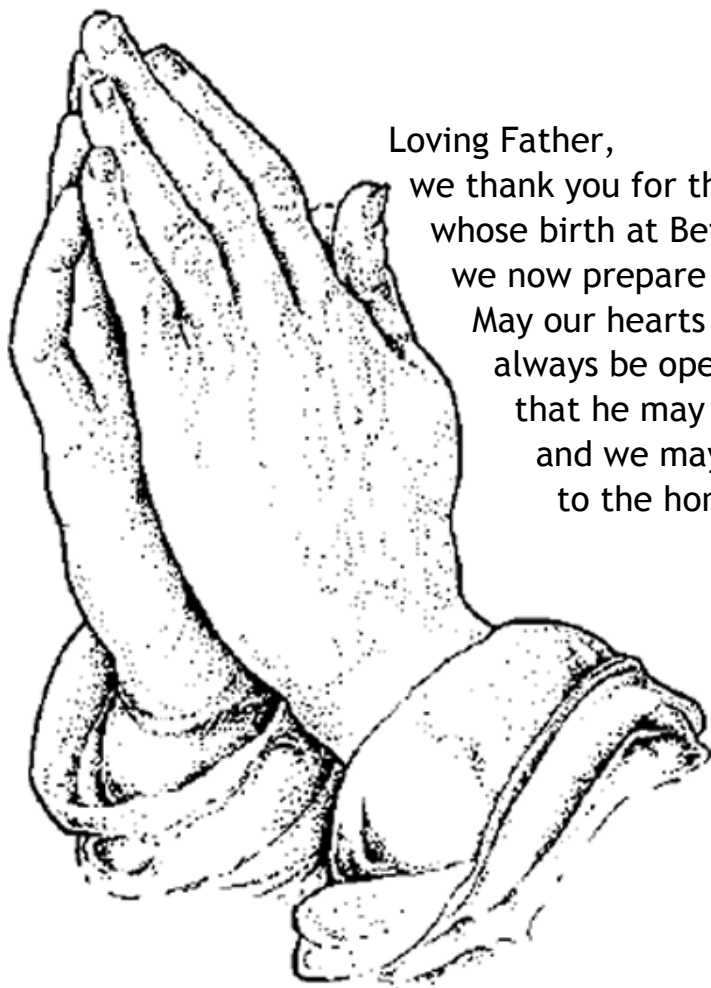


Prayer Leaflet

December 2006



Loving Father,
we thank you for the gift of your Son,
whose birth at Bethlehem
we now prepare to celebrate.
May our hearts and our homes
always be open to him,
that he may dwell with us for ever,
and we may serve him gladly all our days,
to the honour and glory of your name.

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin

Godmanchester

Good News For All

Luke 2:1-10

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

The angel who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds said that he came to them with “good news of great joy”. Many people today hear these words about “great joy” but don’t understand them. They relish the season as they decorate their homes, shop in cheerful shopping centers, attend festive parties, and exchange gifts with the ones they love. But after all the excitement subsides, they feel empty and joyless.

Others don’t like the season at all. Many have no money for gifts or decorations. Some have no friends with whom to celebrate. The atmosphere of cheer around them actually deepens their feelings of sadness.



The problem with both groups is that they wrongly identify the “great joy” of which the angel spoke. It is found not in the superficial fun but in the deeper meaning of the season. When Jesus was born, God became a man so that he could save us from our sins and give us the joyful prospect of eternity in heaven. That’s the true reason for joy. The shepherds went back to the cold nights and loneliness of their vocation, but they were “glorifying and praising God” (v20).

The real meaning of Christmas is indeed “good news of great joy . . . for all the people.

Our Prayers in December are especially requested for:

In the Church

Mothers' Union – for fellowship with our Deanery friends at our Advent meeting (5th).

Choir – that they may be uplifted and strengthened to lead our singing with enthusiasm during the busy and exciting season's of Advent and Christmas.

Flower Guild – that our decorations will increase the joy of Christmas for everyone visiting the church.

Magazine – for those people in the community for whom the magazine is their only contact with the Church.

Children's Church – in all their activities leading up to Christmas, and especially as they prepare to re-tell the Christmas story in their Nativity Play on Christmas Eve.

Churches Together – that they may have enough help to give lonely people companionship and love at the planned Christmas lunch.

For the evening [slightly academic] Bible Study Group which will meet initially at Linda and John Watson's at a date to be announced.

In the Community

for those who find Christmas a time of sorrow and desolation that they may feel strengthened by God's presence.

The school's in the town – for the health, safety, and well-being of Children and Staff in the run up to Christmas and through the winter months.

The charity the Church supports through the collection plate in December:
Small Donations made to various charitable causes, decided at the end of year Charities Committee meeting.

This month, in our Street Prayer Mission, we'll be praying for:

Week commencing Sunday 3 December:

No cards, but prayers said for those living outside of the Parish.

Week commencing Sunday 10 December:

Bayliss; Bluegate; Hudpool; Pinder Close; Malcoff

Week commencing Sunday 17 December:

Pettit Road; Windsor Road; Stuart Close; Ravenshoe.

Week commencing Sunday 24 December:

Buttermel; Brick Kiln; Ferndown; Golden Rod.

Week commencing Sunday 31 December:

**London Street; Betts Close; Barringer Court; Earning Street;
Sylton Close.**

Please remember the residents of the above streets, those known to us, and especially those, as yet, unknown to us.

Some Prayers for December:

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the
light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son Jesus Christ comes again as
judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive him,
who is our Lord and our God.

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son,
so we wait for his coming in glory;
bring us through the birth pangs of this present age
to see, with her, our great salvation
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

God in Trinity,
eternal unity of perfect love:
gather the nations to be one family,
and draw us into your holy life
through the birth of Emmanuel,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

