

VICAR'S LETTER

The view from the study.

Over the years, I have come across many interesting snippets in, of all places, Susan's *Woman's Weekly* magazine. One such item was a piece from Canon Roger Royle (once a familiar figure in religious broadcasting on the BBC) about Christmas, in which he spoke of the loving greetings we send out and likened Jesus to God's love letter to the world. It's a delightful image, repeated in the hymn *Love came down at Christmas*, and one that powerfully echoes the words of John 3.16, *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...*

I would go further to say that Christmas may, in fact, be seen as God's statement to the world, even his indictment against the ways of the world. Yes, love comes down - to confront bitter hatred. But not only love: light comes down, to confront the darkness. Hope comes down, to confront despair. Life in all its fullness comes down, to confront death in all its guises. Christmas is a wonderful love letter from God, but it is also a powerful statement of protest – God's love, light, hope and life coming down to show us where we are in error.

And this year, what must God be feeling as he surveys the world into which he came in human form all those years ago? It's all a bit of a mess, to put it mildly... war in Ukraine, frightening fuel bills, worries over the price of almost everything, strikes in many sectors of society, concerns about climate change and environmental catastrophe. Yet, into this mess, love still comes. Light still shines. Hope still finds a place. Life is not defeated. God's love song is an enduring one. The incarnation wasn't just a little excursion for God, but an eternal affirmation of his concern for the world he had created.

So when we sing our carols don't just look back wistfully to the birth of a baby in Bethlehem. Look forward too, holding fast to the enduring message of the love song that God sang as a blessing over the world in the coming of Christ.

However you mark the occasion, I wish you a peaceful Christmas and a hope-filled New Year

Every blessing, Neil.

Moving on.

Talking of Christmas, sadly this will be my sixth and final one with the good folk of Grimsargh. As announced at the start of October, my wife is to become Rector of Halsall and Lydiate in Liverpool diocese. My final Sunday here will be on 8th January, then later in the month we will be on the move again.

We are looking forward to this new beginning, but I will be sad to leave Grimsargh behind. What will I take with me? Certainly I will always treasure the memory of so many wonderful people at St Michael's. When we first visited the church, both Susan and I went away with a warm feeling of invitation: a friendly welcome from the congregation, a pleasant place in which to worship, and a community with so much to offer. I certainly didn't need a lot of persuasion to accept the position of vicar - although I should add that the icing on the cake was the school, where I found another warm welcome and a clear desire to work together for the good of the wider community that both church and school together are called to serve.

One of the many special things about Grimsargh is that it has been able to retain a strong sense of community, despite it being a rapidly developing village. This is reflected in the way many people around the parish retain a sense of St Michael's as being their church, even if they are not regular worshippers. I believe that is what a parish church should be – a place for anyone and everyone, not just for the committed congregation. I hope that St Michael's will always see itself as an inclusive and welcoming place, where families can come for weddings, baptisms or funerals, and where anyone can come to worship, pray or simply ponder, regardless of their understanding of or commitment to the Christian faith.

As for those who are committed, I can only say a massive thank you for allowing me to share with you in the journey through the last five years. We've had quite a time of it, especially with all the disruption brought about by the pandemic, but we are still here, still smiling, still singing, still engaging in worship and sharing in fellowship. St Michael's congregation is a delightful, hospitable, caring community of all ages, dedicated to living the gospel and being a beacon of hope in the world. I thank you all very much indeed.

May God's blessing remain on this church, our fabulous school and the whole parish of Grimsargh we are part of. With my thanks and prayers, Neil.

JIGSAW Club

It is fantastic to be able to say that JIGSAW Club is up and running again, with a fabulous team of leaders and helpers working together to help our

children discover just how great, special and wonderful Jesus really is!

Joanne Lander has taken on the role of coordinator, to ensure that the rota is managed and all the admin is in order. Thank you, Joanne! Thanks also to everyone who has volunteered to be part of the team running sessions, and to Miss Smith (deputy head at school) for all your help in getting us ready and sharing your planning with us for the sessions. Thank you also to Nellie Cowell, for doing so much to drive forward the restarting of JIGSAW Club. Further thanks are due to Anthony Cowell for getting the cabin roof watertight again, and we must not forget to thank Sue Holt, who ran the JIGSAW Club for many years and maintained a children's page in the magazine even after she had stepped down, going beyond the call of duty!

There are many people who have supported our work with children over recent years, for which I am very grateful. I pray that the children of Grimsargh will always find a welcome here and the ministry of this church amongst our young people will thrive in the years ahead.

Services during the vacancy.

