

## **A few words from the Vicar ....**

Well, it's still November as I write my January letter. As I don't have a crystal ball, this means I'm unable to comment on our Advent and Christmas services (hope they went well), neither am I able to comment on the outcome of the General Election.

Nonetheless, as we reach January and a New Year (2020 already!), I hope your Christmas is going well. That's correct, 'going well'; this is not a typo. Christmas doesn't end with the Boxing Day sales or even the 2<sup>nd</sup> January return to work that follows the extended break.

Traditionally, there are 12 days of Christmas (hence the song), which officially ends at Epiphany (5<sup>th</sup> January). However, an alternative tradition has emerged in which Christmas lasts for a full forty days, until Candlemas (the Feast of the Presentation of Christ at the Temple) on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

I don't have a have a problem with ambiguity. I'm happy to latch onto both traditions. Why should I be forced to choose between them? Whether we view the period from Epiphany to Candlemas as the same season as Christmastide, or somehow separate, hardly matters as they are both joyful seasons.

Anyway, whichever way you look at it, the chances are it is still Christmas as you read this!

So, if Christmas finishes on 5<sup>th</sup> January, or even 2<sup>nd</sup> February, does that mean you can still eat roast turkey, pigs in blankets, sprouts and Christmas pudding? Sure, why not? If you want to, of course you can! In fact, there is nothing to prevent you from tucking into such delicacies in mid-August, if that's what takes your fancy.

There's nothing better than finding a spare Christmas pudding stashed away in a dark recess of the kitchen cupboard, and then indulging Mid-Summer. Christmas Pudding and vanilla ice cream. Superb!

Likewise, the truths we especially celebrate during the Christmas season, should not be stashed away and ignored during the rest of the year. They remain relevant and will always remain relevant.

Truths like Christ's incarnation, God coming amongst us as Jesus; a helpless baby with the fullness of humanity but also fully divine. As St John poetically expresses it, 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us....' (John 1: 14) Jesus is our saviour, the Prince of Peace, and remains so throughout the year, year in year out, for eternity.

Many years ago, an animal charity ran an advertising campaign, 'A dog is for life, not just for Christmas.' Do you remember it? Well, the same goes for Jesus; Jesus is for life, not just for Christmas!

Every Blessing

*Dave*