



Hullbridge, Rawreth, Rettendon Churches Newsletter Christmas - 2020

www.facebook.com/groups/hrr.churches



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God's family likeness

I have just completed (what I dearly hope is) the final revision of our plan for services in our three parishes churches over Christmas and it's here on page 3.

Covid has meant that I actually have had to say that people will need to book to be a part of our congregations. I've been a Vicar or Rector for over thirty years and this is the first time in my experience that we have faced the very real prospect that we really may have to turn people away if they haven't booked in advance!

Echoes of the Christmas Story? Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem but being told that everywhere was fully booked up? Well, at least for us not booking wouldn't mean a few nights living in a cowshed, never mind having a stable as a maternity ward.

There have been a lot of firsts because of Covid for all of us and we have had to learn new ways of doing things. In Churches we have changed the layout of our seating to adapt for social distancing and we have had to change the way we do parts of our services. We can't even have tea or coffee after the service!

But along with all this there has been real generosity in all sorts of ways. Friends caring

for each other often means much greater cost – those caring for people who are frail or disabled not only give up their time but also have to isolate to make sure that they aren't the cause of even worse problems.

As part of our St Nicholas Day Celebrations (6th December) we collected lots of toys for children who won't be getting much and will be feeling left out of all the fun going on around them, a much crueller sort of isolation. I have just been able to deliver those to the Salvation Army who will make sure that they get to the right children in time for Christmas. So a huge thank you to Rayleigh Salvation Army for all their work.

We have also had to learn new skills, it had never crossed my mind that we even could live-stream services, but now we do it all the time. I am really grateful to people who have helped with that, given advice, provided royalty free music and images. Yet again, people's generosity has been so important.

As we have to do all the usual things but in new ways, my prayer is that this Christmas we will see the love and generosity of God, which is always there, in new and exciting ways.

As we remember the birth of the Son of God, we can give thanks that, because of him, we too are Children of God. My prayer is that the

family trait of love and generosity work its magic in us too, so that we can know the full and incredible joy and peace of the Christmas Message.

Thank you for the big and little ways that you have been generous. Some of your kindness will be to friends and family but some to people you don't know and will never even see. Sometimes someone will have said 'Thank you' to you, but that is not possible for secret acts of kindness. But it is noticed, and there is a smile on God's face when he again spots the family likeness in his children.

May the generous and loving God bless you with the Joy and Peace of Christmas



Richard Jordan is Parish Priest of St Nicholas, Rawreth, All Saints Rettendon and St Thomas Hullbridge.

Church Services

We hold Morning Prayer each morning and Compline each evening.

Morning Prayer - 8.00am

Compline/Night Prayer - 8.00pm

you can join us by joining our Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/HRR.Churches.

Our Eucharist/Holy Communion services are on Sunday mornings. These are held at the following times:

St Thomas Hullbridge 9.30am

St Nicholas Rawreth. 10.00am

All Saints Rettendon. 11.15am

Once again you can join us by joining our Facebook group -

www.facebook.com/groups/HRR.Churches.

You can now download the order of service for Eucharist/Holy Communion that we will be using from our webpage:

hrr-churches.org.uk/prayer-and-reflection/

You will also find the Collects and Readings there for each Sunday too.

Bereavement Group at St Nicholas

We will be meeting on the last Thursday of December at St Nicholas from 2-3pm. All distancing measures will be in place but sadly we won't be able to have refreshments. For more information contact Pat on 07790 460026 or Helen on 07880 728560.

Rawreth Ladies Club Meetings

The meetings have been suspended due to Covid-19 for information as to when they will re-open contact Sue Merton Tel: 01268 561703.

Rawreth District Council

For up-to-date information, contacts and telephone numbers visit their website: www.rawrethparishcouncil.co.uk/ or contact the Clerk Hayley Bloomfield

Tel 07773 952455. or e-mail clerk.rawrethparishcouncil@btinternet.com

Rawreth Village Hall Bookings

For Village Hall bookings contact Dave Collins Tel: 01268 734933 or e-mail daveicollins40@gmail.com

Rettendon and Battlesbridge Newsletter

For more information, contacts and telephone numbers in Rettendon and Battlesbridge click on the link below:

<https://e-voice.org.uk/retbatnews/assets/documents/issue392-december-january>

or email: retbatnews@gmail.com

HRR Churches Newsletter

If you know of someone who would like a copy of our Newsletter please forward their e-mail address to me christine@davidholmes.plus.com and I will send them a copy.

