

Christmas News

Newsletter of St Christopher's Cathedral and Awali Church

A few weeks ago I was asked by a teacher, the head of year of a school, if she could bring children to see the cathedral. As a year group they were exploring festivals of different religions and wanted to come to the cathedral to talk about Christmas. There was one proviso that the school had a policy of not teaching the religious story to this age group.

I wrote back to say that I was always delighted to welcome children into the cathedral, but that I could not talk about Christmas without telling the story of the first Christmas, the story that inspires our celebrations of Christmas today. I could not just talk about special foods, the sharing of gifts, decorations, Father Christmas and not mention the birth of Jesus.

With regret and some understanding the teacher wrote back to say that they wouldn't be bringing the children to the cathedral.

But it got me thinking about our celebrations of



Christmas and of course at the very heart of them is the telling of the story. The Nativity Play, performed by the children, is the retelling and acting out of the story; the Nine Lessons and Carols encourages us *"in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass and the Babe lying in a manger"*; and in our Christingle Service on Christmas Eve, Nativity sets from all over the world will be portraying the story of the birth of Jesus on the cross-shaped table in the middle of the Alun Morris Hall, each in their own way trying to make

the story of Christmas relevant to different cultures and experience.

And that surely is the message and the wonder of Christmas: that God has made our story his story and we are called to make our story part of his.

Christmas Services

Friday 7th December

9.30am Nativity Play



Sunday 9th December

7.30pm Bring and share Advent and Christmas
(in The Deanery)

Friday 21st December

9.30am Advent Service and Christingle Workshop

Sunday 23rd December

10.30am Holy Communion

6.15pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Monday 24th December

4.30pm Crib service (Awali)

4.30pm Christingle (Cathedral)

11.30pm First Communion of Christmas

Tuesday 25th December, Christmas Day

10.00am Holy Communion (Awali)

10.30am Holy Communion (Cathedral)

There will be **no** regular service at Awali on Saturdays 22nd or 29th December at 10.00am

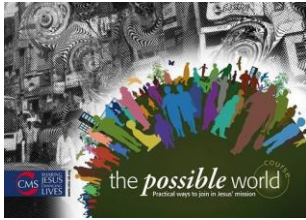
Monday 31st December

11.30pm First Communion of the New Year

share the joy

Homegroups

Homegroups meet on Mondays at 9.30am – a women's group usually in a home in the Saar area and on Wednesdays in Juffair. They will be following a course of studies entitled *The Possible World, practical ways to join Jesus' mission*. Each session will include a 6-8 minute film containing stories of inspiring ordinary individuals living out their faith in their lives.



Looking Forward to Lent

Over the first weekend in Lent we are privileged to welcome *The Rev'd Dr Andrew Mayes*, who is the Chaplain of St Barnabas' Church Limassol but also the Diocesan Spirituality Adviser. He is the author of several books on spirituality and a course that he has prepared for churches in our diocese especially for Lent, which our homegroups will be following.



The long weekend will include:

Thursday 7th March, 7.00pm Cathedral dinner.

Friday 8th March Preaching at both English and Tamil-speaking services.

Saturday 9th March 10.00am – 3.30pm leading a Quiet day at Awali beginning with Holy Communion



in the church and the rest of the day based in the Princess Sabeeka

Park, Awali.

Sunday 10th March 6.15pm Preach at the Evening Service.

Monday 11th March 9.30am Women's Group.

Living Room Dialogues

The first Living Room Dialogue of the New Year is on **Sunday 13th January** when *Mary-Justine Todd*, the Founder and Director of Women's Crisis Care International, Bahrain, will be our speaker. This is the first and only violence crisis response centre in the Arabian Gulf. WCCI provides violence crisis response services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse.



Ordinand to visit Bahrain

Tom Pote is training to be a priest at Westcott House, Cambridge and, following a lecture in Cambridge given by Bishop Michael about the Diocese and the Church in the Middle East, he asked if he might do a placement in the Diocese. Bishop Michael asked if we would host him for a month to give him and his wife, *Maria Vittoria*, the experience of living and ministering in the Middle-East.



So Tom and Maria Vittoria will come to Bahrain, following the Diocesan Synod in February, and they would love the opportunity to meet over a meal and experience the warmth of St Christopher's hospitality.

Regular Weekly services/ Contacts

Monday- Thursday 8.00am Morning Prayer.

Friday 9.30am Holy Communion with Friday Club (All-age Family Service: 1st Friday of the month).

Friday 6.00pm Tamil Service.

Saturday 10.00am (Awali) Holy Communion (All- age Family Service: 1st Saturday of the month).

Sunday 10.30am Holy Communion.

Sunday 6.15pm Holy Communion (Evensong: 2nd Sunday)

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