The pattern of services will change in the vacancy. The current plan is to have one service on a Sunday at 10am, as follows:

1st Sunday - Morning worship

2nd Sunday - Holy Communion (with JIGSAW Club)

3rd Sunday - Family Service

4th Sunday - Holy Communion (with JIGSAW Club)

5th Sunday - Morning Worship (usually)

Thursday morning 11am Communion services will, for the time being, be held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, commencing on Thursday 19th January,

The Churchwardens and PCC will monitor the situation and any proposed changes will be discussed as the vacancy proceeds.

May I thank the Churchwardens, Anthony and Mark, for all their support over the last five years, and for all that they will be taking on in the running of the parish during the vacancy period. Please pray for them, all the PCC and all who hold office at St Michael's.

Refreshments in church

We are offering refreshments after the 10am service. Thank you to all those who are already helping on the rota, but more helpers would make it an easier task for all concerned!

If you would like to assist on the rota, please speak to Penny Thompson:
01772 651850

Toy Service

The Toy Service will be held at the Morning Worship on the 4th Dec. Please bring any toys, gifts for teenagers etc, unwrapped. These will all be donated to the Salvation Army for distribution.

Carol Singing

Friday 16th December starting at The Plough at 6.30pm and then at the Farmers Market on the Saturday morning at 11am. We need as many volunteers as possible thank you.

It's all Greek to me! (cont)

The last of the 3 well known Greek tragedians is Euripides, like Sophocles also of the latter 5th century BC. The work of his I draw to your attention is the play known as “the Bacchae”. Immediately this will call to your mind a vision of drunken orgies, Bacchus being the Roman god of wine, his Greek precursor being Dionysus. But the introduction to the Oxford edition of the play reads: “To the Greeks ... Dionysus was not solely, or even mainly, the god of wine...His domain is...not only the liquid fire in the grape, but the sap thrusting in a young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of nature.”

The play is therefore not simply about what we now know as bacchanalia; it is a thoughtful putting together two diametrically opposed ideas, on the one hand the state and its authority based on rationality, on the other, the arts, in particular dancing, and the world of the spirit, freed from convention by alcohol, and dare one say it, also drugs. It is, in other words, very much the world which appealed to the 1960s generation of my youth. In psychological terms it is the rational Ego, opposing the instinctual Id.

The play is set in Thebes where the new king Pentheus opposes the introduction to the city of the cult of Dionysus. The play has this unusual feature. The chorus is normally there merely as a narrator, setting context to move the play on to the next scene. In the Bacchae the chorus are actual actors, the dancing free spirits of the title who end up by luring Pentheus, driven mad by Dionysus, into the mountains, where he meets the customary gory and macabre death, punishment for his arrogance (hubris) in confronting a god.

The Oxford edition drew attention to a modern parallel, a dancing mania introduced to central Germany in the 1920s, but as it relates “Pentheus won in the end”, as the man who inspired the movement, was discredited by

moral scandal. You'll think I'm making this up, but I can show the actual passage if you're interested, or, check the name on google. That man was called "Muck Lamberty".

Mark

Foundation Governor

Are you interested in being a school governor? There are vacancies for 3 Foundation Governors at St Michael's School. The role is largely the same as any other governor (supporting the school and helping to set the strategic direction for the school) but with the additional focus of ensuring the Christian ethos of the school is maintained. For this reason, it is important that Foundation Governors hold the Christian faith and are part of the Christian community.

Please speak to Neil if you'd like to know more, before 8th January. After this date, contact the churchwardens or school for further information.

MOTHERS' UNION

Christmas is getting nearer as you read your magazine! The Mothers Union started the celebrations with their annual Christmas meal on November 16th!! Twenty seven ladies partied at the White Bull this year with crackers, silly jokes, charades & tongue twisters and lots of chat, of course! A big thank you to the White Bull staff for their welcome and hospitality.

Here's a few tongue twisters for you to try out on your families!

Shiny stars sparkle on silver sleighs

Thelma fell on frozen frost freezing her fiddly thumbs

Pretty packages perfectly packed in pretty paper

Eleven elves licked eleven little liquorice lollipops. Enjoy!!



Next meeting December 21st

Christmas Communion, in church 7.30pm

Followed by mulled wine and minced pies

Mothers Unions annual subs. This year is £27.60. Please give the money to Nellie in a named envelope. Cash or a cheque made out to Grimsargh

Mothers Union. It will be collected in December. I know it is a lot but it does ensure the Mothers Union can continue to support the many projects it runs in England and worldwide. Thank you for supporting it. God's blessing on you.

Christmas Appeal

I like this appeal—the BIG GIVE pledges to match all donated online gifts to charities between November 29th & December 6th so doubling the impact of your donation! (PS If anyone wishes to donate but needs help to do it online do have a word with me & I'll send it off for you.)