Likewise if you do not wish to receive a copy of the Newsletter please forward your email address to me and I will take you off the circulation list.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Christine

Christmas Services at Hullbridge, Rawreth and Rettendon

| | St Thomas Hullbridge | St Nicholas Rawreth | All Saints Rettendon |
|--|---|--|--|
| Sunday 20 th December | 9:15am Parish Eucharist | 10:00am Holy Communion | 11:15am Carol Service *Booking essential |
| | 4:00pm Christingle Service On-line only on both the Hullbridge Facebook group and the hrr.churches Facebook group | | |
| Christmas Eve | | 4:00 Crib Service On-line only | |
| | 10:00pm Christmas Eve Mass *Booking essential | 11:30pm Midnight Mass *Booking essential | 11:30pm Midnight Mass *Booking essential |
| Christmas Day | | 10:00 Christmas Eucharist Joint Service | |
| Sunday 27 th December | | 10:00 Three Parishes Eucharist Joint Service | |
| Email contacts | *To book in to one of our services please use the following email or contact the churchwardens directly. Please do not assume your booking has been made until you have had confirmation. Because of Covid regulations we will not be able to admit those who do not have a booking. | | |
| | stthomashullbridge@gmail.com | stnicholasrawreth@gmail.com | Allsaints.rettendon.pcc@gmail.com |

All services will be available by Facebook livestream including those with congregations present. They will be livestreamed through our Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/hrr.churches and then made available through our website www.hrr-churches.org.uk/prayer-and-reflection/ and the YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/RJsYouTube>

To join services live on Facebook you will need to be part of the Facebook and so please follow the link in good time, we will be delighted to include you.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

Bishop Peter's Christmas message: The Difference of Christmas

Because of the pandemic Christmas is going to be different this year and that will be so hard. As I write, we don't exactly know how, but it is likely that we won't be able to gather fully as families; no big parties and celebrations; our Christmas worship together will be limited. Added to that many more families than in recent years will struggle to buy Christmas presents or even put a Christmas dinner on the table.

Christmas 2020 will be different.

Yet the truth is that the first Christmas was very different too. The heart of that difference was and remains that Christmas is for outsiders. Everyone gathered in that stable when Jesus was born was an outsider: the shepherds were outside the strict religious rules of the day because of their dirty job with the sheep; Joseph and Mary were in all probability marginalized because Mary was pregnant before marriage. And the Christ Child himself came from totally outside – from the glory of heaven to earth, to be born outside amidst the mess of our humanity.

So if you feel an outsider as Christmas approaches, this same Jesus and his church is there for you and any others who feel isolated or neglected.

So however we celebrate this Christmas, the challenge is to make a difference to those amongst whom we live. If you truly want to make a difference this Christmas then:

- Mend a quarrel; apologise if you were wrong; forgive someone who has treated you badly.
 - Give something away -- anonymously.
 - Help out at a foodbank
 - If we are allowed to, visit someone who is lonely or in need, or e mail, or even write to them. Christmas cards and e mails are going to be so important this year.
 - Tell someone who needs to hear it that you love them.
- Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement. That is the Christian difference.

But there is also something to receive at Christmas too: that gift is Christ himself.

After the angel appeared to the shepherds, Luke says this: ***15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*** And they did exactly that.

However we celebrate Christmas this year we must, with the shepherds, once again go to Bethlehem and peek inside that stable door to see the wonder of all wonders – that the Almighty God loves us enough to come amongst us as a weak and vulnerable baby, born on the outside. A baby who grew up to die on a cross outside the city wall for our sins and rose mightily from the dead to give us hope for our futures.

God has left Jesus outside on the doorstep of all our lives. The question, as with all babies left on doorsteps, is who will open the door and take him in?

That is the difference of Christmas



Dear Friends,

Wow where has this year gone, I cannot believe we only have 6 weeks left of 2020, and what a challenging year it has been for everyone. I do hope you are all keeping safe and well.

Last time I wrote I was talking about welcoming visitors to our schools on a Saturday in November. Unfortunately, that did not happen due to the second lockdown we were placed in. However, we managed to put a video up on our website of our wonderful school and we directed our new parents to the page to view our school virtually.

We are now thinking about how we can celebrate Christmas in schools virtually, and we will still manage to do our Carols Around the Tree, which is a lovely service.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and I wish you all a happy new year.

I look forward to writing again soon.

Mrs S Willis
Executive Headteacher

Rettendon Primary School
Main Road, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford

Like most schools in the UK returning in September was something we looked forward to immensely. After several months with many children being educated and supported at home, it was our hope to have the whole school back on site safely. There have been many issues to work through related to the whole Covid-19 situation, but with the support of staff, parents and the local community we are grateful to have almost completed our first term of the year.

Returning to school, our children are hungry to learn, and loving the opportunities that are there, albeit working in different spaces and with different times for the school day. We have managed some gorgeous walks in the local area, and around All Saints church to help inspire our writing and science

As the year continues we would value your thoughts for our hard working staff as they work around the many changes new statutory requirements; and for our children and supportive families, that they continue to keep well, both physically and emotionally.

Phil Andrews
Deputy Headteacher