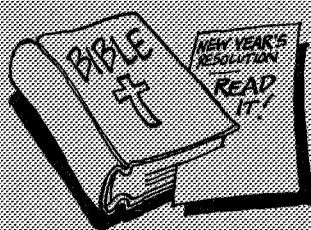


Deane Parish Magazine

January



January Diary



January 1	1st Sunday of Christmas
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)
10.30 a.m.	Family Service
January 8	Baptism of Christ
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.30 a.m.	Service of the Word
6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
January 15	2nd after Epiphany
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 a.m.	Family Worship with Baptism
6.00 p.m.	Service of the Word
January 22	3rd after Epiphany
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 a.m.	Family Communion
6.00 p.m.	Service of the Word
January 29	4th after Epiphany
9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
10.30 a.m.	Praise Service
6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion

Please note deviation from usual pattern of 6.00 services.

9.00 and 6.00 readings

January 1	Galatians 4:4-7;	Luke 2:15-21
January 8	Genesis 1:1-5;	Mark 1:4-11
January 15	1 Samuel 3:1-10;	John 1:43-51
January 22	Genesis 14:17-20;	John 2:1-11
January 29	Deuteronomy 18:15-20;	Mark 1:21-28

Please note that the deadline for copy for the February magazine is Sunday January 15th. Copies of the Directory containing the names and details of church officers and other leaders may be found at the back of church.

The Rector Writes

Bouncing back from failure

Have you made a New Year's resolution and if so how long do you think you will keep it? Well I suppose that just depends what your New Year's resolution was. Some resolutions are easy to keep, whereas others are hard. If my New Year's resolution was that I would never get exasperated with anything or anyone I know I would hardly last the day!

One of the reasons I don't make resolutions is that I don't like failure. I don't like making mistakes. And yet if I think about it this is ridiculous. After all we all make mistakes. When we make a mistake all it shows is that we are part of the human race. It says in the Book of James "We all stumble in many ways." Yes we all fail. The problem is that no one wants to be a failure, or to admit it. After all, have you ever met someone who said to you, "My goal in life is to fail"? Of course not! Everyone wants to succeed, and as a society we put a lot emphasis on success, so much so that people will even lie, cheat, steal, in order to succeed!

Because we value success so much we tend to exaggerate the effects of failure. But failure isn't the end of the world. You won't die from failure. What we are to do with failure is respond positively to it. When we fail we are, in the words of the well-known song, to "pick yourself up, dust yourself down, and start all over again".

One of the best ways to bounce back from failure is to redefine it. Let me suggest to you how this can be done, by thinking of failure in this way. Failure is not failing to reach your dreams. *Failure is not having a dream.* Failure is not setting a goal and missing it. *Failure is not having a goal.* Failure is not falling down. *Failure is not getting back up.*

Do you know that one of the main ways God makes you into the kind of person he wants you to be is by using your failure? He uses it in your life to mould you, shape you, and develop your character. While we rarely learn from our successes, tending to attribute these to our natural talent and charismatic personality, we can learn from our failures

God is not surprised when we fail. He knows it's going to happen. And God doesn't stop loving us when we fail either. Psalm 103:14 says, "God knows what we're made of. He remembers that we are dust." God knows our frailties. He doesn't expect us to be perfect.

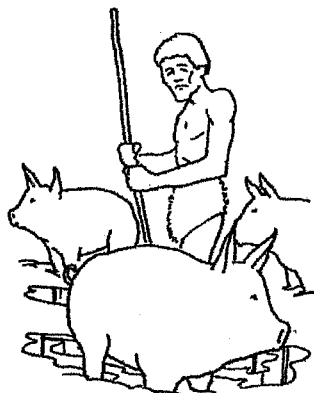
Often when we are in the middle of failure it is difficult to see God's hand at work, but as we look back upon our failures we can see that God has in fact been there with us.

