

Brookfield News

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When we are never made to wait

Recently the giant online retailer Amazon launched its latest innovation in ‘smart shopping’ - ‘Amazon Dash’. Now, with just a click of a button, you can order any one of 40 basic household items, and have it on our doorstep 24 hours later.

Dash is just the latest in an increasing number of products and services offered by retailers to satiate our every need, whim or desire in eye-wateringly fast times. At the click of our online fingers, we can have our favourite restaurant meal on our table within 30 minutes, or that iPad that little Jonny wants by bedtime. Yes, really.

So how do we respond to this reality of shopping becoming

an on-demand, instant gratification experience? As with all new technologies, the benefits are undoubted – imagine the joy of never running out of loo roll! But below the surface are potentially negative impacts that are deeply challenging to the fabric of society, which go beyond the obvious costs to the environment and smaller retailers.

Are we becoming a society that is losing the ability to wait, rely on our neighbours, or simply to ‘do without’? If we never have to wait for goods and services, how will that affect our ability to sit and listen to each other, to work through difficult relationships, to listen to our own thoughts, and especially to hear God? For those of us who have children, how will they learn

these essential life skills? The implications are profound.

There is no doubting the value God places on patience and waiting. The Bible is brimming with stories of people who had to wait for God to move – think of Abraham, Moses, or Anna. Patience and its close cousin self-control are two fruits of the Spirit.

Countering this ‘culture of now’ requires self-awareness, self-discipline and healthy boundaries. If we can pursue these, tough though it may be, they will not only keep us healthy, but might also serve as a witness to others that God’s ways are indeed good – even if not always as fast as we would like!

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Services

Sundays

11.00am Sung Eucharist

"Sunday Supplement" the children's activity takes place every Sunday in the sacristy during the service

Weekday Services

Said Eucharist

Tuesday 7.30pm

Wednesday 9.30am

Friday 7.30am

Saints' & Holy Days

18th-25th January The week of prayer for Christian Unity

25th January The Conversion of St Paul

9.30am Mass

Sunday 29th January The presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

11.00am Choral Mass and procession

Clergy Day off: Fr. Guy is off duty on Monday but don't hesitate to call him in emergencies.

The Vicar is usually available in the Vicarage, 85 Dartmouth Park Road, from 8:00pm until 9:00pm on Tuesdays for the purpose of interviews, arranging Baptisms, reading of Banns and Weddings etc. he is also available to hear confessions then or by appointment.

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Changes for religious broadcasting at the BBC

The former Labour minister James Purnell, who is the BBC's head of radio and education, is to take on responsibility for its religious affairs programming. BBC Director General Tony Hall said that the decision meant the BBC was taking "one of the big issues of our times" seriously.

The BBC seems set to diversify its religious programming, with increased multi-faith coverage, to better reflect the "role of religion in modern Britain". Director General Tony Hall, Lord Hall of Birkenhead, has said he will soon invite religious leaders to a round table to discuss how the broadcaster can improve on its existing output. A senior executive will also be appointed to design new programme concepts alongside what is currently delivered, such as Songs of Praise and Thought for the Day.

The Ven John Barton muses on the Epiphany

Lost and found

A little boy is lost in a crowded department store. Unknown to him, his mother is searching, too. Catching sight of her he cries, "Mummy, Mummy where have you been?" "I've been looking for you," she says as she gathers him up in her arms.

The Bible's wise men from the East were also searching for someone. If T. S. Eliot got it right in his poem 'The Journey of the Magi', theirs was a gruelling experience:

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long
journey..."

Eventually, they found "the One who has been born king of the Jews" and worshipped Him. After all that effort on their part, they

We, three kings?

They're there in most Nativity plays, resplendent in regal gowns and cardboard crowns, carrying their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Actually, the Church celebrates the coming of these exotic people to the stable at Bethlehem not at Christmas but now, in January, in a season called 'Epiphany'.

The word means 'revealing', and it reminds us that the Saviour was a gift to the whole world – even Gentiles from 'the East' were welcome at His coming. The story of the Wise Men, as we usually call them (but more accurately the Magi), is a 'revealing' – the 'new king' was to

might not have taken kindly to the suggestion that in reality they were responding to God's initiative. It takes a while for God-seekers - past and present - to accept that the human quest for truth is actually a response to God's inner prompting. The 17th Century scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal imagined Jesus saying: "Be of good cheer - you would not seek Me if you had not found Me."

