



## *From the Curate*

Dear Friends,

2012 promises to be a year to remember in several respects. To begin with, it is a Leap Year so we have an extra day in which to enjoy it! Secondly, it is the diamond anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty the Queen and in celebration of her dedication to the service of this country we have an extra bank holiday on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Thirdly, it is the year of the Olympic Games which this year are being held in London. It is exciting for us as the Olympic Flame is due to pass through the Deepings on route to Lincoln. For all these reasons there are likely to be several opportunities for the Church to reach out to the community in celebration.

Hopefully these events will go some way towards alleviating uncertainty regarding the economy and also gloomy predictions of the end of the world in December, the latter prediction being based, as I understand it, on a calendar of the ancient Mayan people. St Paul warns against false prophets and speculations and Our Lord himself reminds us that the time of the end of the age is something known to the Father alone. He further urges us to make best use of each and every day, doing what good we can in the world. For 'just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me'.

For some the year is now designated as being in the 'Common Era' (CE). For Christians it will always remain the year of Our Lord, Anno Domini (A.D.). May you live each day of 2012 in the knowledge of Christ's loving presence with you.

A blessed and peaceful new year to you all.

*Revd Sonia*

# Parish Directory

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	Liz Spratley	
Assistant Churchwardens	Doris Bellairs	
	John Worthington	
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<b>Parochial Church Council</b>		
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Vice-Chairman	Adrian Hallam	
Hon. Secretary	Roger Bridgeman	
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Covenant Secretary	Peter Wilde	
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<hr/>		
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	<i>The above plus</i>	
Deanery Synod	The Reverend Sonia Marshall	
	Simon Marshall	
<hr/>		
<b>Choir Master</b>	John Worthington	<a href="mailto:music@dsj.org.uk">music@dsj.org.uk</a>
<b>Organist</b>	Philip Spratley	
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Church Hall Bookings	Tony Masters	<a href="mailto:churchhall@dsj.org.uk">churchhall@dsj.org.uk</a>
Church Ladies' Fellowship	Anthea Wray	
Church Coffee Group	Carole Mills	
	Margaret Flegg	
Church Flowers	Pauline Brooksbank	
	Christine Masters	
House Group	Doris Warner	
Rose & Sweet Pea Show	TBA	<a href="mailto:roseandsweetpea@dsj.org.uk">roseandsweetpea@dsj.org.uk</a>
Just People	Richard Gamman	<a href="mailto:youth@dsj.org.uk">youth@dsj.org.uk</a>
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## In this Month's Priory News



Dear All

As we approach the end of 2011 we should

like to express our gratitude for the help and encouragement which we have received from so many quarters for our attempt to deliver an interesting and informed magazine for the Priory Church and Parish. Since we took up the challenge of producing Priory News we have enjoyed the contact we have had with so many people and we hope that this will continue in the New Year. We are particularly grateful to our 'regulars' who produce the rotas which you see towards the back of each issue and all who keep us up to date with the activities of the many groups within our church, we are also very grateful to those who keep supplying us with the wonderful photographs on the front cover.

In this month's magazine you will find a slightly 'late' Christmas message from our new Bishop, a quiz which might have you guessing and incidentally, we should also like to hear from anyone who spots the anachronism in the cover photo.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

*Caroline and John.*

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By popular request – Margaret gives us a recipe for Lincolnshire Tea Loaf

This month's cover picture is another from our regular contributor - John Marsh.

Clergy Duty Days:	Revd Janet	Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday
	Revd Sonia	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday
Either can be available on a Friday		

Thank you to those who have sent in articles for Priory News. Contributions and suggestions are very welcome. Please let us have your prayers, poems, pictures, comments, reminiscences and anything else you'd like to share. **NB: pictures containing recognisable children must be accompanied by authorisation to publish from their parents or guardians. We will not publish the names of children pictured unless specifically requested to do so by their parents or guardians.**

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*Please let us have your contributions for the **February** edition of Priory News **BEFORE** the deadline, **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January**. Thank you for your help.*

