



St Paul's Church

Dear all,

MERRY CHRISTMAS, or in the (Spanish) words of the song that I have sung quite a lot in recent weeks at various school nativities "Feliz Navidad, próspero año y felicidad" (Merry Christmas, prosperous year and happiness). A great sentiment and I have enjoyed singing the song alongside the many carols that speak of the joy of the season as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Christmas Day is followed very quickly by New Year's Day when we engage in that sentiment of wishing others a happy and prosperous New Year.

It also takes us to a time, in the church calendar, when we move into the Epiphany season which is a festival commemorating the coming of the Magi (Wise men) to visit the Christ child, and as they do they bring significant gifts.

I don't want to get ahead of myself as we are only just celebrating Christmas Day itself, but I do want to consider the importance of gift giving in the context of how we respond to those for whom Christmas and the New Year will not be a time of prosperity and to encourage you to continue with your generous giving to the Foodbank. This important work makes a significant difference to many.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the gifts that have been provided over the course of the last year, and to those that have worked to distribute them. May the spirit of generosity and giving be as evident in the New Year and beyond.

Feliz navidad,
Rev Chris

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

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

SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS EVE

4 pm - Crib & Christingle Service

SUNDAY 25th DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY (Zoom)

10 am – Christmas Service

SUNDAY 1st JANUARY – 2nd SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

11 am Communion (said)

SUNDAY 8th JANUARY – Epiphany (Zoom)

10 am Holy Communion

EVENTS

SATURDAY 24th DECEMBER

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

SUNDAY 8th JANUARY

5 pm Oasis at St Nicholas, will be an outdoor 'Christingle' service with bonfire and hot dogs.

Prayer Resource for Christmas 2022

'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...' (Isaiah 9: 1a)

We thank God for:

- The birth of His Son that first Christmas, and for the people who He may have sent into our life as a gift, to show us something of himself.
- 2022, and as we look back, we give thanks for the good times and leave with God the struggles and worries of the world.

Please pray for:

- The peace and joy of Jesus to touch each person's heart this Christmas.
- God's love and hope to reach every corner of our world.
- The loved ones of all who have been killed or injured this year: in war-torn areas, terrorist attacks, road traffic accidents, natural and man-made disasters, and in other incidents around the world.
- All who have to work during the festive season; for the bereaved or those who are separated from loved ones; for people spending Christmas on their own or in unfamiliar surroundings.
- Our Church family: all who are struggling at this time; and for Hazel, Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Carol, Sandra and Brenda; and for Ruth, Helen, Meaghan and Libby, and for the residents and staff of Maidstone Care Centre.
- Charys, recovering after an operation on her broken leg, and for Brian who has had to sort out their house move on his own.
- Our memories of this year, leaving with God the struggles, worries and uncertainties faced and hopes dashed; and, as we look ahead, ask God to lift our eyes, renew our minds, soften our hearts, transform our lives and give us hope for the future.

Hope. Peace. Joy. Love.

It is about the light of the world that broke our fear.

An Emmanuel. A God who is here.