Jesus summarised His mission as, "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost". When criticised for keeping bad company, He told the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the Prodigal Son.

The Bible unfolds the story of God in pursuit of a defiant human race. Adam and Eve are on the run from Him. They are prototypes of mor-

tals in every age, who have "have erred and strayed like lost sheep", in the words of the Book of Common Prayer. In the New Testament, the Pharisee Saul, convinced that he was already serving the Almighty by pursuing Christians, was actually resisting God, or "kicking against the goad". His moment of truth was dramatic and violent: a volte face accompanied by three days loss of sight.

John Newton was an 18th Century Captain of slave ships. He described his conversion thus: "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." It was an epiphany. Significantly, Epiphany is our name for the meeting of the Wise Men with Jesus, commemorated on 6th January and the weeks following.

be the Saviour of the world, 'good news for all people', as the angels proclaimed to the shepherds.

The name 'Magi' should alert us to their true role. They were 'wise' in the sense that they knew and studied the stars, but their primary trade was fortune-telling. 'Magi' is the root of our word 'magic', and people like them held the ancient world in thrall to their predictions. In the Greek and Roman world of

the time no major decision would be made without their sanction. Think of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the superstitious fear that dominated people's lives.

Yet when these powerful representatives of the world of magic, portent and fear came to the stable, they prostrated themselves before the infant Jesus, as they gave Him their gifts. Thus, as the first Christians saw it, the old world of fear and superstition gave way to the new world of love, grace and faith. That was the 'revealing' that we celebrate in Epiphany – not some elderly men bringing gifts to a baby, but a baby bringing to the world the greatest gift of all, a Saviour.



Whose head?

Take a look at a coin in your pocket. Chances are it has on it the Queen's portrait, a Latin inscription, a date and the value. In New Testament times coins were similar. They were gold, silver and copper, some with Latin or Greek and some with dates or values.

In the First Century everyday currency was rather like when you just got back from holiday abroad. You would have a pocket full of different currencies and have to sort them out. You have to change your dollars at a bank and not many places will take euro coins. There would be local Jewish coins, Roman Coins produced by the empire, local Greek coins for small states and foreign coins. You could only pay for some things with a particular type of coin. Temple taxes had to be paid with one sort,

Roman taxes with imperial coins and probably local purchases with local coins. That is why the Temple was full of money changers. Worshipers changed their local coins into the currency accepted by the Jewish treasury.

The Bible gives us lots of names of different coins and tells us what you could buy with them. In a famous example, Our Lord was asked whether we should pay tax at all to the Romans. A denarius was a Roman silver coin.

Show me the coin used for paying the tax.' They brought him a denarius, and He asked them, 'Whose image is this? And whose inscription?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. Then He said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.' Matthew 22 19-21

On another day Saint Peter was asked if Jesus paid the half drachma temple tax. Miraculously Jesus provides enough money for two. Drachma was a type of Greek coin.

After Jesus and His disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, 'Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?' 'Yes, He does,' he replied. ... Jesus said to him. '... go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.' Matthew 17:24

Coin collecting is a fascinating hobby and examples of the commoner Roman, Greek and even Jewish coins can be got at affordable prices.

Savings clubs & financial education for primary schools

A network of savings clubs and financial education in primary schools across England has been recently launched with backing from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

LifeSavers, a programme promoting financial education and savings clubs administered by credit unions in primary schools, is on course to reach 30,000 children by the end of 2018 after a successful pilot scheme.

LifeSavers gives children practical experience of money management through saving small, regular amounts of money in savings clubs administered by credit unions.

The scheme encourages support from parents and volunteers and

provides teacher training and resources to help schools integrate financial education across the curriculum.

The programme is a partnership between the Archbishop of Canterbury's Just Finance Foundation and Young Enterprise, the enterprise and financial education charity.

A grant from Virgin Money will enable LifeSavers to reach 120 more schools by 2018 in six areas including the North East, Nottinghamshire, South East London and West Yorkshire.

An additional funding boost from the Government announced earlier this year will enable the resources and learning to be shared with

many more primary schools across the country.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "How we think about and use our money is central to a fulfilled and contented life. That is why I strongly support this exciting initiative to encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards money and the habit of saving. This programme has the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of millions of children and future adults."

Welcome

Seen on a fridge magnet: "Make yourself at home! Clean my kitchen."

“Dear Friends...”

From the Vicars Desk

I am delighted to begin this first letter of the New Year with two pieces of good news.

