

# *Our Vicar writes*

## CRADLE OF HOPE

As your new Vicar, I would like to start by thanking everybody who has made me, my wife Heather and our dog Millie so welcome. A big thank you to those who have helped to redecorate the vicarage and to start to make some inroads into the overgrown areas of the garden.

We are looking forward to celebrating our first Christmas here among you. As we do so I expect it will be a bit of a mixture of the old and the new. The old familiar story and carols but celebrated in a new way with new friends and congregations.

Of course the first Christmas was very different, yes it did have an old familiar story, the story that God has a plan for the world, and part of that plan was the sending of the Messiah to rescue his people. It was a story people had heard before, but didn't always reflect their expectations. They had been waiting so many years that when it happened, for the most part the world slept on and didn't see the miracle.

We are familiar with the Christmas story, maybe too familiar that we can miss the yearly miracle. For Christmas is a time of cradle hope, that a small child can have the potential to change the world for good. But it is more than just a story of hope and perseverance, it is a story of incarnation. It is a story of Emmanuel or God with us. That is the great miracle that people miss, the birth narrative is a lovely story

reminding us of the mixed family relationships of our society. The message to the shepherds reminds us that the good news is for those that our society rejects as well as for the good citizens. The angels remind us of the call to tell out the good news throughout the world. The Magi or kings remind us of the need to pay homage and to offer ourselves. All of these are small miracles from which we and the

world may take some direction and learn some lessons. But the miracle of the incarnation, God coming into his creation, 'in-creation' if you like is the most amazing and world shattering event until Jesus' resurrection, but that is another story for later.

So let us take a moment of wonder and reflection in this busy season to find the Christ child in all that goes on around us, remembering him in the long journeys and in the crowded pub, the family reunions and presents, travelers and workers, lonely old people, suffering children. We will still find in today's headlines everything that was in the first Christmas, every experience and every need. And at the centre of it all a child, born to love, born to die, born to live.

Christmas begins with Christ.

Born in the night he brings light to the darkness  
He gives point and purpose  
To the pain of a mother  
The pride of a father  
The hope of the simple  
The searching of the wise.  
His hands are full of miracles  
His heart is full of love  
He comes to share and enrich  
Every part of our lives.  
Will we have room to let him in?

Wishing you all a fantastic Christ filled Christmas.

*Simon Dommert*

Vicar