

A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

I'm beginning to get my house back to normal. For two months it's been full of things for the Christmas Fayre and Christmas presents waiting for delivery. Now, my knitted toys have been packed away for next year (???), everything left over from the pound stall has gone to the charity shop and all the presents have been delivered. We've even put away all our own presents, there's just the decorations now that stop me from dusting!

It's been a good Christmas, although the weather and sickness kept me from some of my favourite services. Snow with the Christingle service, and Brian being off colour with the carols by candlelight. Luckily the snow has melted and Brian is back to normal (or as normal as he usually is!!!)

I must admit to craving a little normality. I really can't see me waiting until twelfth night to take my decorations down. We'll probably manage until after New Year, but the odds are in favour of them coming down straight after!

New Year resolution

A lot of resolutions in the past
Ran to January 2, then faded fast
This made me start to wonder why
So many good intentions go awry.

Is it impossible to keep our word
Made to ourselves? - that seems absurd,
Some further thought made me decide
The gap from year to year is far too wide.

Could monthly resolutions fill the bill?
Weekly, perhaps, be better still?
Well, if a resolution's good
A case for daily could be understood.

So, daily, let's resolve to do or say
Some kindly act or word, and pray
For help—God's always there to aid
And Every day's a day the Lord has made!

Bernard Evans

Courtesy of the January 1995 magazine

Flowers and a Clean Church! Can you help?



New rotas for 2024 are now in the church tower
If you would like to arrange flowers or donate money towards their provision, then please complete your chosen week on the rota on the noticeboard.

If you are able to help with the cleaning to keep our church nice and tidy, please add your name to the rota on the table at the back.



Thank you for your help.

Barbara

Thank you, Judith:

Just to be clear.
These gifts are for
your Birthday AND
Christmas.



Today's service is all about our favourite carols and poems or prose. Many years ago my uncle Frank's very special friend, Joyce Rowley gave me a book of poems and prose entitled "Words for all Seasons". It has been looked at and read so many times that the pages are all brown and falling out, but it is one of my most favourite books and offers joy and comfort and pleasure.

Here's a couple of entries that I have chosen to share with you:

Keeping Christmas

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you:

to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world;

to put your rights in the background and your duties in the middle distance and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground;

to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and to try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy;

to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are doing to get out of life, but what you are doing to give to life;

to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe and to look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—

are you willing to do these things even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Henry Van Dyke

Christmas-Tide

We approached our last house high up on the hill, the place of Joseph the farmer. For him we had chosen a special carol. which was about the other Joseph, so that we always felt that singing it added a spicy cheek to the night. The last stretch of country to reach his farm was perhaps the most difficult of all. In these rough bare lanes, open to all winds, sheep were buried and wagons lost. Huddled together, we tramped in one another's footsteps, powdered snow blew into our screwed-up eyes, the candles burnt low, some blew out altogether, and we talked loudly above the gale.

Crossing, at last, the frozen mill-stream - whose wheel in summer still turned a barren mechanism - we climbed up to Joseph's farm. Sheltered by trees, warm on its bed of snow, it seemed always to be like this. As always it was late; as always this was our final call. The snow had a fine crust upon it, and the old trees sparkled like tinsel.

We grouped ourselves round the farmhouse porch. The sky cleared, and broad streams of stars ran down over the valley and away to Wales. On Slad's white slopes, seen through the black sticks of its woods, some red lamps still burned in the windows.

Everything was quiet; everywhere there was the faint crackling silence of the winter night. We started singing, and we were all moved by the words and the sudden trueness of our voices. Pure, very dear, and breathless we sang:

As Joseph was a walking
He heard an angel sing;
'This night shall be the birth-time
Of Christ the Heavenly King.

He neither shall be bornèd
In Housen nor in hall,
Nor in a place of paradise
But in an ox's stall ...'

And two thousand Christmases became real to us then; the houses, the halls, the places of paradise had all been visited; the stars were bright to guide the Kings through the snow; and across the farmyard we could hear the beasts in their stalls. We were given roast apples and hot mince-pies, in our nostrils were spices like myrrh, and in our wooden box, as we headed back for the village, there were golden gifts for all.

Laurie Lee from Cider With Rosie