First as you will recall the London Medical Orchestra with the help of the Barnet Band held a concert in the church in aid of C4WS in December. With the door receipts added to the bar takings and after all the expenses the total profit was just over £1500. This was a splendid result and many thanks go to all those who helped with ticket sales, the door and the bar. There was a splendid turn out from the community and everyone enjoyed the concert which included the popping of hundreds of paper bags! Our own stint with the night shelter begins in mid January so if you are able to help in any way with any of the many tasks that go to make up the whole night and morning activities please do contact Bill Saunders. I should perhaps point out that the money is for the charity as a whole and not for our part of the work which we estimate costs something in the region of £1200 each winter.

The second piece of good news is that the Church Wardens and I decided that because of the dire need of the people of Syria and especially of Aleppo the whole of the collections from the Carol Service and Midnight Mass would be given to Christian Aid for its work in the Syrian Refugee camps. The Carol Service produced the amazing sum of £790 and Midnight Mass £256 giving a total of £1046. Thank you to everybody who gave so gener-

ously for this very special cause where need is so obvious. It was perhaps fortuitous that we had the biggest congregation ever for the Carol Service with people having to sit in the side aisles and share service sheets and candles despite printing more than last year!

So what does the New Year hold for us all I wonder? Sadly it looks as though there will be yet more austerity in all sorts of spheres. Only this morning on TV there was an item about the wait to see a GP for non urgent matters likely to be up to a month! Well if my GP is anything to go by it could be more as I waited three weeks in the summer when pressure was supposedly off. The government assure us of extra money going into training more GP's but that is somewhere down the line before they come on stream.

Then there is the whole Brexit phenomena. Where on earth is that going? The Government seem to be at odds with the EU as to the sort of terms that might be agreed and the time scale looks tight to say the least. It can't help thinking that its going to be a bumpy ride.

Possibly the most catastrophic change this year is going to be the start of the Trump years in the White House. I was appalled last week to hear him say that he would not support the UN's motion that the Israeli Government were wrong to build settlements in the former West Bank territories. If there was one thing that those of us who

went on the Holy Land pilgrimage learned, it was that there has to be an end to land grabbing by Israel. There can never be peace and justice for all the inhabitants of the Holy Land until land is returned to its rightful owners. For the Israeli government to turn round and claim that because Jews have lived there for three thousand years (on and off) they are entitled to have the land is bizarre in the extreme and ignores the fact that the Arab inhabitants have also been there for just as long. For years the US government have supported the state of Israel whatever it did despite its very obvious illegality. Just at the moment that that seems to be changing we have a new inexperienced president who looks as though he could very easily create a situation where more violence is likely to break out.

I pray that the year may be one of peace for all of you and also that my fears may prove to be unfounded.

Your Parish Priest

Some Weather Jokes

Q. Have you heard about the avalanche warning?

A. It says avalanches are snow place to be.

Q. Why did she break up with the meteorologist?

A. It was a stormy relationship from the start.

Q. What did you think about your date with the snowman?

A. Chilly personality; really an absolute zero.

Staying positive!

Here's a test! Who said, "I dare not marry; the future is so unsettled." Was it Olympic multi-medallist Katherine Grainger? Wrong - it was William Wilberforce in 1801. Who said, "There is scarcely anything about us but ruin and depression." Maggie Smith? No - it was William Pitt in 1805. Who said, "In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope." Gordon Brown perhaps? No - it was Benjamin Disraeli in 1844.

Life can always seem difficult. But let the Bible help! Deuteronomy 33:25 serves as a golden Bible promise for believers facing the unknown: 'As your days,' declared Moses, 'so shall your strength be.' Here's a promise for New Year: More days - more strength!

Think now of the terrain that would test God's ancient people, there on the borders of the Prom-

Why we have Trump and Brexit

Voters surprised politicians on both sides of the Atlantic last year. As a result, America has an unlikely President and the United Kingdom is in the process of leaving the European Union. There are hints that the electorate in other countries are also disgruntled with the status quo and may vote for untried alternatives.