# Church Calendar for January

1 <sup>st</sup>	SUNDAY	<b>NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS (Second Sunday of Christmas)</b>	
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
5 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	9:30am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Home Communion
		7:45pm	Church Ladies' Fellowship
6 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	<i>Practice Night:</i>	
		6:45pm	Choir Practice
		7:30pm	Ringers
7 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	11:00am	Wedding: Rebecca Worthington and Robert Miles
8 <sup>th</sup>	SUNDAY	<b>THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD</b>	
		8:00am	Holy Communion (said)
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
		6:00pm	Plough Service followed by Plough Supper
10 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	<a href="#"><u>William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645</u></a>	
		9:00am	Clergy Chapter – Holbeach Hurn
		3:00pm	U3A – Tour of the Church
12 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	<a href="#"><u>Aelred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167</u></a>	
		9:30am	Holy Communion
		7:30pm	PCC Meeting in the Church Hall
13 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	<a href="#"><u>Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher of the Faith, 367</u></a>	
		George Fox, 1691	
		<i>Practice Night:</i>	
		6:45pm	Choir Practice
15 <sup>th</sup>	SUNDAY	<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY</b>	
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
17 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	<a href="#"><u>Antony of Egypt, Hermit, Abbot, 356</u></a>	
		<a href="#"><u>Charles Gore, Bishop, 1932</u></a>	
18 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins	
19 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	<a href="#"><u>Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095</u></a>	
		9:30am	Holy Communion
		7:45pm	Church Ladies' Fellowship

20 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	<a href="#"><u>Richard Rolle of Hampole, Spiritual Writer, 1349</u></a>	
		<i>Practice Night:</i>	
		6:45pm	Choir Practice
		7:30pm	Ringers
21 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday	2:00pm	Wedding of Kris Westran and Kirsty Shipman
22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF EIPANY</b>	
		8:00am	Holy Communion (said)
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
24 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday	<a href="#"><u>Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, 1622</u></a>	
25 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	<a href="#"><u>THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL</u></a>	
26 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday	<a href="#"><u>Timothy and Titus, companions of St Paul</u></a>	
		9:30am	Holy Communion
27 <sup>th</sup>	Friday	<i>Practice Night:</i>	
		6:45pm	Choir Practice
		7:30pm	Ringers
28 <sup>st</sup>	Saturday	<a href="#"><u>Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Philosopher, 1274</u></a>	
29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (Fourth Sunday of Epiphany – Candlemas)</b>	
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
30 <sup>th</sup>	Monday	<a href="#"><u>Charles, King and Martyr, 1649</u></a>	
<b>FEBRUARY</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup>	Wednesday	<a href="#"><u>Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c525</u></a>	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thursday	<a href="#"><u>The Presentation of Christ in the Temple</u></a> (Candlemas)	
		9:30am	Holy Communion
		10:30am	Home Communion
		7:45pm	Church Ladies' Fellowship
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Friday	<a href="#"><u>Anskar, Bishop of Hamburg, Missionary in Denmark and Sweden, 865</u></a>	
		<i>Practice Night:</i>	
		6:45pm	Choir Practice
		7:30pm	Ringers
4 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday	<a href="#"><u>Gilbert of Sempringham, Founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189</u></a>	
5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT - SEPTUAGESIMA</b>	
		10:00am	Sung Eucharist
		6:00pm	Choral Evensong

# Registers for November

**BAPTISMS:** we welcome into the Lord's family:

6<sup>th</sup> Lily Clare Pennells  
Bethany Rose Turner

## Cooking with Margaret

### Lincolnshire Tea Loaf



#### Ingredients:

12oz Mixed Fruit  
250ml Cold Tea  
1 Egg  
8oz Brown Sugar  
1lb Self-raising flour

#### Method:

Soak fruit, sugar and tea in a bowl overnight. Next day mix in egg and flour. Put into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin (or 2 x 1lb tins) and bake for 1 hour at 300° F/150° C/Gas mark 2.

Nice if buttered.

This recipe was especially requested by a member of the Church.



**HOUSE GROUP**  
**7:30pm Wednesdays**  
**at 45 Crowson Way,**  
**DSJ.**  
**All welcome!**

## *Forthcoming Events*

On Sunday 8th January there will be the traditional PLOUGH SUPPER following the evening service. All are welcome, BUT, please add your name to the list in Church if you are attending.

The next meeting of the Social Committee will be held on 31st January.

*Bill Flegg*

## News from Children's Church

We had a wonderful run up to Christmas this year, enjoying all our usual activities but through the fresh eyes of our new members who've joined this year and others who are growing in confidence and levels of involvement.

11<sup>th</sup> December was a particularly busy day with our party in the morning. We enjoyed dancing for an hour to build up our appetites before we had our party lunch; thanks to all the members of the congregation who supplied food. Santa came to see us and gave out presents to lots of wide eyed youngsters. In the afternoon the annual Christingle service was well attended. This is a wonderful community service and we are very grateful to the Choir for spending their Sunday afternoon leading the singing.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December many of our members were involved in the Deeping St James Community Primary School Christmas concert. It was once again lovely to see the Church full and personal highlights were Erin Fisk singing Silent Night and Helena Gamman (accompanied by Rev Janet) playing Walking in the Air on her flute.

