Are you ready yet?

How ready are you for Christmas? Are you the sort of person who has all their Christmas shopping sewn up by September or do you race round the shops on Christmas Eve putting yourself on the back if you manage to land yourself a few discounted bargains in the process?

As vicar of two local churches I’m not only thinking about Christmas preparations in my own home, but all those that will take place in church. So at St John’s and St George’s, (and I know the same will be true for the other local churches), we are planning or already underway with Advent services, Carol services, early morning Advent Reflections (6.30am on Mondays in Aggies), school services, writing scripts for the Christmas Eve services, planning the midnight mass (at 11pm on the 24th at St John’s Hurst Green or 11.30pm St George’s Crowhurst), arranging other local carol singing such as the Diamond on Tuesday 22nd December from 8pm, holding services in care homes such as Windmill Manor, hosting concerts and then finally the Christmas Day service itself. I can tell you that by Christmas lunchtime I’m ready to sleep!

On that first Christmas day, some preparations took place but not many. Mary and Joseph just about managed to find some shelter to birth the Saviour of the World. But no big gathering of near and dear was particularly planned. Those that wanted to turned up including a few farm animals, some nearby shepherds and by contrast some holy men from the East.

But it was a good day. It was an amazing day. Because it was about everyone who needed to be, however different they were, being together and sharing their joy that God in Jesus was tenderly coming to live with them as he does with us.

The main thing most people love about Christmas day is being together with family and friends. But for some it’s hard. It’s a time of heartbreak. It’s a time of being alone. Keep your eyes open for those around you who may welcome an invitation to join your celebrations. And even if they choose not to, they will really appreciate that you asked.

Christmas in church is equally special. It’s a time to celebrate, be together and be reminded again that God is with us in Jesus not just at Christmas, but always, even in the dark times. Community, togetherness and looking after each other are more important than any Christmas present, bargain or otherwise, that you’ll open on Christmas day.

So come along, whoever you are. Join in with others from the local community at St John’s or any of the other local churches here in Hurst Green and Crowhurst. Know that you are a wonderful, important, treasured person loved by your church, as well as those near and dear and by God. And have a very special Christmas.

With tidings of comfort and of joy! Revd Anna Eltringham, Vicar of St John’s Hurst Green and St George’s Crowhurst

CHRISTMAS BUFFET LUNCH

On Wednesday 16 December from 12 noon to 2pm, Aggies-on-the-Green will be hosting this year’s Christmas Buffet for £10 per person. Tickets are available at the Coffee Shop each Wednesday. All are welcome!

RISE Theatre is a professional Christian theatre company with a passion for delivering original, entertaining, faith-based drama working at schools, churches, events and festivals across the UK, with the aim of inspiring people of all ages to discover their full potential in life.

Christmas Services in Hurst Green

Full details are in the enclosed Christmas card.

Please note that ‘Midnight Christmas Mass’ at St John’s is at 11pm. The Communion Service on Christmas Day is at the slightly later time than usual of 10am.

Carol Singing at The Diamond

Local churches invite you to a community sing along of some Christmas carols on Tuesday 22 December from 8pm.

The Next issue of Hurst Green News will be published on Saturday 2 January 2016.

Please do not be caught out by the early deadline: Friday 11 December to reach the printers before they close for Christmas and the New Year.

Details of where to send material are at the bottom of this page.

The next issue of Hurst Green News will be published on 2 January 2016. Please send material for that issue, including items for the diary, no later than FRIDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2015 to The Compiler, 3 Parklands, Oxted, RH8 9DP; e-mail: hgncompiler@gmail.com. The Compiler reserves the right to edit copy. The Hurst Green News is published by St John’s Parochial Church Council (Registered Charity 1133107) as a church and community newsletter.

It is financed by advertisements and St John’s Parochial Church Council.
Christmas in Australia

Over 40 years ago we arrived in Australia on the last shipload of £10 poms (British migrants who only paid £10 towards their fare to Australia) and settled in Elizabeth, near Adelaide.

The first Christmas was quite a shock; it is very hard to keep up old traditions when the temperature is 30°C. The commercialisation of Christmas was much more blatant even than in England; popular street parades were sponsored by local department stores, big floats with Santa and the elves frolicking under artificial pine trees with artificial snow. There was very little carol singing or Christmas plays or pantomimes. The religious significance of Christmas was a thing apart, a matter for churches, although the children did nativity plays at school.

A traditional British Christmas just doesn’t work in the heat. We decorate our homes and give presents just as back in the UK, but there is no place for turkey and Christmas pud. Instead most families get together with the “rellies” (relatives in Oz speak) and friends and have a BBQ or a picnic in the park or on the beach. A good Aussie tradition is that everyone brings a dish so the hostess doesn’t do all the cooking. A lot of the Dame Edna ideas about Australia have a grain of truth; throwing another prawn on the barbie (or even a sausage or a burger) sounds familiar, and even the rivalry over whose is the best pavlova rings true. For years we went to my cousin’s house for Christmas Day where there were usually 25-30 people of all ages, happily enjoying a huge garden party.

But we did miss proper Christmas. I belong to an organisation called TEA - The English in Australia. Our local group decided to have an official Christmas in June when it is quite cool, so we have a party with a traditional Christmas dinner, crackers to pull and carols round the piano. It’s just what you need in the middle of even an Australian winter. Pamela Whitehouse

Santa’s coming to Hurst Green!

