



News about the Church Magazine and the Turret Times

The Church Magazine will cease publication after December due to lack of an editor. The Mission Community Council wants to take the opportunity to explore how we might communicate across the churches and into the communities. The other three churches have expressed an interest in receiving this newsheet, so it will be sent electronically to Dawlish, Cofton & Starcross. If you know anyone who currently receives the magazine, or anyone for that matter, who would like to receive a copy of the Turret Times, please let our magazine secretary, Marian Wannell know. A note may be left with Chris.

If an emailed copy is possible, please inform Chris by email.

Midweek Holy Communion Services, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> (BCP), 19<sup>th</sup> at 5 Cedar Close at 10.30;  
9<sup>th</sup> January – St Bernard's Cottage. BCP service will be on 16<sup>th</sup> January for this month only.



Christmas Services and Events @ Holcombe Village Hall

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 9.30 Holy Communion (BCP, said)

**3.00 Teas in the Joan Copp Room, all welcome;**

**4.00 Carol Service**

**Service of the Longest Night, 21<sup>st</sup>, 4 pm St Mary's Cofton**



Christmas Eve, Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>

**4.00 Crib Service/Scratch Nativity.** Children are invited to come dressed as shepherds or angels. If anyone wants to be a king, Mary or Joseph, let Chris know as soon as possible.

**5.00 – 5.45 Light seasonal refreshments; all welcome.** *This will be bring and share.*

**Chris would like a coordinator** who is not necessarily to do anything themselves, but who could be the person we will tell – I will bring x. Easy eating and serving finger food. Mostly to be served out of the containers in which it is brought to minimise work. Also, someone to bring milk and serve teas and coffees.

**6.00 Holy Communion for Christmas – please note the time!**

Christmas Day

**9.30 Church Family Gathering: Carols and Readings.**

*Children are invited to bring a present (not too noisy!!) to show us all.*

*All adults welcome too! On your own or with others. Everyone is part of the church family.*



Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> 10.00, St Gregory's joint service.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2.30 Messy Vintage **Epiphany party with activities, worship songs, story and tea for all ages. Combining the January Tea Service & Messy Church.**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January 9.30 First Sunday Service -Epiphany (informal Holy Communion)

The annual service of Remembering and Hope has been moved to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb, 3 pm

**Ladies Lunch** – Weds 6<sup>th</sup> December, 12 noon at Amelia's Cofton Country.

**Messy Church** – Weds 6<sup>th</sup> December, 4 pm in the Village Hall



**Christmas Tree Festival at St Greg's** Launch event – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 7 pm;

Also open – Friday 8<sup>th</sup>, 10-4; Sat 9<sup>th</sup> 11-4; Sun 10<sup>th</sup> 2-4. Free Entry – refreshments available.

Come and see our trees, including one representing HAP!!! (more overleaf!!)

On the **Saturday afternoon 9<sup>th</sup> December 3 pm.**

**Three Choirs Concert. Free entry,** donation bucket jointly in aid of St Greg's lighting project and HAP. (fitting out the office and store room). Light Christmas music and readings. Which choirs?

St George's, St Greg's and Westcliffe School. Support our choir!

**Forget Me Nots:** **WHO** is it for? Those affected by Dementia, friends, families; all interested in offering support. **WHEN?** The last Wednesday of the month (next Weds, 31<sup>st</sup> January) **WHERE?** **St Mary's Hall, Dawlish Warren** (ample parking, accessible building etc) **Programme 2.30** – arrive, meet and greet; **2.45** – sing and pray; *short dementia friendly time with just two or three familiar songs and hymns.* **3.00** – tea & cake followed by café style chat, discussion, activity or guest “speaker”.