Why? Here's one suggestion. Dreams of utopia have evaporated. Not so long ago we thought the human race was set on a moving walkway called progress, which would deliver health, wealth and happiness. Up to a point it has done that. Modern medicine has kept

ised Land. First, they would face:

THE ENDURING HIGHWAY

Before the ancient people of God, there lay many scary adventures - but they were to see the way ahead as God's appointed path. For us today, 'the highway' is a portrayal of the lifelong discipleship of the Christian believer. Think prayerfully about 2017! Then there was also:

THE ACCOMPANYING ROCK

In Deuteronomy 32, Moses had described the Lord as 'the Rock of salvation' - contrasting Israel's faith with the empty rituals of the godless society: 'For their rock is not as our Rock, as even as our enemies concede.'

Against the surrounding rocks of idolatry and superstition stood Israel's Rock of Creation, the rock face of the Ten Commandments -

millions alive. We can fly to the other side of the world in a day or if we prefer, sit at home and communicate with our distant relatives via Skype. Astonishing advances are being made, but simultaneously the bloodiest wars are being fought and there's no sign of a let-up. Human beings are no nicer than they ever were.

Confidence has been rocked by nightly news of carnage across the world. We are losing faith in progress and in politics. And when it comes to prosperity, we have witnessed the world's economy shipwrecked by a handful of bonus-greedy bankers. The outcome? The rich have become richer and

and the abiding love by which God was pledged to His people. Later, Paul declared that the Rock accompanying God's people - is Christ himself (1 Corinthians 10: 4).

Here's a third piece of terrain awaiting us!

THE BECKONING LAND

Moses could see it from afar - the Land of Promise. For the Christian of today 'The Land' stands for salvation itself - with sins covered, the promise of a new inner power, the presence every day of Jesus - and assurance of life in the hereafter. In the words of hymn-writer, Isaac Watts:

If we could climb where Moses stood, and fear that view no more; Nor Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood would keep us from that shore.

Stay with the pace, then; More days, more strength!

the poor, poorer.

We still have a built-in yearning for something more stable, more trustworthy, more just. Imagine a different world where the Kingdom belongs to the spiritually poor, where mourners find comfort and meekness is rewarded. Where a deep desire for right to prevail will be satisfied, mercy is offered and received, purity of heart brings a vision of God, and peacemakers are His children. This is Christ's alternative to the status quo. It isn't cheap. Some will be persecuted, as He was, simply for being identified with righteousness. Their place, too, is in heaven. Is that the manifesto we're seeking?

Basil and Gregory ± lives of costly discipleship

2nd January

By David Winter

'Discipline' is now virtually a banned word, along with 'risk', 'problem' and 'failure'. They seem to have been replaced respectively by 'focus', 'safety', 'challenge' and 'opportunity'. On the occasions when we do recognise and applaud the virtue of discipline, it's usually in the lives and activities of soldiers, police officers, dressage horses and the dog. But every year the Church Calendar remembers (on 2nd January) the lives of two outstanding leaders of the fourth century Church, Basil and Gregory. The hall mark of their lives was an iron self-discipline. Life-long friends since they were students together, they committed themselves to an almost ferocious austerity. In fact, both died early from the long-term consequences of extreme self-denial.

Bishops in the Eastern Church, they looked more to the new city of Constantinople than to Rome, but they both faced powerful opposition. Basil's unwavering commitment to the faith earned him many enemies, not only from secular sources (political and even imperial) but also from within the Church. Gregory, a less robust character, faced similar insults and even physical violence when he set out to reform the church at Constantinople. Eventually this opposition cost him his bishopric.

Basil was an activist, Gregory a contemplative, yet their lives followed a similar path of costly discipleship. Basil was born into a wealthy and influential family, but during a time of famine he felt it was his Christian duty to distribute the entire family inheritance in the form of food for the poor in his city. From then on he lived an austere, even frugal life, and died at the

age of 49, worn out by disease and physical weakness. Gregory too had poor health, largely through self-imposed poverty.

In the declining years of the Roman Empire and in an atmosphere of moral laxity they believed that as Christian leaders they should set an example. 'Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord', says the Bible. Perhaps modern Christianity is a little too quick to see discipline in terms of subjection and punishment. But 'those whom the Lord loves he disciplines'.

Basil and Gregory, whatever we think of their lifelong regime of self-denial, were clear that their life of discipline was motivated by love of the same Lord who in love disciplined them. Without going to the extremes that they did, perhaps a little godly discipline might help us to build a healthier relationship with the God we try to 'trust and obey'.

New Year, New Life

The month of January is named after the Roman god Janus, who is depicted with two faces. We may look back to the old year with sadness or regret, but how can we make a fresh start at the beginning of 2016? The apostle Paul writes 'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.' (Philippians 3:13,14).