So what does God want us to do with failure? He wants us to handle it correctly. And how do we handle failure correctly? By learning to deal with failure; receive forgiveness; learn from our failures; and let our failures motivate us in doing, or seeking to do, greater things. We need to learn to find God's grace in our failure.

Bouncing back from failure may not be the easiest thing to do in life, but it is something that God wants us to do. It doesn't matter what failures we have experienced in the past, or we might be going through in the present, or we might face in the future. Big or small, failure hasn't changed God's purpose for your life.

What do you do with failure? You allow God to teach you through it, motivate you by it, and grow through it. Happy New Year!

Don't stay
feeding the
pigs—go back
where you
belong—in
the arms of
your loving
heavenly
Father!



What will you do with 2006?

How will you spend 2006? All those hours, days and weeks that lie ahead of you...

The Bible says 'make the most of the time' (Ephesians 5:16) That doesn't mean speed up your life. It doesn't mean more rush. In fact, rush is a hazard to this process.

It means that as this brand new year of 2006 begins, we are called to take time to plug into God's plan for us - NOW.

It means becoming obedient to his revealed will for our personal life, our work, our marriage, our priorities... - NOW.

It means prayerfully discerning the divine and eternal opportunities before each of us - NOW. Yes, now. 'For now is the accepted time. Today is the day of Salvation.'
(2 Corinthians 6.2)

So, today, let us hear his voice, let us not harden our hearts.

New Year Thoughts

God's Aid

God to enfold,
God to surround,
God in speech-told,
God my thought-bound.

God when I sleep,
God when I wake,
God my watch-keep,
God my hope-sake.

God my life-whole,
God lips apart,
God in my soul,
God in my heart.

God Wine and Bread,
God is my death,
God my soul-thread,
God ever breath.

As for the future....

O my Father, my God, I am in your hand;
and may I rejoice above all things in being so.
Do with me what seems good in your sight;
only let me love you with all mind, soul and strength.
John Wesley

Who Needs Theology?

The preacher had no Theology - or history! He would just give us the thoughts that had occurred to him on reading the passage for the day. This was meant as an amusing point and to assure us that he was no better than us. We were all coming at the passage from the same level of ignorance!

Hang your heart out, Apostles, Ambrose, Athanasius ... Zwingli, who gave lives and sometimes deaths for Theology! What wasted hours, years, talk, energy, to get a sound Theology, a context in which to understand the individual passages of Scripture!

God can certainly speak to us through Scripture without our having any theological qualifications and a tight, closed Theology is itself dangerous. However, it is generally recognised that there is danger in presuming to understand Scripture without knowing the historical and theological context. The Prophets prophesied out of the 'knowledge of God' (= Theology) which they and others taught faithfully. The Jews knew the context of the words they heard. The Psalms were sung within a theological context - the covenant faithfulness of God.

Of course our preacher had some Theology! His sermon betrayed the fact. It would have been a poor thing if one given the task of preaching had not. Failing to recognise it was a failure to think clearly and presenting that lack as amusing was irresponsible.

Without true knowledge of the true God, how can we explain the need of salvation, the meaning of the cross; discern between the work of the Spirit and the work of the devil; explain the importance of God's law; know why we are Christians rather than Hindus or Muslims? How can we have hope of eternity, any meaningful perspective on the present; make any sense out of suffering; have a faith which is anything other than a superficial prop, yielding an occasional feel good factor?

We need a Theology! To suggest otherwise is to leave young Christians with the impression that there is no need to engage the mind, to seek understanding, to be equipped to ward off false teaching and leave them vulnerable to any alternative faiths presenting

themselves. Understanding is essential, lazy-mindedness dangerous. The drop out rate is tragic, as people understand just enough to make a Christian commitment, say, at the end of Alpha, but do not further their understanding.

In extreme cases, bad Theology or no Theology leads to participation in acts of great evil by Christians. This explains why some co-operated with genocide in Rwanda - they had not understood what it meant to be new creatures in Christ and took part in satisfying the blood lust of the spirits they were still serving!*

When the adrenaline associated with new found faith stops surging and the time of testing comes, the Christian will falter and perhaps fall if not equipped with understanding. It is a mark of grace in any Christian to thirst for knowledge of the scriptures in their historical and theological context. The preacher's responsibility is to expound Scripture in that context.

