

MARSTON NEWS

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

My dear Friends,

EXPLAINING OURSELVES

The "Marston News" is delivered to every home in the parish. Although it primarily contains Church news, it also contains other information of general interest, and we hope that it may be of service to the whole of our community. It has been a deliberate policy of our Church to send it to EVERY home in Old Marston, partly in order to help the many newcomers to this parish to feel "at home" and "part of the family" as early as possible, and partly in order to emphasise that our Church seeks to help all and welcomes the support of all.

That is why various invitations from our Church also go to every house. No-one can say he is left out. It is sometimes said that the Churches are interested in only a chosen few who happen to support them and that they have little concern for those who do not belong to the "pious few" who form the "inner circle". It is possible for this to happen, and we therefore wish to emphasise that in our Church of St. Nicholas, Marston, all are welcome to share in all its activities equally. Anyone may attend any Service and may sit anywhere, and may come dressed as they please! We are also glad for our Church news to enter the homes of members of other Churches, so that we may have their prayers and interest.

The Church of England is the established Church of this land. This relationship is not for the benefit of the Church (and indeed not a penny is received from the State by the Church or its clergy), but for the benefit of all the people of this land. That is why the Church of England has territorial parishes, which in the case of Marston is identical with the civil parish. Every house and cottage and caravan in England is in someone's parish, and you who receive this leaflet live in the parish of St. Nicholas, Marston, or are on its Electoral Roll. It is the privilege and the duty of the Church to be of service to everyone in the parish, whether C. of E., nonconformist or nothing at all. The Vicar of the Parish has a responsibility towards all his parishioners, and therefore he greets them all alike. Naturally he does not force his attention on those who do not desire it, but it is always a pleasure when a parishioner, who has little or no connexion with the Church, recognises his relation to it, and turns to the Vicar, as he has a right to, for help or advice in time of trouble, whether spiritual or material. Hence, for instance, the names of all new babies, of all people in hospital, and of those away on active service, are put on the Prayer Board in Church, whoever they may be. Thus too, various people of the parish of other persuasions recognise the work of the Church on behalf of all, and contribute to it by gifts and interest. Some who support our Church never attend it!

Thus too, it may be added, we do not wish anyone not to receive the "Marston News" simply because they cannot afford it or cannot conscientiously support it. Therefore it is distributed freely; but we rely on as many people as possible contributing at least 3d. an issue (3/- per annum) to the cost. During the year the distributors will call regularly, but not only to ask

for money. "The Church Cares" has been a slogan used by us, and when the distributors of the Magazine call, please remember that it is chiefly in order to maintain contact with you, so that we may be of increased service to you, so that we may know of any matters over which you want our prayer, so that we may be kept in touch with cases of sickness and need.

We hope that thus you will have an increasing sense of "belonging" to the family at Old Marston. In a new housing area there is rarely a sense of community at first, and one thing the Church seeks to do is to give this sense of friendship and fellowship—and indeed many families have been finding that very real and practical. May 1956 be a truly happy and prosperous one for you and yours, and may the love of Christ fill your hearts and homes!

Yours friend and Vicar,

GORDON D. SAVAGE.

FREE CHURCH OR R.C.?

As might be expected, there are many families in this Parish who are not Church of England. Sometimes this is by conviction, sometimes through the accidents of history. The divisions of Christians are a scandal, and we live in a day when Christians ought to be drawing much nearer to one another. The area of agreement is far greater than the ground on which there is disagreement. We of St. Nicholas have the privilege of doing all we can to heal differences, to repair misunderstandings and to promote co-operation, for we are the only church in this parish. And indeed there are some notable instances of co-operation, toleration and "broad-mindedness". Often it is bigotry which keeps us apart; but all those whose love for the Cross of our Saviour transcends denominational loyalty have already a great point in common. May I therefore remind all such that January 18 to 25 is a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Let us all on each of those days pray for each other for a few moments at 12 o'clock midday. And in particular will all members of the other churches take very seriously the following invitation for **Thursday, January 19th?** All who have a concern for the souls of the people of Marston, for the progress of the Gospel in this district, and for the unity of Christian people, are warmly invited to meet sometime that day as follows. It can be of real help to all of us, sharing our concern, our information and our prayerful hopes. **12 to 12.15:** A time of silent prayer together in Church. **7 to 7.45 p.m.:** A time of praise and prayer in Church, with all who come invited to take part and to lead. **8 to 9 o'clock:** A time of informal conference and social intercourse at the Reading Room, with light refreshments. Please write any special "Requests for Prayer" for your particular work or interests on slips of paper, and give them to me, or put them on the table inside Church, so that they may be read aloud before our times of prayer.

G.D.S.

