

All Saint's Church of England, Petersham

STANMORE ROAD, PETERSHAM (Opposite Fire Station)

Two minutes from Petersham Railway Station

Rector Rev. S. W. Gissing, Th.L. — Phone: 569-4735

DECEMBER, 1980 — JANUARY, 1981



SUNDAY, 14th DECEMBER

7 p.m.: Combined Churches' Carols Service
(arranged by Ministers' Fraternal)

**This year, to be held at All Saints' — conducted by
representatives of the Churches**

CHRISTMAS DAY



THURSDAY

7.30 a.m.: Holy Communion

9.30 a.m.: Family Communion

WEDNESDAY, 31st DECEMBER

11.30 p.m.: Holy Communion

From your Minister's Desk



My dear friends,

What on earth makes December 25 such a significant date? There's no doubt that it is most unlikely to be the real date of the birth of Jesus. In fact, it's fairly widely thought to have been in the September period of the particular year. We'll find now and then someone who therefore says that we shouldn't celebrate the Birth of Christ at any time, seeing the actual date isn't definitely known. I don't feel that's a sensible re-action. Oh, I realise the date we keep has echoes of a pagan festival—and I know that the modern style of celebration has succumbed to a great deal to the overtones of the old pre-Christian spirit.

But this time is as good as any to recall and proclaim the self-giving love of God which the birth of Jesus demonstrated in a way second only to the later action on Calvary. Bethlehem marked the beginning of a new depth of experience of God in the life of man. God committed Himself to you and me in a way that leaves us breathless when we really grasp the reality of the Nativity. We mostly miss this real thrill of Christmas because of the cloying effect of the secular festivities that smother the occasion. The self, the world and the devil will ever strive to cloud the real meaning of God and His relationship with man. The superficial "joy" of the Festive Season tends to rob us of the greatest treasure — the quickening of the experience of God Himself. At Christmas we are reminded how He abandoned Himself to us. He counted not the being God something to be grasped and clung to, but humbled Himself to be found with us in fashion as a man (as Paul points out in Philipians).

Really, Christmas has a most surprising — even staggering — truth that is unique among the great religions. God searches out man — and gives Himself to man!! And that makes Christmas a parable of true Christian experience. Such experience always has in it the element of surprise. The wonder of it will ever startle us into adoration.

We must never reach a dead level of uniformity — if and

when we do, the zest goes out of our experience and faith and we become lifeless.

What brings a thrill to the heart is the effect of some new obedience. We are challenged to do some hard thing — it may be great or small. At first we may seek to evade the challenge — and generally we can find ways of escape. But that way misses the real fun of living. To find ourselves challenged — may I say “dared” — by God to some high summons, and to respond, it may almost be recklessly, is to discover how marvellously God redeems His promises, how utterly faithful He is, and even to share something of His own being. Obedience is really the BIG word in all Christian living.

If life loses its glow, the cause may be sought in some disobedience. If my life lacks power it's because I'm evading some command of God to go with Him out of the shallows of life into the deeps. If I am depressed it's because I'm failing to respond to some call of God.

“To obey is better than sacrifice.” I can sacrifice time and talents and possessions more easily than I can obey some difficult self-abandoning summons that may take me to the point of failure and humiliation. Life with God is an adventure. The adventure comes in obeying the next command. That lies around the corner after the first obedience. That's how God keeps us wondering and alive.

This is a truth of being “in Christ” that Christmas would speak to you and me about. He is an adventurous God. The extent to which He will go in self-giving for the good of you and me is stupendous. If we want to know the God of Christmas we will have to walk with Him however uncomfortable and hard it may be. Once we neglect that recklessness that is characteristic of Him the thrill and meaning will go out of our faith.

May this Christmas your style of celebration be such that you find the thrill of His companionship vital and meaningful once more.

Your sincere friend in Christ Jesus.

S. W. GISSING

WALTERS & SON

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Offices and Chapels:

433-35 NEW CANTERBURY ROAD, DULWICH HILL—560-9999

890 CANTERBURY ROAD, LAKEMBA—759-4044

You are invited to enquire about our funeral fund.

People of all ages are accepted without medical examination.



The Churchwardens and their families join with the Rectory Family in expressing the wish that you may have an encouraging and lastingly joyful remembrance of God's wondrous GIFT, so that you may know the feelings of the hymn writer who sang of being "lost in wonder, love and praise".



1980 ANNUAL FETE RESULTS

Again this year the Lord blessed us with good success. We have a wonderful band of hard workers — and they were strengthened by Him to achieve another record day. The following figures indicate the day's takings on various stalls — of course, there will be some adjustments because of expenses — but they are a cause of much Praise to God.

White Elephant \$1,066; Mrs. Jones \$1,122; Mrs. Champion \$858; Mrs. Rhule \$1,061; Jewellery \$285; Bookstall \$316; Hoop-la \$110; Hot Dogs \$35; Refreshments \$168; Hamburgers, etc. \$181; Cakes and Sweets \$500; Pottery \$491; Groceries \$465; Plants \$191; Train \$84; Fruit and Vegetables \$50; Painted Faces \$22; Donations \$203. TOTAL \$7,213.

OUR THANKS GO TO ALL WHO WORKED SO HARD AND TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED US!!!