Our preparations for Christmas climaxed on the last Sunday of Advent with our nativity production, which was directed by Ted and Andrea. Once again the bar was raised in terms of the professional presentation standards! We do feel we've hit on a winning formula with audience participation in the songs and thank you all for entering into the spirit. Many thanks also to all who contributed to the chocolate raffle and to Martin and Johanna for organising refreshments.

We look forward to sharing our next adventures in Christian fellowship with you in the New Year.

*Richard and Andrea Gamman*

## *Christingle Update*

The Christingle Service held on 11<sup>th</sup> December raised £120.36 for the Children's Society. Many thanks for your support.

*Lisa Goodchild*

## *Priory Coffee Group*



On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December the Priory Church Coffee Group held their Advent coffee morning when those attending were treated to home made mince pies and coffee. The event was well attended and raised £358-35 for funds.

The organisers would like to thank those who have supported their events throughout the year especially those who give prizes for the various raffles, and those who help behind the scenes.

The day ended with Margaret and Carole going to the John Lewis store to receive a community award cheque for £ 300-00 which will be used towards the purchase of new tables for the hall

*Margaret Flegg*

*Mission Committee*

A note for your diaries – May 19<sup>th</sup> is our next Craft Fair in the Church Hall. Everyone welcome

## Calling all knits!

The Mission Committee and the Wednesday House Group would like your help. We have decided to knit some squares to make up into blankets. If you have any spare balls of double knitting wool please pop them into Fred's box in church or, even better, if you want to make a few squares yourself - here are the instructions. The finished squares can go into Fred's box too.

For one 8"/20 cms SQUARE, you will need:

Yarn from a 100 gram (3.5 oz) ball of yarn or scraps of yarn or wool - double knit (UK)

Size 4mm needles

A yarn sewing needle.

1. Cast on 32 stitches (*try to make your stitches neither too loose nor too tight to help ensure uniform squares*)
2. Row 1: knit
3. Row 2: knit. These two rows form the 'garter' stitch knitting pattern for your square
4. Continue knitting as per these two rows until you have knitted a square
5. To ensure you square is 8"/20cm either use a tape measure or form a triangle by folding one corner of your square over to meet the opposite corner as shown - if all sides are equal - then you have a square!
6. Cast off
7. Use your yarn sewing needle to sew in all the yarn ends using a darning method



### **VERY IMPORTANT**

**Leave a one metre (one and a quarter yards) length of your yarn attached to your work after you have cast off. This will be used to join the squares together.**

## *Garden Quiz*

Although this quiz was produced for a U3A Gardening group most of the clues are of a general nature so no intimate gardening knowledge is needed. All the answers, however, do have garden connections. Some are Christmas related, some are not. The answers will be included in next month's magazine.

1. What tree bears the crown at Christmas?
2. If sugar is sweet what are blue?
3. What fruit might you find in the farmyard?
4. This flower might be universal?
5. Their scent is much preferred to Will's!
6. You might find this flower in the valley?
7. What fruit might you use if you want to 'phone home?
8. It's an apple that thinks it's a pear!
9. Who would look good on a tandem?
10. What rose might you find in the Arctic?
11. Marry a thrush with a bit of a foot for a Christmas kiss!
12. It's a bovine petticoat!
13. He's a happy sort of fellow!
14. What garden bird appeared on the reverse of the last farthing coins?
15. You need more than one of these for a white Christmas!
16. It's a male bovine in a hurry!
17. What did the Danes say before they grew rich in Shoreditch?
18. There's a lot of this in Wimbledon!
19. The water's pouring out in Wales!
20. These brought joy to a Lakeland poet!
21. What tree has a heart?
22. This would smell as sweet whatever you called it!
23. What vegetable might you eat with custard?
24. If Rudolf's is red, what might make the snowman's?
25. In pots and pans he builds his nest, Best noted for his coloured breast!

## *A Thankyou*

New Year Greetings and a big "thankyou" to all of my helpers who deliver the Priory News magazine to its readers.