Firstly, if you want a new start, you need to forget the things which are behind. Paul pictures himself as an athlete running for Christ, yet not looking back. He refused to allow

his past sins and failures to define who he was. By God's grace, he no longer saw himself that way. The same can be true of ourselves, as we confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness and new life.

Secondly, we need to focus on the things that lie ahead. The athlete is entirely focused on winning the race and gaining the prize. Like Paul, we have to be single-minded in making Jesus the focus of everything we do. How can we go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading this year? What will it mean to better serve Christ in our workplace and career, or family and children?

Paul looked forward to the day

when he would stand before God, and God will say, 'well done, good and faithful servant'. In light of all that Jesus had done for him, Paul wanted to give his very best to Jesus. As we stand at the beginning of this New Year, let's ask ourselves, 'What can I do this year that will help me bring glory and honour to God?'

Senior moment

A priest standing in his church one afternoon was astounded to see a suspicious looking man in a black ski mask come hurling headfirst through the stained glass window. "What on earth are you up to? What happened?!" he demanded. "I'm terribly sorry," said the man, "I forgot to let go of the brick."

Church brings hope to troubled S Sudan

Bishop Henry Garang Deng's home has been wrecked. But it's not safe for him to do anything about it. His family has been forced to flee abroad. Many members of his congregation have fled to refugee camps.

Henry is bishop of Malakal, in troubled South Sudan. The chaos in his diocese is a result of fighting between rebel groups and the army. He has seen many years of war in his country. He blames the current crisis on politics and says the government has not organised itself to help reconcile and rebuild the nation. But he still believes there is hope.

'The church is the element holding the country together,' he says.

'Christians have not been given a chance, they are confused and most of them are displaced. But the Church is our only hope and the one thing that will bring us together is the Gospel.'

He says the Church has begun to work in refugee camps. 'We have been focusing on the Word of God which always unites us. People pray and pray. We believe the Church has to go back to prayer and this is the way we will find a solution.'

Another South Sudanese priest, Joseph Bilal, is bringing rival ethnic groups together to help build peace – using the Bible as a starting point.

'We help them look at how to build peace,' he explains. 'We are basing

so much on the Bible. We say God created them all to love one another and then we look at how we can (do this).

The Church has also been working with young people. Joseph says, 'We want to teach them to become peace builders; to see them building up our country, not being used to destroy it.'

This article is from Anglican World, a quarterly magazine produced by the Anglican Communion. To read the full story, plus other news of the Anglican Church around the world, why not subscribe? Visit <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/anglican-world-magazine.aspx> Interested in Anglican news around the world? Get a free bulletin emailed to you daily. See <http://www.anglicannews.org>

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The women making peace - worldwide

Who solves the arguments in your home? Around the world the Church is playing a key role in peacemaking and reconciliation. But recent research suggests if women are involved in the process it is more likely to work, and stay working.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's reconciliation adviser, Canon Sarah Snyder, has seen this first hand. In her former role at Religions for Peace she was involved in training women in the church as peace builders in Nigeria, Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Kenya. She says, 'Women are often seen as the victims of violence, which they are, but they are also on the front line of peace building. They are often the first to notice changes of behaviour in their families and community and the first to be willing to cross

lines of violence.'

Local Anglican Alliance facilitator, Tagolyn Kabekabe, says in the matriarchal society of the Pacific Islands women command respect and their maternal instincts make them seek and negotiate peace, whatever the cost. On one occasion her own mother helped to resolve a family dispute about land by inviting all the interested parties plus church and community leaders to a huge feast she had prepared.

Mothers' Union Regional Development Manager, Johanna Fadipe, says the MU can bring peace about because of its respected position. 'The MU president in DR Congo, Marthe Balesima, is married to the local MP,' she explains. 'They have both been influential in seeking peace in their area after terrible

violence.'

Recently Sarah Snyder saw women actively involved in peace building in a Jordanian refugee camp. 'They have been raped, beaten and lost their families and yet they are telling their children not to resort to violence. These women are peacemakers in the face of violence.'

This article is from Anglican World, a quarterly magazine produced by the Anglican Communion. To read the full story, plus other news of the Anglican Church around the world, why not subscribe? Visit <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/anglican-world-magazine.aspx> Interested in Anglican news around the world? Get a free bulletin emailed to you daily. See <http://www.anglicannews.org>

THE WAY I SEE IT : Everything New?