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THINKING OF OTHERS AT CHRISTMAS - - -

At this time of the year we have a ready opportunity to put our Christmas faith into action:

The Australian Council of Churches renews its request for contributions to the CHRISTMAS BOWL APPEAL A Bowl on our Chhristmas Table to receive from all present the price of their meal to go to provide for depressed peoples overseas.

The Church of England Homes seeks gifts toward making it a happier time for those who live in our institutions.

The Home Mission Society seeks gifts toward making a few underprivileged children and adults living in poverty in our metropolitan area happy.

Put YOUR GIFT in a clearly marked envelope and place in the Offertory on Christmas Day; or earlier if possible.



DATES TO REMEMBER . . .

- December 2: 1.30 p.m., Women-in-Friendship "End-of-Year" Celebration.
- 6: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Kindergarten pre-Christmas Party.
- 8: 7.15 p.m., Parish Council.
- 11: 12.45 p.m., Senior Parishioners' "End-of-Year" Party.
7.30 p.m., Theatre Party to "JONI".
- 13: Morning Newspaper Collection.
- 14: 7 p.m., COMBINED CHURCHES CAROLS SERVICE at All Saints'.
- 19: 6 p.m. Parish Christmas Family Barbeque.
- 25: Christmas Day Services:
7.30 a.m., Holy Communion.
9.30 a.m., Family Communion.

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TO THINK ON . . .

"The world does not so much need men of great intellect, as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle."

—E. G. WHITE.

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The PULPIT DIGEST of December, 1967, published a sermon in which the preacher made the following statement: "During the First World War, the Society of Friends printed the Sermon on the Mount as a separate pamphlet without comment, for distribution among the allied armies. Both the British and French governments banned it, and forbade its distribution among their troops on the ground that it was subversive of national policy."

—Frank Holliday Ferris in "Food for the Full-Grown".



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

I won't look back — God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets;
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,
Who mercifully forgives — and then forgets.
I won't look forward, God sees all the future —
The road that, short or long, will lead me home;
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear with me the burdens that may come.
But I'll look up into the face of Jesus,
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled,
For there is joy and love and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

—Annie Johnson Flint.

ALL SAINTS' WOMEN-IN-FRIENDSHIP

Our group will have its final "get-together" on Tuesday, 2nd December, when we have our Pre-Christmas Celebration in the Parish Hall at 1.30 p.m. Our special guest and speaker will be Mrs. Laurie Waller.

Will all readers take this as a personal invitation to join us on this occasion. We would make you feel very welcome, and assure you of a very happy afternoon. We are looking forward to having with us guests from several of the local nursing homes as well as many friends of the Parish.

We have planned a very interesting programme for the first few months of 1981, and would really be delighted to have your company. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month (not January) at 12.30 p.m. for a 'Business Meeting, and 1.30 for our programme of the day. If you feel shy to just "come along", a phone call to me at the Rectory (569-4735) or to Ida Barrett, our Secretary (569-2291) would be welcomed.

May your Christmas be enriched by the knowledge that our Heavenly Father loves each of us. So much so that He sent His Son, Jesus, to live among us and to die for us. And, more than that, He rose from the dead and gives us all the opportunity to have this Resurrection Power in our lives.

BETTY GISSING, Chairman.

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FLORAL TRIBUTES

We are most grateful to all who help beautify our church on Sundays by contributing towards flowers as a way of remembering loved ones.

- December 7: Mr. and Mrs. Swankie and family, in memory of mother and grandmother.
Mrs. Willis, in memory of Mrs. Willis, Senr.
- 14: Mr. Minitier, John and Margaret, in memory of Mrs. Minitier.
- 21: Mrs. E. Wiley, in memory of her mother, Mrs. George Bearpark.
- 25: Barbara and Stella, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, sister Ena, and friends Dorrie and Sally.
- 28: Mrs. Willis, in memory of Mrs. Shiels.

Friends who would appreciate the opportunity for making remembrance of folk by placing floral decorations in All Saints' are asked to contact the Rector as early as possible—say by six weeks prior to the selected date. This will help in organising the details and recording the Memorial in the Chronicle.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

(Martha Snell Nicholson)

Suppose that Christ had not been born
 That far away Judean morn;
 Suppose that God, Whose mighty Hand
 Created worlds, had never planned
 A Way for men to be redeemed.
 Suppose the Wise Men only dreamed
 The guiding star whose light
 Still glows down through the centuries.
 Suppose Christ never walked here in men's sight
 Our blessed Way and Truth and Light.
 Suppose He'd counted all the cost
 And never cared that we were lost
 And never died for you and me
 Nor shed His Blood on Calvary
 Upon a shameful Cross.
 Suppose that having died He never rose,
 And there was none with power to save
 Our souls from darkness and the grave!
 These things that I've "supposed" — are so
 As far as piteous heathen know!

WORSHIP
ARRANGEMENTS AT
ALL SAINTS

**MORNINGS at 9.30 a.m.:-**

Holy Communion on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays.

Morning Prayer on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Family Service is the 3rd Sunday.

SUNDAY SCHOOL is at 9.30 a.m.

KINDERGARTEN is at 9.55 a.m.

EVENINGS at 7.00 p.m.:-

(This changes to 5.00 p.m. during winter months.)

Holy Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Evening Prayer on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays.

Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals by arrangement with the Rector.