*Doris Bellairs*

## Rotas for January

		Servers	Sidespersons	Intercessors
<b>Sun 1st</b>	<b>Naming and Circumcision of Christ</b>			
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Chris Halley and Paul Boswall	Team D: Trevor Harwood and Graham Hardy	Martin Fisher
<b>Sun 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Epiphany of our Lord</b>			
	<b>8:00 am</b>	Geoff Armstrong		
	<b>10:00 am</b>	John Sellars and Simon Marshall	Team E: Bill Flegg, Margaret Flegg and Liz Bridgeman	John Marsh
<b>Sun 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Second Sunday of Epiphany</b>			
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Chris Halley and Simon Marshall	Team F: Val Wilde, Doris Bellairs and Christine Masters	Ann Smart
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	John Sellars		
<b>Sun 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Third Sunday of Epiphany</b>			
	<b>8:00 am</b>	Geoff Armstrong		
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Paul Boswall and John Sellars	Team A: Kim Hallam and Doris Bellairs	Niccy Fisher
<b>Sun 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Presentation of Christ in the Temple - Fourth Sunday of Epiphany - Candlemas</b>			
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Chris Halley and Simon Marshall	Team B: Joy Cunningham and Ann Meekings	Bet Washbrooke
<b>Sun 5<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>Third Sunday Before Lent – Septuagesima</b>			
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Paul Boswall and John Sellars	Team C: Tim Hitchbourn and Cledwyn Bennett	
	<b>6:00 pm</b>	John Sellars		

		Bread & Wine	Coffee	Flowers	Cleaning	Brasses
<b>Sun 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</b>					
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Doris Bellairs and Christine Masters	John and Sue Marsh			
<b>Sun 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Epiphany of our Lord</b>					
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Christine Payne and Ann Meekings	Johanna Jones	Jane Thompson		
<b>Sun 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Second Sunday of Epiphany</b>					
	<b>10:00 am</b>	Dick and Anthea Wray	Bill and Margaret Flegg	Eileen Day	Liz Spratley and Sandra Jones	Bill and Margaret Flegg

Sun 22nd	<b>Third Sunday of Epiphany</b>					
	11:00 pm	Pat Feek and Doris Warner	Ann Bennett and Penny Hebblewhite	Christine Masters		
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Presentation of Christ in the Temple - Fourth Sunday of Epiphany - Candlemas</b>					
	10:00 am	Bill and Margaret Flegg	Val Wilde and Doris Bellairs	Margaret Flegg	John and Linda Sellars	Val Wilde and Sylvia Anderson
<b>Third Sunday Before Lent - Septuagesima</b>						
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10:00 am	Peter and Val Wilde	Liz Spratley and Linda Sellars	Doris Warner		

## Readings and Readers for January

		OT Reading	OT Reader	NT Reading	NT Reader	Gospel
Sun 1st	<b>Naming and Circumcision of Jesus</b>					
	10:00 am	Numbers 6:22-end	Jacob Boswall	Galations 4:4-7	Trevor Harwood	Luke 2:15-21
Sun 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The Epiphany of our Lord</b>					
	8:00 am	Isaiah 60: 1- 6		Ephesians 3:1- 12		Matthew 2:1- 12
	10:00 am				Martin Fisher	
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Second Sunday of Epiphany</b>					
	10:00 am	1 Samuel: 3: 1-10	Adrian Hallam	Revelations 5:1-10	John Worthington	John 1:43-end
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Third Sunday of Epiphany</b>					
	8:00 am	Genesis 14:17-20		Revelations 19:6-10		John 2:1-11
	10:00 am		Cled Bennett		Liz Spratley	
Sun 29 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Presentation of Christ in the Temple - Fourth Sunday of Epiphany - Candlemas</b>					
	10:00 am	Malachi 3:1-5	Caroline Herron	Hebrews 2:14- end	Alistair Donaldson	Luke2:22-40
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	<b>Third Sunday Before Lent - Septuagesima</b>					
	10:00 am	Isaiah 40:21-end	Nicky Fisher	1 Corinthians 9:16-23	Simon Marshall	Mark 1:29-39

## *Choir Notes*

The Choir was again invited to join the pre-Christmas festivities at the Bell on Bridge Street in December 17<sup>th</sup>. This is about the fourth year we have led the singing of Christmas Carols and we are happy to be able to pass £42.40, donated by those present, to our Mission Committee to be given to good causes.

*John Worthington*



**It is always salutary that Christmas Day is immediately followed by a series of saints' days, which in a spiritual sense 'sober us up' from the excesses of Christmas.**

On Boxing Day, we have the story of the death of the Church's first martyr, St Stephen; and then a few days later we shall focus on the death of the Holy Innocents - those children murdered by Herod in an attempt to kill the infant Messiah - and then after that we shall be remembering the great English saint, Thomas Becket who was murdered by the King's men on the steps of the altar of his cathedral Church at Canterbury in 1170.

What do we learn from this?

We learn that the joy of the birth of the infant Jesus leads inexorably to suffering and death: his own suffering and death and the suffering and death of those who follow him.