The historical situation into which God spoke was the context in which he chose to reveal his will and ways to humankind. That is the nature of our God. He reveals himself through the history of a people - the Jews - and so graciously demonstrates that his ways 'work'! It is not an ethereal wisdom with no contact with life as it is. In this way God built up a picture - who he is, who we are, how sinners can have a relationship with a holy God. That is Theology! We ignore it at our peril, worshipping a god of our own fabrication.

Most preachers work very hard at understanding the passage from which they are preaching. We should all do our best to grasp what they find to say to us about it and so increase our own understanding of the faith once delivered to the saints and which is our salvation if we take firm hold of it.

** Meg Guillebaud Rwanda, the land God forgot? Monarch 2002*

By Anne Roberts

This article was first published in 'Christian Herald' and comes with the prayer that we might all grow in our ability to give an account of the faith we profess during 2006.

P.S. The preacher referred to was not preaching at St Mary's Deane!

January 6th is Epiphany

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure.

Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were they called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father,

Origen, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.



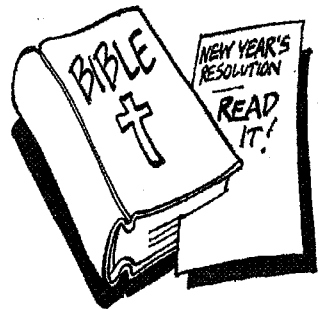
As you consider your New Year's resolutions...

Philippians 4:13 ---

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

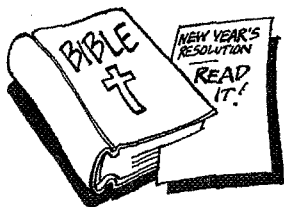
The road to success is not straight.

There is a curve called Failure, a loop called Confusion, speed bumps called Friends, red lights called Enemies, caution lights called Family. You will have flats called Jobs. But, if you have a spare called Determination, an engine called Perseverance, insurance called Faith, a driver called Jesus, you will make it to a place called Success.



The Basket and the Bible

The story is told of an old man who lived on a hill farm with his grandson. Each morning, Grandfather was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible. One day the grandson asked, "Grandfather, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?"



The Grandfather turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water." The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You will have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again. This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was "impossible to carry water in a basket," and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough," and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See, it's useless!"

"So you think it is useless?" the old man said. "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean. "Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out."

Can You Help?

Elizabeth Plant and her OLM support group are organising a forum on March 29th for as many Deane based voluntary and charitable organisations as possible. The forum has arisen out of the questionnaire which many of you completed in October and other research which the group has done. They found that the people of Deane do not meet as they used to do, not so long ago, in the parish at the shops, while at work, on the buses or while socialising. The group decided to invite to the forum people leading voluntary/charitable organisations who were therefore already involved with and working with some of the people of the parish. The idea is that they meet, network, get to know about one another and pass on what they have learned to others.

If you belong to an organisation or know of one which is based in Deane parish, do give the details to Elizabeth or one of the group. The group members are Jean Mainey, Pat Sewell, Anne Roberts, Alison Partington, Les Kilsby, Craig Mochrie, John Tudor and Charles Winder.

Thank you for your help.

Statistic of the Month - one in five went to church at Christmas!

The Church of England recently published its national attendance figures for 2003, which make interesting reading! They show, for example, that church attendance at Christmas increased in 2003 over 2002 to 2,650,000 in 2003, a 2% increase.

If that kind of increase continues there could have been well over 2.7 million people in church this Christmas - and that's just the Church of England! Since C of E attendance is about 28% of the total, this suggests there could have been nearly 10 million in English churches this December, and probably more than 12 million in the whole country. That's 20% of the population, one person in five!

In towns, the average attendance is nearly 400 people per church, which is a huge opportunity to tell people the good news.

