

# ST PETER'S NEWSLETTER

**January 2017**



## LETTER FROM THE VICAR

1st January sees the feast day of The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus. Eight days after his birth, Jesus is presented at the Temple in Jerusalem ( Luke 2.21-40) to complete the requirements of the law, the presentation of the first born male to God. As our calendar year begins so does the life of Jesus. He may be born in a stable in Bethlehem but until he is presented to God his life hasn't truly begun. This is when the child is given its name, and names are very powerful things.

There is a lot of folklore and historical mystery around names. It was believed, for example, in ancient Jewish texts that to pronounce the name of God was to gain power over creation. So it became taboo to mention the name of God and was offered as the unpronounceable tetragrammaton YHWH. From this comes the belief that to know a person's name is to have power over them. There is also the belief that names can influence the receiver, and so the selection of names becomes all the more important.

It is no accident then that the child of God is given such a potent name, Joshua in Hebrew, Jesus in Greek, meaning, 'The Lord is Salvation'. Admittedly this name has been held by others but in this context we begin our new understanding of God's action in the world. For Jesus receives his name not from his earthly parents but from God via Archangel Gabriel (Luke 1.31). Past Joshua's of scripture have brought salvation to the people of Israel (Joshua's leadership of the people of Israel in The Book of Joshua). This one is to be different; and how do we know? The witness of Simeon and Anna, the prophets of the Temple. They, like others, had been waiting for the Messiah and this naming along with their words underlines the promise of God in this child. Simeon declares that this child has come as 'a light to lighten the gentiles and to be the glory of [God's] people Israel'. This is a new ministry for a people no longer chosen purely by birth but by their acceptance of Jesus as their Saviour. This is where the mission and ministry of God comes to us for the first time in human history. Salvation is now open to all people who are willing to receive God into their own hearts. Such an appropriate opening to the New Year for each of us, to receive this message for ourselves; Jesus is our salvation, we just need to welcome him in and he will make us new.

Happy New Year,

Fr David



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# Coffee Drop-in

Our monthly Coffee Drop-ins are proving successful, however it would be great to see more of you popping by, enjoying some tasty cakes, delicious coffee or tea, and some fellowship and chat, while also raising more money for the day's designated charity.

For an hour and a half (10-1130am), every second Saturday of the month, the back of church is transformed into a cafe - with ambient music, as well as the above mentioned cakes etc.

Recently we've raised money for Macmillan Cancer, amongst other charities, and in December we collected for Terrence Higgins Trust , to coincide with World Aids Day.

Its a very relaxed way of spending a Saturday morning, but it would be great if we could swell the numbers even more!

So if you're out walking the dog, or the kids, or just happen to be passing, please drop in and join us - and let your neighbours, friends, acquaintances and strangers know we're there with open doors (even if on cold days we shut them to keep the heat in!) and a full cafetière! [Ed: Date of next Drop-in 11th Feb]

Neil Gillespie



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This year we have offered those who did last years Pilgrim 'Follow' course the opportunity to do the second year course called 'Grow.'

Six people are now meeting regularly to grow as Christians by examining in more detail four aspects of our faith. These are: The Creeds, The Eucharist, The Bible and Church and Kingdom. The four aspects are studied and discussed within six sessions each, so we are going into quite a good depth of theology.

"You will find a greater emphasis in the Grow stage on learning to tell the story of God's work in your life to others as every disciple is called to be a witness. You will also find a greater emphasis on learning to live out your faith in everyday life." p.6 Pilgrim Grow

We also find that we grow by sharing hospitality, life experience, discussing, and reading and reflecting on scripture together. As we have become closer to each other we support one another in our Christian journey (pilgrimage) and this we are finding very valuable.

Fr Michael