By Canon David Winter, a former Head of Religion, BBC.

I have now reached the point in life when the mere sight of the adjective 'new' attached to anything causes mild panic. My favourite tomato soup comes in a new-fangled can, and I know I won't be able to open it. My internet provider insists on burdening me with an 'update' - a 'new' approach to computing. I'm thrown into blind panic, until I see that I can click on 'decline' which I always do. 2016 had more than enough that was 'new' - Brexit, a new Prime Minister, and a new President-elect of the USA. Is there a pause button somewhere?

So how do I approach the New Year? Well, it's a nuisance to have to

change my computer letter-head, and I know in mid-February I shall absent-mindedly revert to typing '2016' everywhere, but on the whole it's a bit of a non-event. So what? Some numbers have changed. Nothing significant is different. What the people baptising themselves in the Trafalgar Square fountains are celebrating eludes me. Peace in the Middle East? An end to poverty, homelessness and loneliness? The coming of an age of justice, love and compassion? It might take a bit more than a change in a single digit on the calendar to bring those about.

What I suppose New Year does spark, in a low-key kind of way, is hope. Really, that should be celebrated at Advent, when the great theme is the 'Christian Hope' of a

new kingdom of justice and love. Or at Easter, when the Spring's new colours are matched by our songs of resurrection and new life. In ordinary English usage, 'hope' can imply doubt - 'I hope so'. But in the language of faith, hope is something clear and promised. Human hopes can be dashed. Hope in an unchanging God is another matter altogether.

Challenge

It was the beginning of term at a primary school. The teacher asked the children their names one at a time, and for each to spell their name out loud. When she came to a young boy and asked his name..... 'Ravashanka Vankatarataam Bannerjee,' he replied. 'Ah - how do you spell that?' gulped the teacher. 'I don't,' said the little boy, 'but my mother can.'

Noah and the Flood

'Once upon a time' is the traditional way to begin a story. In the Bible it might be 'in the days of' or 'it came to pass': those words introduce us to the wealth of stories in Scripture. We read stories about the triumph of good over evil, others that are full of derring-do, and yet others that are heart-rending and poignant. And all of them revolve around colourful individuals. This year we shall be exploring that treasury of stories narrated in the Bible – it might be a patriarch or a king, a mother or a wife, a disciple or an evangelist. We shall see them described in Scripture and also reflected in a painting or sculpture.

We begin this year with Noah and the Flood, vividly described in Genesis and taken up by the Chester Mystery Plays and Britten's 'Noye's Fludde.' God's intention at the Flood is to judge the world and purify it, but to save a remnant. He chooses Noah, a just man, who



with his family will be saved to people that renewed world. Like the other stories, we see human figures caught up in God's plans, and they abound in the glorious mosaics that decorate the interior of the magnificent 12th century cathedral of Monreale, near Palermo in Sicily.

Among the scenes depicted there, one mosaic shows Noah and his family looking out of the ark. The

bodies floating in the water are signs of the old sinful world, but Noah is leaning out to welcome back the dove. It bears an olive twig – a sign that the waters have receded. The dove and the olive twig promise a new earth and a new life to faithful Noah, who will preside over that reborn world. January marks a new year for us, and our hopes echo this scene as we pray for our world and a renewed desire for peace and harmony in it.

We've got a new word: Post-truth

The Oxford Dictionaries selected 'post-truth' as their 2016 word of the year. Originally coined in the 1990's, it came to the fore as a description of the way the UK Referendum and the US Presidential election were fought last year.

Rather than concentrating on facts and policies, these campaigns relied on the repetition of unsubstantiated claims and stories. Emotion won over argument. In an uncharacteristically severe reproof, Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury described all this as the "fact-free manipulation of emotion by populist adventurers."

In the TV panel game "Would I Lie to You?" each participant tells a personal story, and the opposing team has to decide whether it's true or a lie. It only works because, at the end, the storytellers are honour-bound to admit whether or not they have told the truth. In the Radio 4 game "The Unbelievable Truth" each player is given a subject to define, with four truths secreted in what is otherwise a fictional account. The other players have to spot the truths. Are they right or wrong? Again, honesty has to prevail or the game wouldn't work. Telling the truth isn't easy. Like the fabled angler who exaggerated the size of the fish which got away,

many of us have caught ourselves out embroidering the facts.