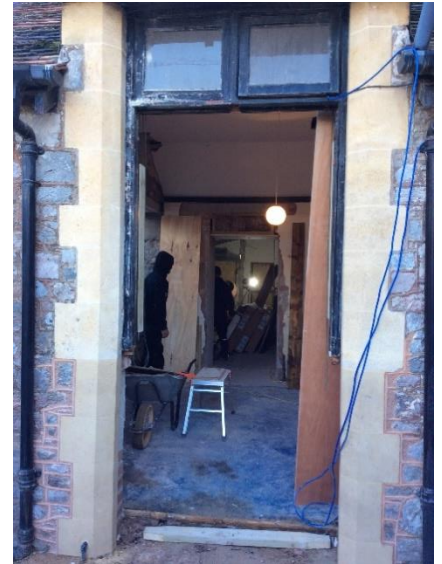
**Extra event: FRIDAY 29<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER from 2:30 An afternoon with carols and readings.**



**HAP – the building project. The photos were taken on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November** and show the new roof



going on the main room, the new doorway which will give step free access, the new space on the left where the WC will be (taken from the doorway). Chris has more pictures if you ask to see them. They are working from the back forwards so there is still much work to be done on the front roof. However, by the middle of the month we hope that all work that affects the actual church will have been completed and that the organ might be able to be tuned. The current hope is that we might be able to meet again in the church for worship from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in January, although that is not yet certain. What is clear is that when we move back in the work will not all be finished, including the front wall, storage etc, and it will be interesting as we get used to the new layout, the new names of the rooms and the fact it will still be a work in progress. At the time of writing we have realised that more work needs to be done to the electrical supply and the fuse box than was envisaged and we



praise God that the legacy (see below) means that we can pay for this. We are also starting to think about how to fit storage into the new office/vestry so that we can accommodate all the things we use during worship over the course of the year, as well as make it a place to sit and talk. We ask others to be patient as we prioritise this, as this will take much of the load off the shoulders of our churchwarden, Bill, and make daily life so much easier for those who prepare for and lead worship. They may well be quite a few boxes around as we gradually move back in! We will need to ensure that the church is clean enough for the first time we use it, but we do not yet know when it would be appropriate to have a major spring clean of the main church building.

### **How to use what we are given; the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25)**

*The text of Chris' sermon from Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November which explains the story of HAP and Harold's legacy.*

The parable of the talents: active responsible service which produces results, not just conserving what is.

How do we use what has been given to us in a way which will produce fruit for the Kingdom of God and the loving reign of Jesus? What does the master hope for from us? Talents of course were money, about 6,000 denarii and a denarius a day's wages.

For most of this time I want to tell the story of our building project; what we are doing with the resources we have been given. About 3 years ago, when we were renewing the church roof, one of the grant making trusts encouraged us that we would be good candidates for a sizeable grant for other work in the church, and did we know that sometimes they offered 100% grants? Hmm, we thought. Look at the Church Rooms; wood rotting everywhere, windows in danger of falling out, roofs leaking and growing mould, no step free access or anywhere to change a baby, no private space, inadequate kitchen for what we were wanting to do and right at the last minute the water heater in the loo wash basin blew up! What can we do? – if we are going to make a mess, let's do it properly!

Now, a word about the past. It was lovely in the past. It served its purpose faithfully and we rejoice for those who had the vision to build what is there as we are literally building for the future on their

foundations. The incarnation teaches us that we need to be present in the world as it is, so we build for the future. A second word about the past. The church council was previously told it would not be possible to get planning to create a second access. It is always good to question messages from the past – they may be right, they may not be – (do you carry with you things you have been told, perhaps not openly? “you’ll never be able to do that”, “you don’t have that ability”) .... So we questioned and this time permission came.

Preliminary estimates for the work were about **£70k** so we launched an appeal. Do you remember me saying that was roughly £1K for each person on the electoral roll? The financial situation changed and gaining grants become much more difficult. Although we have tried for one and did quite well until the last round, and we do have one small grant. Basically we do not qualify for many as we are not a listed building.

