

Have yourselves a Messy little Christmas



The last Messy Church of 2017 was a very busy one, focusing on the journeys in the Christmas story and our own journey to come to worship at the manger and welcome Jesus into our hearts and homes at Christmas. Our homes are little Bethlehems, said Nicholas, the place where Jesus is born and this was echoed in the journey of the figures of Mary and Joseph round the benefice, which many from Messy Church signed up to participate in.



Windmill United Benefice

The parishes of Burstow, Horne and Outwood

Rector: Revd Nicholas Calver
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January 2018

On Christmas night all Christians sing



The Christmas season was a busy one across the benefice with over 600 people attending services. Three carol services, in Smallfield Church Hall (*below*), Outwood Church and Horne Church (*above*), were led by singing from augmented choirs and were all well attended, as were the three crib services and the services at midnight and on Christmas Day. In different sermons across the three churches Nicholas focused on the shepherds, including, at the crib service at Horne, inviting people to come up and take a bit of sheep's wool from the crib. Shepherds watching their flocks is not about sitting on a hillside under the stars, he said, but is an active work of tending, feeding, minding, guarding – all of these actions summed up by one word: caring. And, he went on to say, it is by caring that we too make the message of the angels known, just as those first shepherds did to those to whom they spread the good news of Christ's birth.



O come, all ye faithful – to the three church Christmas fairs!

The success of the three fairs was a testament to all who had worked hard to prepare everything from crafts and cards to cakes. All had a great atmosphere, variously helped by music and refreshments, and significant amounts were raised for church funds. Many thanks to all who supported these in whatever way.



Unto us a child is born

This year's Benefice Advent Calendar, 'A child is born', contained a short Bible reading and reflection for each day in Advent. One reader has written to say:

Thank you for 'A Child is Born'. I didn't make the time to read a page every day, despite committing to myself that I would, which was insightful in itself. Instead I spent chosen moments to sit and be with it for a while.

Two real moments for me: *'Even though...Even here... Emmanuel'* (where I interpret Emmanuel as Hope) and... *'Be still and know that I am God'* (for me, 'Be still, stop worrying and know it is going to be OK'). These are the two resting places that I want to carry with me this year.

And the conversation between Frank Skinner and Rowan Williams speaks directly to me. It is a light shone on my own confusion.

Thank you.

We'll all have some figgy pudding!

Members of CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) enjoyed a special Christmas lunch at Horne Golf Club in December. The sun streamed through the windows as everyone raised a glass to a very happy Christmas. Celebrations continued at the January meeting when Roger Hind entertained everyone with a selection of songs and encouraged participation by handing out musical chimes so that all could join in.