How can we best use these opportunities?

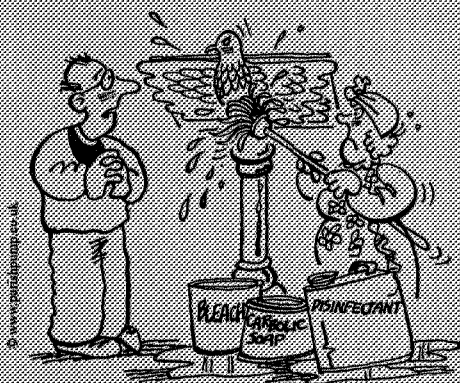
Jokes for your New Year Party (if you dare!)

All these sentences are said to have appeared in church notices.

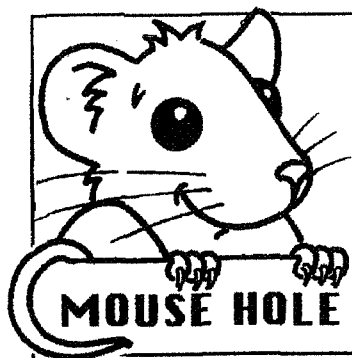
- 1 Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.
- 2 The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- 3 The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
- 4 Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.
- 5 The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
- 6 Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
- 7 Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- 8 For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

ZEAL FOR THE LORD'S HOUSE!

Seriously... much
appreciation and many
thanks to those who
keep the church clean
for us!

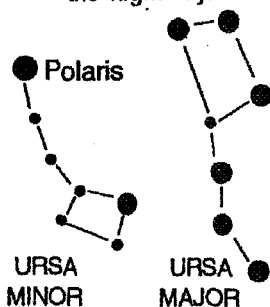


Mabel, I can't help thinking you're taking this risk of bird 'flu a bit too seriously!



Star Facts

'Polaris', also known as 'The North Star' can be seen in the sky all year round. Look out for it in the night sky.

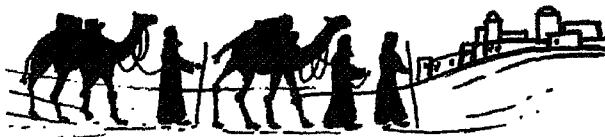
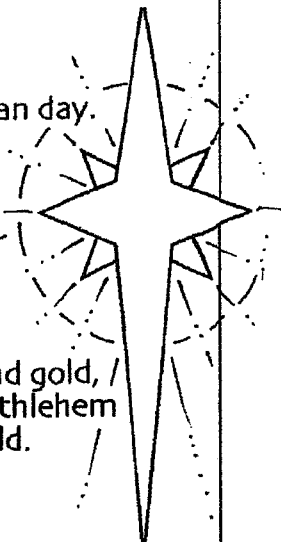


The wise men came
from a land far away,
They'd seen a great star
that shone brighter than day.

The star was a sign
of the birth of a king,
So they followed that star
to pay homage to him.

They carried three gifts:
myrrh, frankincense and gold,
and they found him in Bethlehem
as the Prophets foretold.

The star led to Jesus,
our Saviour and King,
So let's join with the wise men
and go, worship Him.

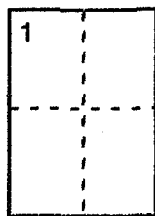


Star Makes

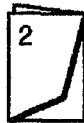
The closest star
to EARTH, is
our own SUN



Stars are different
colours, the colour we
see depends on the
temperature of the
star. The coolest stars
appear RED. Then there's
ORANGE, YELLOW,
YELLOWISH-WHITE
to the hottest stars
which are a
BLUE-WHITE



• Fold a rectangle of shiny
paper into half and half
again (1).



fold

Then (2) cut
to make a Star
of Bethlehem.



• Glue 3 lolly sticks together.
Starting from the centre, wind
wool around each
stick until about 2-3cm
of stick is left.



Try painting the sticks
gold, use gold thread and
add sparkle with glitter.

