



## Churches Together in Alresford December 2019 Newsletter



Christmas is almost upon us – a time to celebrate and make merry!

However, it is a time when our political and economic future is feeling decidedly uncertain. It is also and a time where the gap between rich and poor is increasing; a fact displayed so clearly by the growing number of homeless people on Winchester's streets. It's easy to think that Christmas is a luxury we can ill-afford, an indulgence for the wealthy.

Yet, it would seem that this situation is remarkably similar to that encountered in the Palestinian world into which Christ was born. Though the years have rolled by, the same flawed human condition remains.

As we struggle through our own time of instability, it is indeed consoling that many still come to stop and reflect here in our Alresford churches on 'what it's all about', recognising that deep down we are called to connect with something deeper than our everyday concerns. We all share a longing to try to make the world a more just, honest, and human place.

So together, as the Christian community in Alresford, we will strive to share the joy of Christmas and sing out the message of God's love for all people. We will share food and fellowship and aim to carry on this spirit of ecumenism into the coming year.

Beginning with a joint carol service at St Johns on 15<sup>th</sup> December, we will together offer Christmas praise and this will pave the way for our intention to build more regular opportunities for ecumenical worship in 2020.



In the week beginning Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December we will be singing again, as we share carols with the residents of Ellingham Court, Bailey House and 18 Grange Road. Please keep a look out for dates and times, as these have not yet been finalised. On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> at 11am, we invite everyone to join in a rousing time of carol singing in Broad Street. Not only is this an opportunity for public witness, but it will help to raise much-needed funds for '*Winchester Youth Counselling*', the charity we are supporting this year.

The local community has formed two volunteer groups offering a shared Christmas Day lunch for elderly Alresford residents. The first is at Bailey House, where house manager Sally Holmes and her family will put on lunch for up to 12 people. The second venue will be at Makins Court, where Julie Cleeve and family will provide lunch for about 30 people. Pam Stevens will organise the town mini-bus to provide transport for the day. We are indeed grateful to all these volunteers and it is good to know that no one in Alresford needs to spend Christmas Day alone.

Looking forward into the New Year, we will start by celebrating together the joint Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. A service will be held at St John's on 19th January, beginning at 4.30pm with a 'Bring and Share' afternoon tea and followed by a service at 6pm. It's a great opportunity to start 2020 with the strength of a united Christian community in Alresford.

**Peace, love, and joy are what the Christmas season brings.**

**Our job is to keep it alive all year long!**

**To all – a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**