

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



### *Drop everything*

It's a radical suggestion, isn't it, especially at this time of the year. Chance would be a fine thing, some might say. There's tidying up to be done, cards to sort, presents to buy and wrap, food to prepare, decorations to put up and the relatives to visit. Yet just when we may feel most busy, the church asks us to listen to passages from the Bible, which show people dropping everything and responding to God. I feel there is good reason for this.

During Advent, the four Sundays leading to Christmas, we recall how Abraham, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary allowed their lives to be changed by dropping everything in obedience to God's call. Abraham left for a new land, the prophets took the risk of sharing their challenging message, John called on everyone to repent and Mary obediently answered the astonishing call to become a mother.

The Christmas Message describes how the shepherds left their sheep, which were their livelihood, running off to greet the Messiah without, it seems, so much as a backward worried glance for a wolf or two! How often we long to act spontaneously but decide that the unknown is a scary place and the risk is too great and so we stay where we are physically and emotionally.

The season's message is that we are called to see beyond the ever-present activities and stresses of our daily lives to a simple, uncluttered way of seeing things, with the way of life shown to us in Jesus Christ at the centre of it. For however hard we try to meet the demands on our time and

energy, and we cannot entirely avoid it, our lives will be out of kilter if we do not put God first. If God's love is not at the centre of our being, we are likely to be pulled into a maelstrom of activity and anxiety that ultimately lacks any real purpose and brings no lasting fulfilment.

We might feel that the people in the Bible are just figures from a past age; their lives were very different, and they could do those things more easily, while we have so many modern responsibilities. Well, there is a big difference between dropping everything for God and opting out in despair.

The Patriarchs, Prophets and Saints were people as we are, and they would have found it no easier to leave a life they had known and loved to an uncertain future. Yet they followed God's way, whatever the cost. Their lives challenge our modern agnosticism where so many people are unsure of any real purpose to life, and who live as if unaware that there is meaning and hope in God whose love is fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

So, amid whatever presents, feasts, tinsel and TV you may encounter, or if you happen to have a quieter Christmas than this suggests, can you find time to "drop everything" and consider again whether your everyday life reflects God's presence?

We can feel loved and held by him, so that we can share his love with other people and find a personal reason for this life we lead. A good place to do this would be in one of our church services, where we can hear God's Word, meet other people of

faith, and have a real sense of occasion as we rejoice in God coming among us. But wherever we do this, at home or away, may Christ bless and enlighten us all this Christmas as we focus on his love and salvation which is always there in the busy, confusing world of today.

Love, Jo



Come along and join us for this short, fun service for pre-school children and their Teddy Bears (grown-ups welcome too!) on the first Tuesday of every month from January 2015.

Breakfast and coffee served in All Saints Church from 8.45 followed by a 15 minute service of stories and songs at 9.30 with time for the children to play. There is no charge for breakfast and you will receive a friendly welcome, feel free to bring a friend. Older siblings also welcome.

Tuesday 6th January 2015  
Epiphany—*The Wise Men offer their Gifts*

Tuesday 3rd February 2015  
Grandparents—*Presentation at the Temple*

## **Bible Book Club**

Tuesday December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8.00pm in the meeting Room. Doug Loveridge will lead the Bible Study, Bible Book Club.

### **Hope for God's people**

#### **Isaiah's message for Advent.**

These Scripture passages will form the basis of our study on Tuesday December 2<sup>nd</sup>: they can be looked through before the meeting if desired, in preparation. We would love to see you at the meeting to listen and to share your thoughts.

1.1-9 The consequences of iniquity  
2.1-5 A vision of a renewed nation

5.1-7 The Vineyard  
8.5-13 Enemies  
9.1-12 Darkness to Light  
10.20-23, 11.1-11 The remnant  
35.1-10 A promise of future gladness  
40.1-11 Comfort  
42.1.9 The Servant of the One God  
45.1-7 The servant's identity  
49.1-6 The breadth of God's care  
52.7-10 The return  
55.1-5 For all the nations  
60.1-7 Future greatness  
61.1-4 The One who is to come

### **January 6<sup>th</sup> Bible Book Club looks at Pauls Letter/ Epistle to the Philippians**

Yes, we are going to look at the whole epistle, so please read ahead, all four chapters of it, and come with your comments and questions.

## **Team Service 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015**



### *Working Together to share God's Love*

We have had very successful and popular Team services together in past years and this year will be a big celebration as Bishop Alan, the Bishop of St Alban's, joins us to preach and preside. I do hope that all of you will be able to join us for the service. It is always good to get together to worship as the body of Christ.

Bishop Alan will lead us in reflecting on what it means to go deeper into God's Love. The choirs will sing together, there will be a short Messy Church in St John's Hall next to All Saints' for the children and that all important cup of coffee afterwards to get together with old friends and meet new ones. Bishop Alan will also join us for Lunch at 12.15. It will not be the same without you!