This year our Christmas Appeal is raising money for our Mothers' Union Literacy and Trauma Healing programme in South Sudan. Sadly, South Sudan has seen years of conflict and violence which have devastated communities and forced millions of people to leave their homes. Over half of the refugees are children and are desperately in need of peace and a better future. Based on over 20 years of experience working in the country, our Literacy and Trauma Healing programme provides a safe space for women to learn essential skills like literacy, trauma healing and peace building.



God's blessing on you and your families and all those you love this Christmas season. May you know his peace and presence Love Ruth

SCHOOL REPORT

We are fast approaching a magical time of year in school- Christmas! Our reception staff and children are busy practising for their nativity and our year 1 and 2 staff and children are also just as busy practising for their Christmas production. Dates have been set for parents/ carers and families to watch the reception nativity which will take place in St Michael's Church. Parents/ carers and families will also have the opportunity to watch their child perform in the year 1 and 2 Christmas production, which will take place in our school hall.

The whole school will also be heading to the Panto at The Grand theatre, to watch 'Sleeping Beauty of Clitheroe Castle'. Other exciting Christmas activities, include our Christmas Carol Service in St Michael's Church, our Christmas Parties, PTFA Christmas Discos, our Christmas Lunch and Jumper day and our annual Christmas Grimsargh's Got Talent competition.

Not forgetting the Parish Christmas Fair.

The PTFA are now in full swing and have just held their Annual General Meeting (AGM). Before the end of term, we have the following PTFA events to look forward to:

- Christmas Discos (Thursday 1st December)
- Christmas Bauble Decoration

The children really enjoyed the '2022 Challenge', our first PTFA event of this academic year. The children who took part, raised a whopping £2,004.20! Well done to all those who raised or donated money.

We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about and celebrating All Saints Day. On All Saints Day, we celebrate the holy ones of God. We gave thanks for the light of the gospel that shines out from our lives. Michael Stancliffe (when he was Dean of Winchester) preached about the saints we remember- the people who encouraged and inspired us. He described them as God's fireworks. Inspirational and encouraging people are not all the same. Like fireworks, they are often different, diverse and unique. During worship that week, the children enjoyed reflection time. They took a moment to be thankful for the encouraging and inspirational people who have had an impact on their life. They considered how the inspirational people let their lights shine.

On Wednesday 9th November, our year 5 children visited Archbishop Temple High School, to learn about Remembrance Day. Inspired by this visit, the year 5 children returned to school and took the lead during whole school worship on Remembrance Day. Photographs of the visit are on our social media and our school website. We gathered together at 11am on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year, to give thanks for the brave troops who sacrificed and continue to sacrifice themselves to protect us.

Week beginning Monday 14th November was national Anti-bullying Week. The theme was 'Reach Out' which aimed to empower young people to do something positive to counter the harm and hurt that bullying causes. From children to teachers, influencers to parents, this year's theme aimed to involve everyone. It takes courage, but it can change lives. We kicked off the week with Odd Socks Day on Monday 14th November, where adults and children wore odd socks to celebrate what makes us all unique. The children have also taken part in a range of activities throughout the week linking to anti-bullying and reaching out. Ask your child what activities they have done in their classes this week. Anti-Bullying Week has reminded everyone, whether it's in school, at home, in the community or online, to reach out and show each other the support we need.

A few weeks before the October half-term, Mrs McGivern, a parent of children at our school, organised for a photographer to spend a few hours in school taking photographs of school life. Mrs McGivern is currently in the process of uploading the photos to our website. I must thank Mrs McGivern for the time she has spent supporting school with the continued development of our website- not just with the photos. I must also thank our PTFA for contributing £250 towards the cost of the photographer. We have also added the language translate facility on our website to increase access and support those who are more confident reading in languages other than English.

As a school community we are hoping to make the lives of children in our community and in the wider world, a little more enjoyable this Christmas. We are taking part in the Shoe Box appeal for International Aid- empty boxes are available to collect from the main entrance, outside the main office. If you would like to make up a box yourself this year that would be amazing-please drop off at school before the 1st December. We have also engaged with 'Task Christmas' which is an initiative set up by a Grimsargh resident, to provide local children less fortunate with Christmas presents this year. With the rising costs this year, many families across Lancashire will struggle to afford gifts for their children. Our families have been asked to donate a new toy suitable for children between the ages of 0-10 years.

We continue to enter all sporting events on the calendar and have enjoyed more success since my last report. We finished in 3rd place in the triathlon in which 22 primary schools in Preston took part. We also competed in many other sporting competitions and fixtures. Before we finished for Christmas, we will be competing in the Sports Hall Athletics competition and in the year 5/6 gymnastics competition.

Finally, we were delighted, earlier this term, to welcome back Miss Hayley Allen to our school and to appoint Miss Emma Threlfall on a permanent contract. Two fantastic additions to our Grimsargh School family.

