

A Blessed Christmas to All

One of my abiding childhood memories was that of my mother reading to me the Narnia Chronicles by C.S. Lewis. Many would argue that the Narnia Chronicle are an allegory of the Christian faith, and certainly there are many parallels between Jesus and the principle character Aslan, a talking lion. Indeed, in perhaps the most well known of the Narnia books, *The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe*, when one of the children, Edmund, crosses the path of the wicked witch that would have cost him his life, except Aslan takes his place.

In perhaps one of them most spectacular scenes in the entire series the lion comes back to life, resonating with the Easter story. My mother shared with me many years later that one of the most profound spiritual moments of her life was reading this book to my brother and myself whilst we were on holiday in Wales. When it came to the reading of the 'resurrection' the entire bedroom filled with wonderful golden light of the evening sun.

Towards the end of my mother's life, I would remind her of this moment, and indeed one of the last sentences my mother uttered was, "It will soon be spring." I am convinced a direct reference to Narnia which for many years was kept in perpetual winter until Aslan the lion intervened. For me, it was also a reflection of my mother's deep-rooted faith in Jesus and a genuine hope and belief that death was merely the threshold between this life and the world to come, with springtime a symbol of new life.

I shared these and other thoughts with my spiritual director after my mother died. My spiritual director suggested that I should re-read the Narnia chronicles as an aid to processing my mother's death. I enjoyed reading the adventures of Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy and other children and characters in the pages of these seven books that make up Narnia Chronicles. Many of these adventures and battles reflect the wonder, excitement and indeed challenges we all face as we battle our way through life.

In the final book, aptly called the Last Battle, the children fight the last battle and seem to lose and be forced into a rather strange stable with terrifying uncertainties of what lies inside. Inevitably the children lose that last battle, as eventually we all do in our fight for life. Yet what is important is what lies beyond the threshold. As the terrified children enter the stable they discover that it actually leads into an even greater and even more wonderful world, which they quickly identify as being the true Narnia.

What was inside the stable was far greater than what stands outside the stable. As the children experienced this incredible moment, Lucy, the youngest recalls the birth of Jesus and says in our world it is also true to say that what lies inside the stable is much greater than everything that lies outside.

Christmas is a wonderful time of celebration and joy as we celebrate the birth of our saviour. For some of you, like me, Christmas will be different through the absence of loved ones. The empty chair at the table being a solitary reminder. But I know that our loved ones would not want us to be sad for ever but instead to focus on the babe in the manger, knowing that what is inside the stable, and indeed what is inside our hearts is greater than that which is outside. May the peace, the joy, the hope and the love of the Christ Child be yours this Christmas. *Rev. Tony Rindl, Vicar of St.*

Leonard's

Dates for your diary

Date	Time	Service
Sunday, December 7th	08:00	Holy Communion
	10:00	Family Advent Service
Sunday, December 14th	18:00	Carol Service
Thursday, December 18th	19:00	Carols around the tree, Garden of Memory
Sunday, December 21st	16:00	Christingle
Wednesday, December 24th <i>Christmas Eve</i>	16:00	Crib Service
		23:30 Midnight Mass
Thursday, December 25th <i>Christmas Day</i>	22:00	Holy Communion

Our Folk

Remember in your prayers: Audrey Horsley, Ann Thomason, Mary Swindell and all those in care homes.

RIP: Peter Roberts, Peter Weston, Eddie Smith, Tom Dick and Hazel Thomas.

Community News

Marston Green 50 Plus

Members are going to the Christmas Market in Worcester on **Friday, December 5th**, followed by a meal at Gupshill Manor Tewkesbury.

At the meeting on Monday, **December 8th**, the speaker is Quentin Watt, whose talk is entitled

The Adventures of Harry Payne - The Edwardian Literary Tramp.

On Monday **December 22nd**, there will be a comedy programme followed by the singing of Christmas Songs - Plus mulled wine and mince pies of course!!

Ladies Fellowship

Monday, December 15th, **Christmas Celebrations** 14:00 - 16:00 in the Elmdon Lounge. All ladies are welcome.

Literary Society

Friday, December 19th, **It's Christmas!** A seasonal bring and share evening of fun with readings, quiz and games. 19:30 The Elmdon Lounge.

Marston Green Library

Date	Event	Times
1st December	Under 5's Story time	14:30 - 15:00
4th December	Christmas Coffee Morning	10:00 - 12:00
	Reminiscence Group.	14:15 - 15:15
6th December	Councillor's Surgery	10:30 - 12:00

8th December	Under 5's Story time	14:30 - 15:00
11th December	Reading Cafe.	10:15 - 12:15
15th December	Under 5's Story time	14:30 - 15:00
13th December	Knit and Natter	10:00 - 12:00
18th December	Writers Group	14:00 - 15:30
27th December	Knit and Natter	10:00 - 12:00

Christmas Opening Hours: Monday 22nd open, the closed until Saturday, Dec 27th. Open again on Monday, Dec 29th then closed from Dec. 30th until Saturday, Jan. 3rd.

Christmas in Harmony performing all the festive classics. Friday, December 12th 19:00 - 20:30, St Leonard's Church. Tickets £5 (under 12s free). Mince pies and Mulled wine.

The community of Marston Green have once again been very generous: St Leonard's Christmas Craft Fair on November 15th raised over £1,600. Grateful thanks to Louise Alexander, the Fairs Committee and all involved, for their time and effort. Thanks also to Margaret Walton and her willing team who have organised several events including Afternoon Teas on behalf of the Parish Hall. There will be a Christmas Afternoon Teas on Saturday, December 20th from 14:00 - 17:00 in the Parish Hall.