



Prayer Leaflet

December 2007



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

Bah! Humbug!

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Many Christians do a lot of complaining about Christmas. "Too commercial", they say. "It has pagan origins. We've got to put Christ back into Christmas". The only thing they haven't said is, "Bah! Humbug!"

Yes, Christmas has become very commercial. But as we purchase and wrap gifts, every present can be a silent testimony to the supreme gift, God's Son.



Yes, we know Santa is a myth and that reindeer don't fly. But instead of griping about these non-essentials, which only focuses on them, we need to call attention to the truth of the baby who was born in Bethlehem.

And what about the cry to put Christ back into Christmas? Well, he never left. Listen to the words of the carols heard over and over in stores, shopping centres, and on the streets. They proclaim more truth in one holiday than many pulpits do in three months. They put into the minds of young and old the wonderful truth that "the Lord is come" and that he is to be adored.

Christmas is not humbug: it's a season of opportunity to point others to our Saviour.

Our Prayers in December are especially requested for:

In the Church

The Church – for all people who will visit the Church over the Christmas period; that they will see the real meaning of Christmas.

Events – Crossroads Concert (Dec 1st) – please pray for this event, and those who will attend it.

Mothers Union – for those who find the Christmas season difficult to cope with because of poverty, family trauma, anniversaries of bereavement or any other aspect of their lives.

Pastoral Care Group – give thanks for the Group and all those who visit and care for others on a daily basis.

Choir – that more people will be moved to join us and that we stay healthy and energetic during the busy month of December.

St Mary's 0s-5s Group – give thanks for the provision of a new member of our committee and for those who kindly help each week with preparation and making of tea! And please pray for our parents/carers and their children that they will be touched by the message of Christmas and enjoy the festivities with their families.

Flower Guild – all the Charities who help the homeless at Christmastime.

In the Community

Pray for all those who fear the winter months, those who are unable to heat their homes adequately or afford nourishing food.

The schools in the town – for the health, safety, and well-being of the Children and Staff over 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 2 December:

Park Lane; The Avenue; Pavillion Close.

Week commencing Sunday 9 December:

Danes Croft; McCartney House; Woodley Court.

Week commencing Sunday 16 December:

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

Week commencing Sunday 23 December:

Bayliss; Bluegate; Hudpool; Pinder Close; Malcoff

Week commencing Sunday 30 December:

Pettit Road; Windsor Road; Stuart Close; Ravenshoe.

Please remember the residents of these 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.

