



St Paul's Church

Dear all,

Oh the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful
And since we've no place to go
Let it snow let it snow let it snow

These are some of the lyrics from that famous song 'Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow', written in July 1945, in the midst of a heat wave, by Sammy Cahn and put to music by Jule Styne. It was first recorded by Vaughn Monroe that same year and became a Christmas hit, and then went on to be recorded by many famous names such as Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra and, more recently, Michael Bublé.

Once you start singing the song you can't get it out of your head. It came to my mind last Sunday as the snow fell just as we had finished the carol service at St Nicholas Church. The sudden downfall caused a degree of inconvenience the following day as schools closed and travel was disrupted – I was particularly disappointed as a school concert, due to be in church, had to be cancelled which was a great shame for all those that had put a lot of hard work into proceedings.

I have no doubt that many took the opportunity to enjoy the snow and I saw families out pulling sleds with excited children. I cannot deny that the blanket of snow made everything feel more 'Christmassy', although this sort of scene would not have played any part in that first Christmas. There is much about the nativity story, as we often see it presented, that does not ring true to the actual events on the ground all those years ago in another part of the world, however, as a Christian, the meaning behind the story is clear and, for me, is summed up in the word 'EMMANUEL', meaning 'God with us'.

During advent, the lead up to Christmas, we sing the advent carol 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel', which, like many carols, has a sense of longing and expectation that stretches beyond Christmas and to the eventual return of Christ.

COME, LORD JESUS, COME
Rev Chris

p.s.

Next week's update will cover the two-week Christmas & New Year period. The first update of the New Year will be on the 6th January.

Please note amendments to services on 1st January;

- There will be a short 'said' Holy Communion service at 10am at St Nicholas Church and then the same at 11am at St Paul's Church.
- Oasis in the Afternoon, at St Nicholas, will be on the **8th January at 5pm** and will be an outdoor 'Christingle' service with bonfire and hot dogs.

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

All services are in church, zoom is available for some services.

SUNDAY 18th DECEMBER - 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10 am Experimental Sunday - Rev Anthea

SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS EVE

4 pm - Crib & Christingle Service

SUNDAY 25th DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY

10 am – Christmas Service

SUNDAY 1st JANUARY – 2nd SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

11 am Communion (said)

SUNDAY 8th JANUARY – Epiphany

10 am Holy Communion

EVENTS

SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER

2.30 pm Christingle making (children must be accompanied by an adult)

FOOD BANK

The last delivery before Christmas will be **Thursday 22 December**

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 18th December 2022

‘His name will be the hope of all the world.’ (Matthew 12: 21)

This week we give thanks:

- For the hope and peace of Jesus this Christmas.
- For the wonder of the Christmas story as we tell it again to our families, friends and neighbours.

Please pray for:

- The families of the three boys who lost their lives after falling into an icy lake in Solihull, and for the young boy that remains in a critical condition in hospital.
- The loved ones of those who died in the explosion at a residential block in Jersey.
- All who are struggling to keep warm and safe during this spell of severe cold weather; pray too for all those hosting ‘warm welcome’ spaces for people finding it hard to pay their heating costs.
- Strength for those around the world who celebrate Christmas at risk of persecution.
- Our Church family, especially all who are struggling; and for Hazel, Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Carol, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen, Meaghan and Libby.
- The residents and staff of Maidstone Care Centre, and for Chris and Jenny as they take the Christmas story into the Home this week.
- You may like to reflect on how the events of this year may have affected your attitude to this Advent and to Christmas, and reflect too on your hopes and concerns for the coming year.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

Lord God, I give thanks that you accompany me every step of the way and I pray for new grace for the year ahead. Fill my heart, Lord, with wonder and praise now and always. Amen.