Search '**grimsarghstmichaels**' on Instagram and '**Grimsargh St Michael's C of E Primary School**' on Facebook to have a snapshot of some of the things our children have been doing.

On behalf of our school staff, I wish everyone within our Grimsargh community well and hope you all continue to support each other and stay safe this Christmas time. Happy Christmas to you all.

Mr Stuart Booth

Headteacher

ST MICHAEL'S DIARY DATES FOR DECEMBER

- 1st** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 2nd** 9.30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club
6.00pm Carols around the Crib and lighting of Christmas tree
(On the Green)
- 3rd** 1.00pm Christmas Fair in School
- 4th** **2nd Sunday of Advent**
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am Holy Communion and JIGSAW club (moved from 11th Dec)
With Toy Service (please leave toys unwrapped)
4.00pm Confirmation Class (rehearsal)
- 8th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
7.30pm Bible Study, 204 Preston Rd
- 9th** 9.30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club
- 11th** **3rd Sunday of Advent**
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am Confirmation Service with Bishop Jill
6.00pm Ecumenical Service at ALSTON LANE
- 13th** 9.15am School Worship in church
- 14th** 10.00am Reception Class nativity in church
- 15th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 16th** 9.30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club
6.30pm Carol singing starting at the Plough
- 17th** 11.00am Carol singing at the Farmers' Market
- 18th** **4th Sunday of Advent**
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am Family Service
6.00pm Festival of Lessons and Carols
- 21st** 7.30pm Mothers' Union Communion
- 22nd** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 24th** **Christmas Eve**
4.00pm Christingle and Crib Service
- 25th** **Christmas Day**
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am Family Communion
- 29th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

FOR JANUARY DIARY DATES SEE PAGE 18



For the children of Michael's, Grimsargh.

Jesus

Is

Great

Special

And

Wonderful

For children of Primary School age.

For more information

Or to register

Please contact

Vicar.grimsargh@gmail.com

or

[Joanne Lander - joanelander@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:joanelander@hotmail.co.uk)

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

Oct	23rd	£203.00	Nov	6th	£206.50
Oct	27th	£63.00	Nov	10th	£392.00
Oct	30th	£168.00	Nov	13th	£595.75
Nov	3rd	£61.00	Nov	17th	£80.27

FLOWER ROTA

Dec	4th	Vacant	Jan	1st	Vacant
Dec	11th	Holding Family	Jan	8th	Vacant
Dec	18th	Vacant	Jan	15th	N Cowell
Dec	25th	Vacant	Jan	22nd	Vacant
			Jan	29th	Vacant

SIDESPERSONS, READERS AND COFFEE ROTAS

8.30am	10.00am	Communion Assistant	Readers	Coffee
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Dec	4th	James Cowell			D Rusling N Cowell
Dec	11th	K Thompson			B Holt Vicar
Dec	18th	B Mackley			Youth Reader
Dec	25th	D Rae			L Wood Vicar
Jan	1st	James Cowell			M Lamberty R Woollam
Jan	8th	R Buckley	N Cowell		B Mackley Vicar
Jan	15th	N Maudsley			Youth Reader
Jan	22nd	D Rae	M Lamberty		S Cowell Vicar
Jan	29th	B Mackley	B Mackley		J Lander Vicar

FRIDAY MORNING COFFEE ROTA

		Duty	Duty		Welcome & Circulate
Dec	4th	Nellie	Kate	Christine	Jennifer
Dec	11th	Eileen	Maureen	Janet	Jean
Dec	18th	Jennifer	Jean	Linda	Marlene
Jan	6th	Nellie	Kate	Christine	Jean
Jan	13th	Eileen	Helen	Janet	Linda
Jan	20th	Jean	Christine	Marlene	Kate
Jan	27th	Maureen	Nellie	Janet	Linda

Holy Baptism

Nov 20th Isaac Jacob Maudsley

Funeral

Oct 23rd Frances Gornall, 85 years
Nov 3rd Doreen Hall, 91 years

Jesus said "Let the children come unto me"

'I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.'

ST MICHAEL'S DIARY DATES FOR JANUARY

1st Baptism of Christ

8.30am NO SERVICE
10.00am Morning Worship

5th 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

6th 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club

8th Epiphany 1

8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.00am Holy Communion and JIGSAW club
2.00pm Baptism

9th 7.30pm PCC meeting in school

13th 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club

15th Epiphany 2

10.00am Family Service

18th 12 noon MU AGM Fish & Chips at the Plough

19th 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

20th 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club

22nd Epiphany 3

10.00am Holy Communion and JIGSAW club
6.00pm Ecumenical in church

27th 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club

29th Epiphany 3

10.00am Morning Worship

FOR THE DECEMBER DIARY DATES SEE PAGE 15

DEADLINE for the February magazine is 15th January
Articles to be sent to Mrs Cowell and/or B Mackley