

Welcome to St. Simon's Church

Southsea 18th & 25th Dec 2011, and 1st Jan2012

In the Beginning...

It is true that most great men and women have achieved greatness by clambering onto the shoulders of others, known and unknown; most great human achievements are a team effort. Others have assisted. Others have paved the way. Others have tended the flame which now burns so gloriously.

At Christmas we read what is known as the Prologue of St. John ... the famous first fourteen verses of John's gospel. No one had ever written anything like this before. It stands alone. It is as if you walked for miles and miles through woods and fields and little mud-walled farms and suddenly, round a bend, you come face to face with... a great cathedral soaring above you.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Every single thing you can see or touch or smell, describe or measure from the stars in the sky to the teeming oceans to the rocks beneath your feet, from the life within the atoms composing the tiniest insect to the great monster that lives in the depths to the sublimest human creature together with his imaginings and his works.... is alive with His light... but does not know it. Then, all of a sudden, with sublime artistry, a man of flesh and blood, a man with a name is introduced into the metaphysical flow... John. And just as John, we remember paved the way for Christ, so this device brings us back into the recent history of the rejection of Jesus the prophet and teacher by his own people and the astonishing claim that this rejected Jesus and the uncreated Word are one and the same. In fact, to remove all doubt, all wriggle room concerning what is being claimed, the apostle finishes with the impossible statement that... *the Word became flesh*, became a human being just like us, and came to live in our town...and 'we' have seen the very glory of God himself... overwhelming kindness, graciousness, limpid truth in the guy we sat and talked with, walked with, argued with, touched, wept and laughed with...

He was rejected, as we have seen, by most of us. Most of us were just too busy, too good, too bad, too preoccupied... we just didn't want to know. But

to those of us who did... who were in touch with the emptiness and aching within and invited Him in, He came to fill the void... something wonderful happened to us... we were born anew from above... we found we had become or were found to have become *children of God* as the bondage and mess of our human heritage fell away from us. Thus begins the gospel of John. Thus begins a new life for anyone who cares to receive Christ.

Alpha

But just how does a person 'receive' God? We are running two Alpha Courses starting in the week beginning January 15th, one in the daytime and one in the evening. Alpha is a wonderful way of finding out whether this new life is for real, whether it is for me and what is involved. There is no pressure. This is a supernatural process. It's about seeing and letting things happen, not forcing anything. If you are interested, please phone or email the church office to book yourself in. It's free, and you get fed!

God bless
you all- Matthew



Alpha

New Year's Day Walk - As last year, we're going for a walk along the sea front on New Year's Day, to blow away the cobwebs (weather permitting). The plan is to meet at South Parade Pier at 2pm and head in a westerly direction, aiming for the Quartermasters' Kitchen in the Royal Marines Barracks. Those who want to walk beyond that are welcome to continue and turn back for a slightly later refreshment break! Just turn up if you'd like to join us. Dinah Walters is co-ordinating – no need to book. If you need to contact her on the day, her mobile number is 07906 156 161.



Christmas Nativity! Thank you to everyone who took part in the Christmas Nativity this year! It was a wonderful experience and lots of fun!

Delivery of Christmas Cards – Thank You to everyone who delivered Christmas Cards throughout the Parish this year. We pray that these cards will bring a part of the meaning of Christmas to the homes throughout the community.

There will be **NO K.I.S.S.** Service on Sunday January 1st!
There will be an 11:15 Traditional Holy Communion Service.

Southsea does Strictly! Our son, Chris, is a youth leader in a church in Kent and is planning to take 16 of their young people on a voluntary work project to Malawi next August. The group needs to raise £27,000 and I am planning a series of fundraisers to support them. The first of these is a **tea dance**, to take place on a Sunday afternoon early in 2012. There are three possible dates as this newsletter goes to press – 29th January, 5th or 26th February. I am waiting to hear back from the instructors so there will be more information fairly soon. Tickets will be £5 for a two-hour lesson in St. Swithun's Church Hall, with tea, coffee and home-made cakes available to purchase. So, if you are interested, please make a note of these dates and when I can finalise one of them, I will start publicising it! Dinah Walters

Office Holiday Hours – The Church Office will be closed from Monday 19th December, and will re-open on Tuesday 3rd December. Someone will be checking the office phone and e-mail regularly, so if you need to contact the office please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

Christmas offerings - The offerings at the 'extra' Christmas services (Carols by Candle-light and Christmas Eve Communion) will be given to Tear Fund.



Sermon recordings There have been a decreasing number of requests for sermon recordings on cassette tapes recently. We therefore intend to cease recording on cassettes from 1st January 2012. Please speak to Millie French or Mick Walters if you have any concerns about this, thank you.



RENDEZVOUS @ ST SIMON'S – December 21st – Informal Carols Service – including carols and readings. All Welcome! See Millie for more details.

Calendar

WEEKLY GROUPS:

Parent & Baby Club (Mondays 9.30 – 11am in Church Centre)

Parent Time (Cell Group for Parents with Crèche: Monday's 1 - 2.30pm tel: 92733068)

Youth Cell (Monday evenings: tel 07505 053320)

Tuesday Time Together (Praise and Prayer 10 a.m. in Church Lounge)

City Churches Prayer Meeting (Wednesdays 6.30 a.m.)

Sunday Morning Worship with Children's Groups (see back page)

Sunday Suppers + Sunday Extra (Sunday nights 6 to 7.15pm)

There are also a variety of **Small Groups** for adults for discipleship, prayer and support. Phone Church Office on 92829440 or you can find a [list of our currently running groups](#) on our website.

Other Events:

Mon 19th Dec– Children's Christmas Party

Wed 21st Dec – Rendezvous Carol Service

Wed 21st – Youth Christmas Meal

Sat 24th – Midnight Holy Communion Service

Sun 25th – Christmas Day!

If you would like more details of any of the events listed in 'Calendar' ... please phone the Church Office, open 10am - 12 weekdays. Or visit the Calendar on our website: www.stsimons-southsea.org.uk

Useful Contacts:

Matthew Holland (Vicar)

02392 733068

Youth and Children's' worker

07505 053320

Church Office

02392 829440



Sunday Services

Sunday 18th December

10:30 AM St. Simons Christmas Nativity Service

7:30PM Carols by Candlelight

Saturday 24th December

11:30PM Midnight Holy Communion

Sunday 25th December

Christmas Day Family Communion

Sunday 1st January 2012

NO K.I.S.S. Service

11:15 Traditional Holy Communion Service

Deadline for next newsletter –January 3rd 2012 - Please send us your news and notices of events etc. Either phone the Church Office (92829440) Or email stsimonsnews1@yahoo.co.uk (attachments preferred.) *Would you like to read your newsletter in large print?* Please let the office know.