





December, 1956

# MARSTON NEWS

The News-Letter of St. Nicholas Church, Marston, Oxford


 A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF MARSTON  
 FROM THE VICAR, THE CHURCHWARDENS AND THE  
 CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. NICHOLAS
 

My dear Friends,

You will know that Santa Claus gets his name from Saint (Santa) Nicholas (Claus), a good Bishop of Myra in the fourth century, who according to legend went about giving presents in secret to needy people. This originated the old custom of giving presents in secret on the Eve of St. Nicholas Day (December 6th), now practised by us all on Christmas Eve instead.

Our Church of St. Nicholas exists to give, unseen to the human eye, untold treasures which are waiting for all those who seek the Lord (St. Matthew xiii. 44 to 46). Nearly everyone knows this to be true; many have found it to be true in their experience.

I hope you will think of the good saint Nicholas when you receive your presents at Christmas — and may they be all that you wished! But I also invite you, on behalf of your Churchwardens and Church Council, to join with them in giving a special gift to St. Nicholas Church on its birthday, at the services of Prayer and Gifts on Sunday, December 9 (see note inside). So you can put down first on your Christmas present list, "Present to St. Nicholas Church, £.....". Whatever the sum, it will be very welcome: just pop it into the little envelope herewith.

Someone last year remarked: "That Carol Service just *made* Christmas for me". Inside you will find a list of Services including "Carols by Candle-light", other Carol Services and Christmas Day Services: come, and let the love of Jesus Christ make Christmas real for you and your families.

May God bless your hearts and homes with His joy and His Presence, and make this Christmas a wonderful time for you all.

Your sincere friend and Vicar,

GORDON D. SAVAGE.



## DAY OF PRAYER AND GIFTS

It seems specially suitable that on the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Nicholas we should give our special gifts for the continuance of God's work in this parish through St. Nicholas Church.

So SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, will be a special DAY OF GIFTS for the work of the Church and for the RESTORATION FUND in particular. You will have read the note, "A Big Headache" in the November issue of *Marston News*, when it was stated that in order to finish the year without debt an additional £200 was needed. £96 has been received since then. The position on November 24 is that the sum of £104 remains to be found, over and above our ordinary income for the Church, by December 31. This can be done if we all think of the blessings we have received and if those who have not yet given to the Restoration Fund will plan to give a CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR ST. NICHOLAS. Please come and bring or send your gift on December 9.

But it is also right and proper that we should rejoice in what we have been able to do already, over £1,500 in small gifts mostly during these nine months; and rejoice too in how the Church is now looking, with its Tower and Clock looking bright after the Restoration. So this will also be a DAY OF PRAISE. And because we need constantly to pray to God for our continued effort, our dedication of ourselves, our homes, and all the people of our Parish, it will also be a DAY OF PRAYER. So, remember, DECEMBER 9, the ST. NICHOLASTIDE DAY OF PRAISE, PRAYER AND GIFTS.

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**8.15, The Christmas Communion.** The people of God make a special effort to gather as His Family at His Holy Table on Christmas Day, and our main family celebration of the Holy Communion will be at 8.15 a.m.

There will also be the Holy Communion after the 11 o'clock Service on Christmas morning, and the Vicar will on request be glad to arrange other services in Church or in private homes for those unable to manage these times. In particular, the Vicar would be very glad to know of (i) any intending communicants who cannot manage to attend the "Family Service" of Holy Communion at 8.15 (ending at 9 at the latest) and who could come at 7.15 instead; (ii) any who feel the need for a quiet service of preparation, either as a family from 5.30 to 6 on Christmas Eve, or later as parents, from 11 to 11.30 p.m. In the light of replies received, a full notice of all Christmas Services will be posted in the Church Porch and Rippington Drive notice-board from December 17 onwards.

**11.0, The Family Hour of Worship.** There will be a Family Hour of Morning Prayer, with Christmas Hymns, from 11 to just before 12 on Christmas morning. Children are invited to place a small present each on the Christmas Tree during the first hymn, and these presents will be taken on Boxing Day to children in the Oxford Hospitals. This Service will be followed by the Holy Communion at 12 o'clock.

## WILL YOU PUT "CHRIST" INTO CHRISTMAS IN YOUR HOME?

Many people come to realise that "putting Christ" into Christmas can make all the difference to this festival for themselves and their home. The children of this Parish all know "Once in royal David's City" and many of them are ready to sing it as a Grace before breakfast on Christmas Day. It will give them great pleasure to do this: will you who are parents and friends please remind them, and join them in singing it joyfully and thoughtfully?

**Note.**—Many people have forgotten to pay for the *Marston News* for 1956. Please help us to avoid a big deficit by handing your year's subscription to the Collector or to some other Church Officer as quickly as possible.

