

Yesterday, Today and Forever

That's it then, Christmas is done for another year. If you haven't taken your decorations down yet you probably will do by the 12th Day of Christmas – 5th January. The money is spent, the last of the turkey has gone down the throat of your dog or cat; or maybe an inanimate waste-bin instead. Whether home again from visits to friends and family after a tiring journey, or maybe at home and relived because you have got the house to yourself; there may be a sense of anti-climax floating around your home and even in your head. That's it then, what next?

At Christmas, through the ministry of The Church in the Woottons and churches everywhere we seek to proclaim that through the birth of Jesus Christ, his Father fulfils his promise spoken through patriarchs and prophets over a period of Israel's history stretching through many centuries. We seek also to proclaim the message of hope that Jesus represents. Jesus himself said that the kingdom of God is here. We ourselves can experience the kingdom of God through the difference he makes to us personally by knowing him. And we do see the kingdom of God in our families, in the church family, and in communities connected to, and supported by people with faith in him. Jesus taught and showed what God is really like, he sets the perfect example of life lived and how to live life. His invitation to be part of his kingdom now and in the future is constant and unlimited. The inconsistent and limiting part of all this is us and our inconsistent and limited response to God.

Each Sunday, and on other days too, we remember that God sent his Son into the world to save us. We remember something even more wonderful when we re-enact the Last Supper during which Jesus broke bread and poured out wine as symbols of his own body and blood. Jesus asked his followers re-enact what he did to remind us that he died on the cross for our sake and rose again to new life on the first Easter Day. These extraordinary things opened up to everyone with eyes to see and ears to hear the very real experience of knowing God and being set free by him in a way that simply wasn't possible before.

Christmas is done and dusted for another year but that certainly isn't it. The birth of Jesus is just the very beginning of a new and infinitely continuing part of the story of God, and the universe, earth and people he creates. We invited to be part of this story and I'll write more next month about Jesus, power and authority, and what the world must learn from him as history and His Story continues.

May I wish you a happy, peaceful and blessed New Year.

James