'Post-truth' means that none of this matters. It was entertaining when a Sunday newspaper carried these headlines: "London Bus Found Frozen in Antarctic Ice", and "World War II Bomber Found on the Moon". Whether or not they were true was irrelevant.

"What is truth?" asked Pontius Pilate, as he handed Jesus over to be crucified. He wasn't to know that history would record him as a failure, whereas his prisoner would be worshipped as "the Way, the Truth and the Life".

Hymns and Readings

January 1st Christmas 2

Readings Isaiah 63: 7-9

Psalm 148

Hebrews 2: 10-end

Matthew 2: 13-end

Hymns 39 Unto us a boy is born

40 What child is this

258 O Christ the same

25 God rest you merry gentlemen

Sidesperson: Irada Fracassi

Readers: Jenny Kauntze, Bill Saunders

Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

January 8th Epiphany

Readings Isaiah 60: 1-6

Psalm 72

Ephesians 3: 1-12

Matthew 2: 1-12

Hymns 52 O worship the Lord inn the beauty

48 Bethlehem of noblest cities

We three kings

47 As with gladness

49 Brightest and best are the sons

Sidesperson: Nick Bethune

Readers: Nicky Pittam, Mark Williams

Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

January 18th Epiphany 2

Readings Isaiah 49: 1-7

Psalm 40

1 Corinthians 1: 1-9

John 1: 29-42

Hymns 349 Come let us join our cheerful songs

57 The race that long in darkness sat

55 Hail to the Lord's annointed

56 Songs of thankfulness and praise

Sidesperson: Rob Nesbitt

Readers: Nick Bethune, Lucy Boyd

Intercessions Bill Saunders

January 22nd Epiphany 3

Readings Isaiah 9: 1-4

Psalm 27

1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

Matthew 4: 12-23

Hymns 234 Christ whose glory fills the skies

513 God is love and where true love is

302 O thou who at thy Eucharist didst pray

494 Christ is the worlds true light

Sidesperson: Elizabeth Oyedemi

Readers: Denise Sealy, Carol Kenning

Intercession: Lucy Boyd

January 29th Candlemas

Readings Malachi 3:1-5

Psalm 24

Hebrews 2: 14-end

Luke 2: 22-40

Hymns 33 Of the Fathers heart

234 Christ whose glory fills the skies

156 Sing how the age long

157 Hail to the Lord who comes

Sidesperson: Monica Sarpong

Readers: Joe McKenzie, Rob Nesbitt

Intercessions: Carol Kenning

75 Years on a Desert Island

Seventy five years ago this month, on 29th January 1942, the now familiar signature tune 'By a Sleepy Lagoon' heralded the very first edition of 'Desert Island Discs'.

Devised and presented by Roy Plomley, it was broadcast on the BBC Forces Programme. In the dark days of the War it was an instant hit – well known people asked to choose which eight records they would choose to have with them if they were cast-away on a desert island.

Helpfully, they were granted a copy of the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, as well as 'an inexhaustible supply of gramophone needles', essential accessories for the gramophone player that had somehow survived the ship-wreck.

They could then choose one 'luxury' to have with them. It could not be a means of escape nor of communication with the outside world. Two have chosen a piano.

'Desert Island Discs' is still on the air. I remember the producer telling me that no one turned down a chance to be on it. 'Why would they?' she said. 'A nice free lunch, your own choice of music and a chance to talk about yourself for 45 minutes.'

The programme still has a loyal and large audience, with distinguished presenters – currently Kirsty Young - taking over since Roy Plomley's death about 30 years ago. It's living proof that the best ideas don't have to be complicated. They simply have to work, as 'Desert Island Discs' has done on BBC radio for 75 years. Will it make it to 100, I wonder?

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For your prayers

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF JANUARY 2016

1st College Lane
8th Croftdown Road
15th Dartmouth Park Avenue
22nd Dartmouth Park Hill
29th Dartmouth Park Road

SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

1st Second Sunday of Christmas
**2nd St Basil the Great & Gregory of
Nazianzus**
8th The Epiphany of Our Lord

9th The baptism of Christ
12th St Aelred of Hexham
13th St Hilary of Poitiers
15th Second Sunday of Epiphany
17th St Anthony of Egypt
18th Week of prayer for Christian Unity
19th St Wulfstan
21st St Agnes
22nd Third Sunday of Epiphany
24th St Francis de Sales
25th The Conversion of St Paul
26th Ss Timothy & Titus
28th St Thomas Aquinas
29th Candlemas
30th Charles King and Martyr