The great Welsh poet and priest, R. S. Thomas, makes this point in his poem, 'The Coming'. In this poem the Son of God, standing outside human time with his heavenly Father, looks down on the earth - an earth which is deeply unhappy and dysfunctional - and the Son sees his own death:

And God held in his hand  
A small globe. Look, he said.  
The son looked. Far off,  
As through water, he saw  
A scorched land of fierce  
Colour. The light burned  
There; crusted buildings  
Cast their shadows; a bright  
Serpent, a river  
Uncoiled itself, radiant  
With slime.  
On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many people  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said.



Let me unpack this:

At home we have two sets of Russian dolls - you know the sort, the ones that begin with a big outer doll, and inside there is another doll that is slightly smaller and inside that, another one and so on until you finally reach one tiny whole doll, which somehow is the essence of all the others. Picked up on a couple of trips to Russia, the first one was a traditional babushka, with lots of smaller ones inside it.

Then (presumably manufactured for the tourists) there was one of Russian heads of state - it began with Mr Putin, went through Yeltsin, Gorbachev, Andropov, Brezhnev, Khrushchev, Stalin, Lenin and so on - the last one was a small whole doll of Tsar Peter the Great. I suppose this made the point that in the end these Russian leaders are all the same.

If we made a Russian doll for Christmas, it could make the point that at Christmas many of us begin with what is superficial, but have the opportunity to go deeper.

We would begin with the outer doll. This depicts what we might call the yuletide feast.

By this I mean all the secular celebrations - many of these originate more from the winter solstice than the birth of Jesus - the parties, the time off the work, the need to celebrate the beginning of a new year and so on. These are not bad things and I can't imagine the winter without the Christmas and New Year break. It would be long and dark and depressing - but surely there is more to it than this . . .

The first doll is decorated with a scene of jolly revellers.

This second doll might depict might call the 'magic of Christmas for children.' Many people see Christmas as being primarily for the kids and at this level we have the stories of Santa Claus, his reindeers and elf helpers and of course, the excitement of waking early on Christmas morning to discover what gifts have been left. We remember the excitement of our own childhood and, if we are parents or grandparents, we see it again in the younger generations. Again, this is a good thing in itself and to be enjoyed.

Doll Two depicts a scene of excited children opening their Christmas presents early on Christmas morning.

We come to a third doll and another layer of truth.

Here we find the Christmas stories from the Bible. These stories are so much part of Christmas for many: angels and shepherds, wise men, stables, and donkeys and, of course, a baby asleep in a manger: all the imagery that we see in nativity plays and sing about in Christmas carols.

Doll Three would depict the holy family in Bethlehem.

Is that the final doll or are there further smaller dolls inside? Well I think there is at least one more because behind the scene at Bethlehem, there could be another doll that depicts the whole of Jesus' life, culminating in his death and his resurrection. The angels and shepherds only make sense for a Christian because Jesus rose from the dead. The events surrounding the beginning of the life of Jesus only fall into place because of what happened at the end. Christians begin with the resurrection, because angels sang at Jesus' birth because he was raised from the dead.

So for Doll Four we could have a depiction of Jesus on the cross or a scene of the empty tomb.

Is that it or is there one more?

Well, yes. When we look at the Son of Man who lived and died for us, we see someone who points beyond himself to his heavenly Father; to God himself and his love for the world.

And here we come to it - the small doll, whole in itself, at the heart of all the larger dolls of Christmas - and this final doll, complete in itself, depicts the love of God for his world.

This is the kernel of Christmas.

So here we have our Christian Russian doll - jolly revellers painted on the first one, excited children opening their gifts on the next, the baby Jesus on the next, then the grown up Jesus on the cross and finally, the love of God on the last one.

But how would I portray something as abstract as the love of God?



We all might have our own ideas about that, but perhaps I could offer as an example from another English saint, Dame Julian of Norwich, who depicted the whole of creation - created, sustained and redeemed by the love of God - through a small and perfect hazelnut. Speaking of one her miraculous visions she said this:

'In this vision he showed me a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, and it was round as a ball. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought, "What may this be?" And it was generally answered thus: "It is all that is made." I marvelled how it might last, for it seemed it might suddenly have sunk into nothing because of its littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: "It lasts and ever shall, because God loves it."

So there we have it - we move from the jolly but superficial partygoers looking for a break in the dark winter to the profound truth of that final, small doll depicting God's love - surprising, gracious and compassionate.

This is the essence of Christmas; it's up to us how deep we want to go.

My wife Susan and I send each and every one of you our good wishes for a peaceful Christmastide and a very happy New Year.

+ *Christyhal Lincoln* :