

Christmas News 2016 –

the Newsletter of St Christopher's
Cathedral and Awali Church.



The Bible refers to Mary *pondering these things in her heart*, as well she might. Having just given birth to her baby, she has been visited in the middle of the night by a bunch of shepherds, who are rarely seen in town because of their responsibilities, but who tell her that they have seen a host of angels who declare that *a Saviour has been born, Christ the Lord*. There is a lot for her to take in and so she takes time to ponder and reflect on their significance. David Lose, my favourite commentator on Scripture, writes this:

We, too, are invited to ponder...well, everything. How God uses ordinary peasants to redeem the world. How God reveals the good news of redemption, first to the lowliest. How God comes to us not in power, but in weakness and vulnerability. How God embraces us and all the world through the birth of divine love in the Christ child. It really is too much blessing to comprehend, let alone believe, quickly. And so the Christian tradition invites us to keep twelve days of Christmas. Surely even this isn't enough to take it all in. But it's a start.

Christmas Services

Friday 9th December

9.30am Nativity Play *On Christmas Night*

Sunday 11th December

7.30pm in The Deanery: Christmas carols, stories, poems, readings – bring and share.

Sunday 18th December

6.15pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve, Saturday 24th December

4.30pm Crib Service (*Awali*)

4.30pm Christingle Service

11.30pm First Communion of Christmas

Christmas Day, Sunday 25th December

10.00am Family Communion (*Awali*)

10.30am Family Communion

6.15pm Holy Communion

Saturday 31st December

11.30pm Watchnight Service

The **Nativity Play** this year is a simple retelling of the Nativity story, interspersed with familiar carols, through the eyes of the animals present in the stable.

The **Living Room Dialogue** programme on Sunday 11th December will not have an invited speaker, but you are invited to contribute by sharing a story, a carol or Christmas tradition of your childhood in your part of the world.

At **The Nine Lessons and Carols** we look forward to welcoming the Manama Singers and Church.

On Christmas Eve you will need to make a choice between a **Crib service** at Awali Church or **Christingle** in the Alun Morris Hall

Building Project Gift Day

The Building Project Gift Day raised a sum of BD15,287 and a further BD28,216 is pledged towards the appeal over the next twelve months a total of BD43,503. What a wonderful start! If you missed the Gift Day, please join the party – it's never too late.

Sabbatical Three Months

In October our Dean, Chris Butt, completed seven years service at the Cathedral and the Council, with the support of our Bishop and Archdeacon, has agreed to Chris taking a sabbatical three months, beginning in February after the Diocesan Synod and returning in the first week of May. It will be a mix of study – focusing on *Islamophobia* – retreat, and some travel. During that time **Archdeacon Bill Schwartz** will be coming for the first three weekends and is looking forward to rooting himself again in parish ministry; and **Canon Ian Calder** and his wife **Penny**, who will be here until just after Easter. The Calder family are remembered fondly by some in the Cathedral family as they



were here prior to Chris and Tricia's arrival in 2009. Please

make them feel very welcome in Bahrain. Thank you!

To know more about the life of St Christopher's Cathedral and Awali Church please look at

our website: www.stchcathedral.org or please ring Fozia our cathedral Administrator in the Cathedral Office: Tel: 17253866

Sunday 15th January: *An Ambassador's Scribblings: Poetry, Literature and The Life of a Diplomat*



H.E. William Roebuck, The US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain has had a very varied diplomatic career in the Middle East and North Africa – but he has also studied English Literature and has published poetry.

Sunday 19th February: *Islam: A Religion, A Culture, A Society*

Bill Schwartz, Archdeacon of the Gulf has spent all of his ministry in our Diocese and will be speaking on the subject: *Islam: A Religion, A Culture, A Society*, which is the title of a book that he wrote to help explain Islamic culture to Christians who come from all over the world to work in our region.



Sunday 12th March: *Five Lives - One Day in the Life of Bahrain*

Rohini Sunderam is a Founder member and



Director of the Bahrain Writer's Circle. She has written two books and had articles published in magazines and

newspapers in both India and Canada. She has recently published *Five Days – One day in the Life of Bahrain*.