Christmas is just around the corner and you can almost hear those sleigh-bells ringing... In the week before Christmas, Santa Claus and Rudolph will be touring Hurst Green and Oxted in their sleigh.

Accompanied by Santa’s elves (disguised as members of Titsey & District Rotary Club), they’ll be visiting as many children, and parents, as they can and Santa will be giving sweets to the children, while the elves collect loose change for charities supported by the Rotary Club. Santa hopes to visit the following streets:

**Monday, 14 December**
- 6pm: Mill Lane/Warren Lane
- 7pm: Roseacre/Meadowlands/Holland Road/Coldshott
- 7.30pm: Meridian Square/Barnfied Way

**Tuesday, 15 December**
- 6pm: Pollards Oak Road/Pollards Oak Crescent/The Greenway
- 7pm: Chestnut Copse/Pollards Oak Road
- 7.30pm: The Hollies/Juniper Close

**Wednesday, 16 December**
- 6pm: Boulthurst Way/Hazelwood
- 7pm: Home Park

Please note – these timings are APPROXIMATE. Santa, Rudolph and the elves will do their best to stick to them but Santa’s getting on a bit and needs to stop for a rest from time to time. Keep an eye on the Oxted Facebook Group page, in case the weather forces changes, and listen out for Santa’s bell on the evenings! Fingers crossed that there’s not TOO much snow! Ho Ho Ho!
**BULKY RUBBISH CLEARANCE**

**Will take:** ceramics, furniture, garden waste, glass, household rubbish, metal items, up to two washing machines etc.

**Unable to take:** fridges, freezers, asbestos, car batteries, concrete, hardcore, hazardous chemicals, oil, paint, plasterboard, trade waste or tyres. For advice on these, call Surrey County Council: 0208 329 1030.

Cannot accept any rubbish brought to the site in a lorry. For more information please contact Biffa, 712333 or Customer Services, 722000.

Please do not dump rubbish at sites before the vehicle arrives, or you may lose the collection crew, or we may lose this very valued service.

**SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER**

**Hurst Green**

Community Centre 7.30 - 10.45am

Coldshott 12 noon - 2.15pm

Limpshfield

Stoneleigh Road 12 noon - 2.15pm

Oxted

Council Offices 7.30 - 9.45am

Chalkpit Wood 10am - 12.15pm

Barbara Harling, 723034

---

**PARISH REGISTERS**

Holy Baptism

We welcome into the family of God’s Church:

18 October

Finley Ritchie

Charlie Ritchie

1 November

Ruby Tilt

Holly Golby

Jayden Golby

Kyla Golby

5 December

Claire Wallace

and Jamie Bateman

Marriage

We wish them every happiness in their future lives together:

5 December

Claire Wallace

25 November

Julian Taylor

St John’s Book of Remembrance

To have a name entered, please phone Diana on 712845.

---

**CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

**Sunday 13 December, 7pm**

St John’s Church, Hurst Green

Come and enjoy choral classics by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Handel, Stanford and others as well as Christmas carols for choir and audience. Tickets £10 from members of the choir or on the door.

www.hurstgreensingers.co.uk

---

**MULLINGER ELECTRICS LTD**

All domestic electrical jobs undertaken from a replacement switch to a rewire

Simon Mullinger, electrician

Part P Qualified  All work full insured

01883 372548 or 07974 425126

---

**St Agatha’s Hall**

Booking Secretary

Marjorie Walker, 714492

**Children’s Church**

For toddlers and children who have just started school

Monday, 14 December, 3.30pm

St John’s Church

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Anyone looking after your children is welcome to bring them.

---

**Nine Lessons & Carols**

St John’s, Hurst Green

Sunday 20 December 5.30pm

followed by mince pies and mulled wine

---

**St Agatha’s Hall**

Booking Secretary

Marjorie Walker, 714492

**Children’s Church**

For toddlers and children who have just started school

Monday, 14 December, 3.30pm

St John’s Church

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Anyone looking after your children is welcome to bring them.

---

**Further information - 715769**

Christmas Crib Services

St John’s, Hurst Green

Christmas Eve, 3.30 and 5pm

You are invited to bring a present with you, wrapped and labelled, saying for what age (0 - 16 years) and sex the gift would be appropriate. No soft toys please.

This year gifts will be shared between Welcare (Strengthening Families) and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services.

Children - please come dressed as shepherds, angels or kings to take part in the service.

---

**PREGNANCY YOGA**

Hurst Green Methodist Church

Starting 15 January 2016, 9.40 - 10.50am

and every Friday (except 1st Friday in month) with Caroline Smith. Contact: oxted@yogasmith.co.uk or see www.yogasmith.co.uk for further details.

Community Carol Singing Hurst Green Station

Thursday 17 December 7.30pm

Join with Oxted Band Musicians

Refreshments available

A ‘Creative Community’ event in partnership with Oxted Band, local groups and churches

---

**MULLINGER ELECTRICS LTD**

All domestic electrical jobs undertaken from a replacement switch to a rewire

Simon Mullinger, electrician

Part P Qualified  All work full insured

01883 372548 or 07974 425126

---

**Moor House School & College**

Mill Lane, Hurst Green, Oxted

OPEN MORNING

for Prospective Parents Seeking Placement

Thursday 28 January 2016 at 9.45am

Please come to Moor House School & College and see what we can offer your child

Please call: 01883 712271 or

Email: admissions@moorhouseschool.co.uk