Then on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2016, long time church member Harold Hayden died and when I went to plan his funeral I was told that he had left us 20% of his residual estate and that the estate was at least £400,000. After costs we were to receive about **£70K**. I picked myself up off the floor, praised God and made a few calls to those whom I could tell. From that time on we realised HAP would happen. For various reasons it was not appropriate to make it widely known at that time. With that knowledge, we revisited our plans to incorporate some things that we had discounted. Much hard work ensued with plans, meetings, architect, faculty, local authority planning, builders – I personally want to pay tribute to Mike Burden for all the hard work he has put and is putting into this. We could not have done this without him. Final builder’s estimate was £114K, incl VAT. Yes, we can do it. **£120k** with contingency. (the bequest + the other funds raised, given, Friends, Gift Aid etc ) Then in the middle of the summer of 2017 we hear that the bequest would be in excess of **£100K**. Dallas keeps saying that she really sees the hand of God over all of this.

The end of August we had to commit to the project, but the funds, although certain, had not come. I was really exercised in my mind and spirit as what we should do. Could we commit to the builder without the money in the bank? Supposing the first bills came in and we couldn’t meet them? Would it be possible to ask people to provide “bridging loans” to cover any eventuality? I would have to lead the way, but was that the right way forward? I was unsure. During the day I made a house call and almost as an afterthought, shared my frustration at the delay in the funds but without mentioning my thinking. “Of course we are going ahead”, said that person, “I’ll offer a loan”. Remember I had *not* shared my thinking along this line.

I am sure that God was in that offer and saying, “are you committed to this? Do you really want this?” And the church council agreed and offers came in to bridge the financial gap if needed. About two weeks after we made the commitment to proceed, the money arrived and was about £9K more than we had been told in the summer.

I wanted to tell you this to share the back story behind what has been happening, to give thanks to God, and to share how we are investing our resources for fruit for the kingdom. It is not only Harold’s money, but there is other money given from within the church and the Friends, some quite sacrificially. It is important that, as we are able, we offer our resources to the work of the kingdom. And in this season of remembrance, some gifts are in memory of loved ones, some church members now in glory, and those will be honoured in due course. This has given us a chance to not be hampered by a building demanding attention, but to go forward, *continuing to give as we are called to do so for the ongoing ministry and mission of the church*, because a healthy church does not live off legacies but uses them for fruitfulness. I invite you all to prayerfully consider two things.

**Firstly**, what are we learning now? You each have a blank piece of paper. (They had been given out with the hymn books). I would like it to come back to me, next week if possible, and it can be anonymous, with thoughts and feelings about what it means to be church together *at the moment*. What it feels like to be meeting differently. What you feel God may be saying. Anything you would like us to do *at the moment* that we are not doing. (**Later comment – I am still interested, please let me know. Let’s not waste this chance to reflect on what the Lord may be showing us.**)

**Secondly**, please reflect on how can we use the new building, rather than hide in it. How can we use it to serve our community and share the love of Jesus? We are pouring many talents into this. How will they bear fruit? We are not doing it simply so that we have somewhere better to put the kettle or store the robes.

The master in the parable was looking for active, responsible service which produces results. He treated each servant as an individual according to their ability and situation. May we live as children of the Kingdom, use what we have been given from God, and faithfully discharge our responsibility as disciples.

### **News from the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME)**

This is Salim, an Iraqi Christian from Qaraqosh. He speaks with fondness and nostalgia about his old home: “If you could have seen Qaraqosh before the war, it was amazing.” ISIS tried to capture the city in July 2014





but were pushed back by a small band of Christian and Kurdish fighters. Their courageous defence of the city allowed the women, children and elderly to escape. The jihadists later cut the water supply, causing thousands to flee. ... Our team in northern Iraq visited Qaraqosh earlier this year and found a ghost town. The jihadists had tried to erase all evidence of Christianity. At the Church of the Immaculate Conception, once Iraq's largest church, they piled the pews and bibles up and burned them. They daubed the walls with the black flag of Islamic State and used the courtyard as a shooting range.