**Marston Church Charities.** A statement as to how these are administered be on the Notice Board in the Church Porch from Dec. 7 to 14 and from Jan. 3 to 10. The Trustees would be glad to receive as early as possible names of parishioners thought to be eligible. The Charities referred to in this paragraph are administered by the Vicar and Wardens of the Church; they are entirely separate from the set of Charities (including the "Marston Common") administered under the supervision of the Parish Council. One of the Church Charities provides by its terms the sum of one shilling to be handed to each of the five bell-ringers who ring the peal at midnight on Christmas Eve!

**Carols by Candlelight.** For this Service our lovely old Church of St. Nicholas is illuminated only by candles and the lights on the Christmas Tree, and those who have come in former years will remember what a wonderful and moving preparation this may be for Christmas. We specially invite all who have come to the Parish since last Christmas to come and join us for this Service, which will be from 6.30 to 7.30 on Sunday evening, December 23, and then repeated at the same time on Sunday evening, December 30. The Lessons are read by various members of the Church, and there are Carols for all, including the children, to sing. The Marston Choral Society will also take part. The Church is usually very full, but we have never had to turn anyone away. However, it is advisable to arrive early.

**Women and Children.** The Carol Service for the Mothers' Union, the Young Wives' Group and the Pram Service members will be held in Church on Tuesday, December 18, at 2.45 p.m. All women and their children are invited. It is hoped that mothers who wish to do so will bring their prams right into Church.

**Sunday School.** This year the children will have their own Carol Service, on Sunday, December 16, at 3 p.m. This Service will be for children only, and they themselves will read the Lessons, say the Prayers and sing the Carols. All children of the Parish are invited.

**Decoration of the Church.** This will be done on Saturday, December 22, from 10 a.m. onwards. Offers of help by men and women, gifts of evergreen for the decoration, and a Christmas Tree, or decorations for it, will be welcome!

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."** The hardships which are falling on many in various ways at this time will be lightened by the practical thought and heartfelt remembrance of their friends, and indeed our hearts go out to many homes affected by our nation's troubles. There is no doubt that those who have humbly sought to obey this Christian command will never fail to find its truth and reward in a new way when they themselves are bearing heavy burdens.

**The Significance of Christmas Decorations.** Something to think about. Ivy, a plant which must cling to something for support, symbolizes human weakness and our need of God's support. HOLLY, with its prickly leaves and the blood-red berries, is a reminder of the crown of thorns, of Jesus, already implicit on Christmas Day. YEW and FIR, these evergreens are emblems of everlasting life.

**Peace on Earth.** "World peace depends upon what is in our hearts more than what is in our treaties," said a former Foreign Secretary of U.S.A., Mr. James F. Byrnes.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE,  
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN (St. Luke ii. 14)

## CAROLS AND HAND-BELLS

It is our privilege each year to bring the Message of Christmas to every door in the parish by means of carols and handbells. In order to cover the whole parish, roads will be visited as follows:

- Mon., Dec. 17: St. Nicholas Park, Wardsfield, The Butts, Church Lane and Mill Lane.
- Tues., Dec. 18: Raymund Road, Arlington Drive, Cotswold and Windsor Crescents, Haynes Road, Cherwell Caravans, Salford Road.
- Wed., Dec. 19: Beechey's Avenue, Rippington Drive, Cromwell Close, Fairfax Avenue, Salford Road, Cavendish Drive.
- Thurs., Dec. 20: Mortimer Drive, Lewell Avenue, Nicholas Avenue, Ashlong Road, Marsh Lane, Elms Drive.
- Fri., Dec. 21: The Close Lamburn's Close, Boul't's Lane and Oxford Road from the Red Lion southwards.
- Sat., Dec. 22: Old part of village (Red Lion to Cross Farm, and Elsfield Road).
- Mon., Dec. 24th: By invitation.

This is no light task, now that the parish has grown so much, but we rely on the practical interest and support of our many friends. You are invited to join the carol-singers one or two of the evenings, and anyway to encourage those who share in this labour of love. After two hours' walking and singing every evening, whatever the weather, the singers and players are tired by the end of the week. This year the various organisations are being responsible for a night each.

Please note:

- (a) When you hear us, do please turn on your lights and sing with us.
- (b) We will gladly come and sing your favourite carol outside your house if you will kindly send the Vicar a request in advance.
- (c) The good causes helped by our collection will be thus: (i) one-half will go to the RESTORATION FUND; (ii) half the remainder to the Choir and Bell-Ringers Funds (for the Choir and Bell-ringers not only work hard all the year round but will be out with the Carol Parties *every* evening); (iii) the balance will be divided equally between the funds of the Cromwell Youth Club, the Scouts, the Cubs, the Sunday School and the Pathfinder Classes. Please give generously. If you have forgotten to return your "St. Nicholas Gift Day Envelope" or wish to pay your subscription for the *Marston News* for 1956 please do so when the waits call.