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OUR AREA TO MAKE MUSIC. THE BENEFIT, OF COURSE, IS TWO-WAY. THIS SERVICE IS AT 7.30PM ON THE 15TH DECEMBER.

PERHAPS YOU DON'T WANT TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO HEAR CAROLS BEAUTIFULLY SUNG; THE LONDON DOCKLANDS SINGERS ARE PERFORMING A CHARITY CAROL CONCERT ON SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER AT CHRIST CHURCH, IN FAVOUR OF THE APPEAL TO BUILD A NEW ST LUKE'S CHURCH AND CENTRE. THIS IS AT 7.30PM.

DETAILS OF OTHER CAROL SERVICES ARE ON THE WEBSITE:

WWW.PARISHIOD.ORG.UK

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you're not giving me what I asked for.

When I ask you to listen and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't be feeling the way I do, you are trampling on my feelings, which are my own.

When I ask you to listen to me and you tell me that you feel the same or nearly the same, you have stopped listening.

When I ask you to listen and you have to say or do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange to say.

LISTEN

All I asked for was that you should listen. Just hear me – don't talk at me or to me.

Advice I can get cheaply – a newspaper agony aunt is available for 50p.

I can do things for myself, I'm not helpless.

When you do something for me that I can or I need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness – you infantilise me.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can stop trying to convince you and start going about the business of understanding what's behind this feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious, even to me. I don't need advice.

So please just listen and hear me.

Anon

The Lord's Prayer

In primary school our teacher asked us to write out the Lord's Prayer in full, as he had heard a child in assembly saying "Our Arthur, who art in heaven, Harold be thy name." When we handed in our sheets of paper one boy had written "Arrow Head be thy name..." as he had been under the impression that God was a Red Indian. This had always amused me, so years later when my daughter Sarah came running home from her primary school telling me they had all learned the Lord's Prayer that day, I asked her to recite it to me. She began, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, the Vikings will come....." I wonder how many children, learning the Lord's Prayer parrot fashion, have similar stories.

Lynn Collier

The Trevor Huddleston Fund for Children

The Trevor Huddleston Fund for Children is a charity which is run from within the parish with the object of helping to relieve poverty amongst children who live on the Isle of Dogs. This was started by Bishop Trevor Huddleston when he was the Bishop of Stepney. Most years we are able to give in excess of £6,000. This is mostly through grants to the Island's schools. The trustees consist of Head Teachers from local schools as well as a health visitor. The Chair is the Vicar and the Clerk David Longbottom.

At a recent trustee meeting grants of £3,000 were agreed for the local primary and secondary schools.

David Longbottom

FASTING AND PRAYING – A DAY OF PENITENCE

The 2nd of December might not be a red letter day in your diary; no great saint is associated with the day, but this year the parish has decided to mark the day by fasting and prayer. The suggestion arose because of the problem of how to live out the season of Advent. The Church sets before us two great feasts in the year and helps us to prepare for them by also identifying seasons of penitence so that we can prepare ourselves properly for the event. The feasts are of course Easter and Christmas. While we get the idea of Lent, we seem to have lost Advent in the run up to Christmas.

Advent and Lent are seasons of penitence. Penitence is a very old fashioned idea and in the secular mind, is associated with extreme forms of physical denial. This is not what the Church means by penitence. It is the combination of two things so as to achieve one outcome. The first is fasting. Fasting is denying ourselves those things that we long for. It may be food, it may be that new cardigan we liked but don't actually need. It might be taking less sleep, or not watching television. The list is endless and consists of some form of self-denial. Each individual should choose that which is most appropriate for themselves. Most importantly, it should not be harmful to health – diabetics should not give up food for example!

Time spent in fasting frees up time for prayer. The Church assumes that we spend time every day praying. When not engaged in the activity associated with our fast, time is freed-up for prayer – prayer as time spent with God, not necessarily reciting any words or attending any church service, often just waiting on God.

The combination of these activities is penitence, and penitence is change. It is not some extreme form of self-discipline, but rather, those things we do to our body in order to achieve a change in the spirit. It is the change in the spirit that the Church seeks for us by giving the season of Advent. Without such change, we cannot celebrate the feast of Christmas properly. Fasting and prayer is our lead into Christmas.

To that end, 2nd December has been set aside to get us into swing of Advent when all else is pointing too quickly and immediately at Christmas. A range of activities are planned at Christ Church for the day. It will start with Morning Prayers at 6am to catch the early birds before they go to work. There will be midday prayers (yes - at 12 midday!) and then at 5pm Exposition of Blessed Sacrament. At 5.30pm there will be Evening prayer with a Service of Reconciliation and Absolution. For those who wish it there will be individual confession available in St John's Chapel. The day will end with Mass in St John's Chapel and it will include a healing liturgy.

All are encouraged to identify those parts of the day that they can be part of. Should you have any questions about this, please ask one of the clergy.

Fr Tom TSSF

Posada

The word *posada* means "shelter" or "lodging." This Advent custom is popular throughout the Spanish speaking world and re-enacts Mary's and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their difficult search for lodging along the way. In Latin American countries the ritual lasts for nine days (December 16-24) representing the months of Mary's pregnancy. A group of people travel from house to house on their route, taking the role of pilgrims seeking lodgings. Those inside the homes are the innkeepers who refuse them lodgings. At the last home all are invited in for prayer and refreshments.

This Advent the parish bible study group will be taking part in this with the Mary and Joseph figures from a crib going to the houses of each of its members. When they reach their final destination, on Christmas Eve, they will be put in the crib from which they started and it will be blessed.

The parish bible study group meet each Wednesday at 11.15am at 87 Saunders Ness Road. Just now we are studying the first half of Revelations. When we finish this, just before Christmas, we will be reading the three letters of St John before doing the second half of Revelations. For more information, if you would like to join us, contact David Longbottom or Carol Stanley.

David Longbottom

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Baptisms in November: Nicola Doris Wright
Carly McCreaner
Freddie Wright

"Fight valiantly under the banner of Christ against sin, the world and the devil and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to the end of your lives"

Weddings in November: Larry Alexander Thompson and Emma Louise Mann
Ruslan Hnidin and Irina Jurovska

"God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them"

Deaths in November: Ernesto Leal
Patricia Albany
Doreen Isitt

"Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them"

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Praying for people

In Christ Church and St Luke's there are green forms for you to fill in if you wish to have a prayer said for yourself or someone else

We are planning to publish The Loop every first Sunday of the month along with the Parish diary which also comes out at that time