Salim's son, Revan, left for Jordan six months before ISIS came. War-torn Iraq had little to offer an aspiring musician. He now volunteers for us at the Assemblies of God Church in Madaba (a city south of Amman), distributing food to the refugees there. We are feeding Salim and Revan every month, along with 1,100 other Iraqi refugee families. With your support, we would like to give them a little more this Christmas. PO Box 229, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 9DL United Kingdom



<http://frrme.org/get-involved/donate/>



**If you give to Samara's Aid please alter standing orders; details on the website or from Chris. THE OLD BANK ACCOUNTS WITH FEED THE HUNGRY ARE CLOSING:**

**Samara wrote on 25<sup>th</sup> November:** Do you remember the camp for displaced people we found in Syria earlier this year where the people were living in terrible conditions? Because of the very complex situation there, we were unable to move any of our aid to this camp at the time, so we supported them with food and water over the Summer. It took six months before it was possible, but while I was in Syria, we finally managed to deliver aid we sent from the UK to these people who are living in such bad conditions. Winter clothes, shoes, dignity bags. The people there was so thrilled. ....

We have been working on sending three Meditainers to Deir Ez-zor, an area in the North East of Syria which has recently been freed from ISIS who kept it under siege for three years. The people ..were subjected to torture, public executions, brainwashing and were used as human shields against the outside forces trying to claim back this territory. They have suffered true deprivation in a very hostile environment. They were very poor even before the war and after three years of ISIS rule, they are now in such desperate situations having been completely neglected. It is still a very complex area with a lot of bombs and fighting which makes it very difficult to access, and the people there are in true need of all of the basic necessities for living including food, water, clothing and of course medical provision. We are working with the relevant authorities in Syria as well as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (Red Cross) to transport a convoy of aid there then distribute around 100 tonnes of our aid sent from the UK in this area, they have especially asked us to send shoes. We also have authorisation to send our three Meditainers along with our smaller mobile operating room to Deir Ez-zor imminently. Although the WHO states that there are more than 1 million people in and around Deir Ez-zor, the city has only one four floor hospital; the the 3rd and 4th floors were destroyed by ISIS..doctors on the ground in Deir Ez-zor tell us that they have capacity for around 50 beds. Clearly nowhere near enough for this city, whose population have been trauamtised and deprived for the last three years.

**9.19 that evening** Samara posted: Great news! Today our aid convoy arrived safely in Deir Ez-zor carrying 120 tonnes of essential aid. All of this Aid was sent with love by individuals, churches, organisations and schools in the UK. Thanks so much to everyone who has helped in any way.

**At St George's** we are limited with what we can do while "homeless" but **there is small appeal for the middle of January**. We invite individuals or groups who would like to fill a "**dignity bag**" with supplies for women, a "**smiley bag**" with items for children, or a **care pack** for babies or expectant mothers. These have to be filled with very specific items and if anyone is interested, please contact Revd Chris for the "shopping" lists. (other three churches, you have them in your folders.) In addition, we invite donations of **excellent** quality used clothing (all closures working, absolutely no stains or marks) for all ages and sexes, including winter coats, **shoes (paired, polished, pristine)**; new clothing especially underwear with tags or in original packaging; soap, toothbrushes. Items can be brought to any of the church services at the Hall (please do not leave things in the Hall when we are not there), or left at the Vicarage (13 Westcliffe) between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January, or please contact Chris to arrange a delivery time and place. Thank you. May the light of the Son of God shine on you this Christmas. [www.ceofe-in-dawlish.org](http://www.ceofe-in-dawlish.org); 07710159751; [stgeorgholcombe@live.co.uk](mailto:stgeorgholcombe@live.co.uk). St George's, Holcombe Village, Dawlish, EX7 0JT; like us on **FB**



This arrived from Samara after I had started to print the Turret Times. I reproduce it almost in its entirety so that it can really inform our prayers.

