

Christmas Catches Up
Halling View Winter 2018

Christmas has rather caught me out this year! It's partly the wonderful Autumn weather lasting into October and November. Still enjoying warm sunshine, it didn't seem like Christmas was coming, even though the days were getting shorter and the nights were growing longer. In fact, some people suggested that the reason we sold fewer burgers this year than usual on Guy Fawkes Night, was that it wasn't cold enough to make people want hot food to warm them up.

Mainly, I think, it was that we were all focused on our commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the fighting in the First World War. There was all the planning to do and then there was the day itself. In Halling, as all over the country, large numbers of people participated in diverse and moving commemorations. There were the figures representing First World War soldiers, the poppies on the lamp posts, the Field of Peace the children of Halling School made, the artwork created by Halling Sapphire WI and displayed at the lych gate, different village organisations contributing music and readings to the service in church, and the lighting of the beacon and the fireworks in the evening. It was gratifying to see serving members of the armed forces in uniform and to hear the bugled played at the war memorial, the traditional Last Post and Reveille. As always, the fallen were remembered by name, wreaths were laid on behalf of the whole community and we supported the poppy appeal, which helps to finance the vital work of caring for former members of the armed forces and their families. It was a particular honour for a large number of us to be present for the unveiling of a stone to commemorate Halling's own Sgt Thomas Harris MM VC. The day went well and thanks to all who took part, especially the Parish Council and others involved in the organisation.

So, Christmas! What's the link? Faith, hope and love. We need to make sense of things, to believe that there is meaning and purpose, despite the foolish and wicked things we human beings do and their consequences: on the international level, such as war and bad relations between countries; the problems which perplex and divide our own and other nations; and, closest to home, in the way we are all capable of mistreating one another and in the mistreatment we may suffer at the hands of other people. We need faith that God makes sense of our human lives, whatever may happen to us. We need hope that God is just and merciful and that, therefore, justice and peace will prevail. We need to know that God is love, that we are loved, and that we are called to love another.

The Christian belief is that God makes Himself known in Jesus Christ. Our Christmas hymns and readings proclaim Who God is, the One Who reveals Himself in Jesus. In Him, Christians will tell you, we find faith and hope and love.

Roger Knight
Rector of Cuxton & Halling.

Christmas Services at St John the Baptist Halling:

Sunday 23rd December 3.00 pm: Carol Service with Nativity and Christingle.

Christmas Day 8.00 am: Holy Communion.

Christmas Services at St Michael and All Angels Cuxton:

Sunday 23rd December 6.30 pm: Nine Lessons & Carols.

Christmas Eve 5.30 pm: Crib Service with Nativity and Christingle.

11.00 pm: Midnight Mass.

Christmas Day: 9.30 am Family Communion.