Confirmation. After Baptism, the next step towards full membership of the Church is Confirmation. A usual age for Confirmation is thirteen or fourteen years. By that age many boys and girls will have thought sufficiently about the Christian faith to be ready to come to classes, and parents ought not to deny their children this privilege. Some adults, as well as children, have already signified their intention to prepare for the next Confirmation, which will be later this year. Any others are invited to give their names to the Vicar or to write to him as soon as possible. It is expected that classes

will commence at the end of January. Parents and/or intending Confirmees are invited to have a word with the Vicar at the monthly "Bring a Friend" Service on Sunday evening, Jan. 15, or at the Reading Room afterwards.

Carols and Hand-Bells. Thank you both to the singers and ringers, and to the people of this parish who gave to the collection. The total amount raised was £27 5s. 1d. This is rather less than we had hoped, because of the special appeal being made this year, but it is more than that collected in previous years, and in view of the bad weather experienced the sum is remarkably good. £9 has been given to the Choir and Bell-ringers' Fund (the Choir Party will be on Jan. 27) and £9 to the Cromwell Youth Club, the balance of £9 5s. 1d. being retained for the Restoration Fund. We are sorry that in view of the wet weather it was necessary to curtail some of the visits to houses this year.

Scripture Union. Herewith please find, for your acceptance and use, a leaflet entitled "Where to Find Help". If you humbly and sincerely read the Bible, asking God to speak to you through it, you will find it of tremendous help to you on life's journey. Don't worry if you cannot understand it all at once, and try to understand the message of the Bible as a whole. You can prove anything by taking verses out of their context, and we know this only too well from the religious people who are calling so regularly at the doors in our parish, trying to sell literature and argue and to play gramophone records. Don't be worried by them, but do listen to God by reading simply and sincerely such a book of the Bible as the Gospel according to St. Luke.

January is a month of parties and treats, especially for the children. Thank you to so many for all that you are doing in various ways to give pleasure to neighbours and friends, especially in the parties arranged by the Church.

On the Sick List. Our sympathy and prayer with the many people, including a number of children, who have been unwell in recent weeks.

Sunday School and Bible Classes. In order to increase our Sunday School's influence, some senior classes are now being held in private houses, in addition to the classes in Church, the Reading Room and the Church School. From January 15 onwards a new kindergarten class will be held at 4 Windsor Crescent at 3 p.m. Further information from Mrs. Smith, at that address, or from the Vicar. So that parents may get to know the teachers and the policy of the Sunday School, the teachers will be present at the "Bring a Friend" Service on Sunday evening, January 15, and will look forward to meeting the parents of their pupils at the Reading Room afterwards. Sunday School Party on Jan. 21.

Men's Discussion Groups. Many men have useful criticisms to make of the Church, and pertinent questions to ask. If these are worth making and asking, it is worthwhile to call a small group of men together in order to do this properly, and the Vicar will not need to be invited twice to meet with such group, however small. It is encouraging to find that more men are thinking seriously about spiritual matters, and the Vicar will be glad to meet privately or in groups with men. This is of course in addition to the various organisations which already exist for children, teenagers and women.

Electoral Roll. All who reckon on St. Nicholas as their Church ought to see that their name is on the Electoral Roll. This is specially important in

the case of those who live outside the parish, as otherwise it is not possible for them to be married or buried in this church. It costs nothing to have one's name added to the Roll, and the Vicar will be glad to give particulars.

Organist: Verger. Both these posts are vacant; applications or recommendations to be made to the Vicar.

Cromwell Youth Club. The Cromwell Youth Club is "camping" at Wytham from Jan. 6 to the evening of Jan. 8.

Did You Hear That? A garrulous atheist was filling the room with his profane language. "God! God! There ain't no such being as a God," he shouted. "That's curious," observed a quiet man in the corner, "I happen to know Him." After a pause he added: "More curious still, you happen to hate Him."

A Verse to Treasure: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins" (I John iv.10).

SOME DATES FOR JANUARY, 1956

6. F. *Epiphany of our Lord.* 10.30, Holy Communion.
 8. S. *I Epip.* 8.15, H.C. 11, M.P. 6.30, E.P. 7.30, H.C.
 9. M. St. Nicholas County Primary School starts.
 10. Tu. 2.45, W.L. 8, Choral Society's Meeting and Party.
 15. S. *II Epip.* 8.15, H.C. 11, M.P. 3. Sunday School re-commences. 6.30, E.P. "BRING A FRIEND" SERVICE and meet Sunday School Teachers. Tea at R.R. afterwards.
 18. W. 7.45, Y.W.G. ("Entertaining Children in Wet Weather").
 19. Th. Christian Unity Meetings (see notice inside).
 21. S. Sunday School Party in afternoon.
 22. S. *III Epip.* 8.15, H.C. 11, M.P. 3, S.S. 6.30, E.P.
 24. Tu. 2.45, M.U. ("Memories").
 25. W. *Conversion of St. Paul.*
 27. F. 7, Choir Party.
 29. S. *Septuagesima.* 8.15, H.C. (M.U.). 11, M.P. 6.30, E.P.
-