On Saturday (25<sup>th</sup> November) our aid convoy of relief items arrived in Deir Ez-zor. This is an extremely deprived city and governate in Syria which has just been liberated from ISIS, who have controlled large parts of the city and surrounding areas for the last three years. We sent 14 lorries carrying 120 tonnes of humanitarian and medical aid in the form of clothes, shoes, bedding, hygiene items, dignity bags, children's bags and care packs for women with babies as well as medical aid, sent with love from the UK. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (Red Cross) added four lorries of food, and our convoy had to travel under armed protection to this extremely dangerous area. We are one of just a very small handful of NGO's from outside Deir Ez-zor who are on the ground there now, yet the WHO state that there are more than 1 million people living in and around this area.

Deir Ez-zor is the forgotten city. A poorer area in the first place which didn't receive the same level of media attention that Aleppo did when the fighting was in full force. Many people in the UK have never even heard the name. But the people in this area have endured the same kind of deprivation and trauma, have witnessed the same kind of atrocities, and are now trying to pick up the pieces with almost no help whatsoever. The stories that our team on the ground are feeding back to us are harrowing and make me weep.

In the centre of the city there is a park which used to be for the general public to enjoy. But as more and more were killed in the city, the people living under siege had nowhere to bury their relatives, so they started burying their dead in the public park. Now, the children left behind play among the gravestones. They have no toys to play with, so they play instead with whatever rubbish they can find; empty bottles that have been filled with dirt and dusty cans lined up in rows beside the stones marking the places where their neighbours are buried. When our aid co-ordinator asked the children why they were playing there and were not at school they replied "Our schools were destroyed. We have nowhere else to go." One man talked about how, while living under ISIS control, he longed for his children just to be able to see an apple. Food was scarce and people were going hungry, missing many meals.

Now some markets have started again in Deir Ez-zor, but the area is still very dangerous with sleeping ISIS cells. Because of difficult access, the food prices are too high, and we have heard of market vendors adding huge commissions onto the prices charged to the people who have no other way of finding food. The people on the ground there told our teams how at the worst times people were asked to pay \$50-100 dollars for one kilogram of sugar and \$50 one litre of cooking oil. At the time our team were preparing to leave for Deir Ez-zor, the local people on the ground in the area advised us that our teams should bring their own food because it was scarce and extortionately priced. They told stories of people having given their cars in exchange for a huge box of sugar. Although this situation is continuing to improve, the prices are still too high for the people in this area living with a completely broken and depleted economy and little or no opportunity for employment.

There is no internet in the area, and there is barely any phone reception. Communication with the area is very difficult, but we are in touch with our teams there on a daily basis and they are experienced in working in tough and dangerous places. Our team on the ground were partnering with a couple of other organisations who were providing workers for our team to help distribute our aid. After arriving there and having seen the scale of the needs together with the tough nature of the area, the other organisations were overwhelmed by the size of the tasks ahead. As a result, our team on the ground are now building new relationships with other organisations and groups in the area in order to ensure that we are reaching those who are most in need and most vulnerable to distribute our aid to.

Distributing aid can be done in many ways, but we often find that other organisations try to do it the quick and easy way. Sadly the most vulnerable and needy are often missed when working in this manner, and on many occasions the people are given what is convenient for the NGO's to give rather than what each individual or family truly needs. Our way takes longer, but we feel that if a job is worth doing it is worth doing to the best of our ability, and to try to achieve the best results for the people we are trying to help. The truth is that most people in this area are in need. But proper research and planning are essential before starting a large series of distributions in an area of such great need, especially with such limited communication.

We are also asking people to help us focus on raising additional support for the medical facilities and team that we will soon be sending to this area to provide medical care to these people who are in such great need. Our work always has and will always be a huge team effort. I sometimes feel embarrassed when people tell me that what I am doing is amazing. On one hand it is amazing, but it is only amazing people each one of us contributes to making it what it is. Without you, there cannot be an us. Please share this message with your friends and contacts and help us make a difference. Love Samara.