

Here's an update for November and December looking back at what has been going on in the parish thanks to the grace of God; as well as the time, prayer, money, and other resources that are generously given by our congregations.

Messy Church

Each month 50+ of us gather from Four Marks, Medstead and surrounding villages as Messy church.

Did you know Messy Church is for everyone- regardless of age. It is a completely informal style of church built around creativity, celebration and hospitality.

Messy Church will have a different theme each month but will always include a range of activities - crafts, food, games, discussion, singing and stories.

This academic year we are digging deeper into Who God is. For November we looked at God as a God of Justice and Mercy and a God of Truth and Love.



20 families joined us at the Good Shepherd for December's Messy Church with Christingle, a fun afternoon exploring the Christmas story and thinking about Jesus coming as light to the world. This month's big shout goes to the Messy Food team for feeding all 86 of us with a celebration supper



MCSs Church
with Christingle
8th December



MCSs Church
with Christingle
8th December



Evenings of Prayer



Thank you to all who attended our Evening of Prayer on 26th November and 17th December. Our next Evening of Prayer is in the church hall at COGS on Tuesday 18th February, at 7.30pm. It would be great to have you join us

Schools

Howard and Virginia continue to visit Four Marks and Medstead primary schools weekly on Tuesdays in term time for collective worship.

Medstead Primary School's Christingle service was held at St Andrew's on 4th Of December. The children, with the help of their parents, did an amazing job creating their own Christingles. Through their presentations, they talked about the love of God and the light of Christ that shines in and through our lives forever.

Medstead Primary School Church Christmas service was conducted in St Andrew's on the 18th of December and Four Marks Primary School church Christmas service on the 20th of December at The Church of the Good Shepherd. Both the services were filled with joy of celebration of the birth of Jesus and its purpose for our lives.

On 15th December, we were delighted to have Four Marks School's choir join us to sing at the Carols by Candlelight service at COGS.

COGS Tiny Tots

COGS Tiny tots, for ages 0-12 months, meets at The Good Shepherd each Monday between 10.30 and 12. In December we had three first birthdays to celebrate.

We ended the term with a Christmas baby sensory party, thank you to Kirsty from Baby sensory for running this for us.



COGS Tots

Toddler group is always lots of fun with crafts, games, toys, tents, tunnels and ride on trucks. In November 27 little ones and 23 parents/carers joined us as we thought about light in the darkness.



For children age 0-4

Tuesday
12th November
9-11am

November Tots
is all about Light

Jesus said :
I am the light of the world. whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Craft
Scratch art stars

Activity
Light and dark den

Storytime at 10.30

December's toddler group included our Nativity, with over 30 children joining us to take part in the nativity story. Please pray for all those that come, especially for those for whom this is their only contact with church, and please also pray for more volunteers to meet this need.



Tuesday 10th December

For the little ones:

Craft
Christmas Colouring
and stampers

Activity
Dress up nativity
clothes

Nativity at 10.00am



Everyone is invited to
be part of the story
and join in the singing

Medstead Toddler Group

Jane continues to visit Medstead toddler group on a Thursday in the village hall, building relationships with both the team and the families that visit, chatting with parents, helping with playtime and getting to know the children. In December she was able to help out at their end of term Christmas party.

Pre-Schools

Jane continues to visit our three local preschools, Heydays, Butterflies and Medstead, for story time each week in term time.

In December we have been exploring the Christmas story and thinking about each of the characters.

The Good shepherd hosted both Heydays and Butterflies nativity performances where we welcomed over 120 family and friends who came along to watch.



Butterflies preschool also visited on the 3rd December, made manger biscuits and helped to decorate our Christmas tree.

On 4th December Four Marks school Reception class visited the Good Shepherd. We made manger biscuits, decorated more of the Christmas tree and explored the Christmas story together.



Kids Church Family Gatherings

on the 15th December a few of our Kids church families gathered for a Christmas Movie, Pizza and popcorn.



Kids Church

The Kids Church continues to meet in the church hall every Sunday. The month of December was full of festivity, observing the season of advent and the joy and gladness of Christmas.



Older Children and Youth

The Youth continued to meet in the upper room in the church on the second and fourth Sunday each month.

The Monday Youth Club continues to meet weekly from 4:15pm to 6:15pm (year 6-8) and 5:30pm to 7:30pm (year 9 and plus). Both the groups enjoy their meal together between 5:30 to 6:15pm. It is a great space for young people to connect with each other through games, crafts and other fun activities. They also have opportunity to hear from the Bible and have discussions and interactions during the Bible talk.



Monday Youth club enjoyed their Christmas party on the 16th of December. It was filled with lots of party games and party food for everyone to enjoy.

Tea & Chat/Tea & Bowls/Coffee & Questions

Tea and Chat

We had an excellent turn out in November with 30 guests and the theme for the session was autumn. After discussing our memories of things we used to enjoy in autumn and how we celebrated bonfire night, we examined a number of autumn poems, discussing which we liked best and why. We then created some beautiful art work by painting glasses using the theme of autumn.



Coffee and Questions

The question we examined in November was "Is God interested in the little things in our lives, or is He too busy with more important issues?" There was lots of lively chat, and after examining a number of Bible verses on this theme, we came to the definite conclusion that God is interested in and wants to be involved in **every** aspect of our lives.

We held Christmas Tea & Praise on Sunday 22nd December at 3pm. It was great to see the people who gathered and we are very grateful to all who made it happen and provided food for the tea after the service.

Our next Tea & Chat and Tea & Bowls on Wednesday 19th February and our next Coffee & Questions is Wednesday 22nd January.

Nativity Trail

Over 85 came to take part in our nativity trail and craft café at The Good Shepherd on the 23rd December. Jane, Virginia and team transformed the church with 7 different trail stops, each telling a little about a different character in the Christmas story, alongside a selection of Christmas crafts and a large café space.



Crib Service

On Christmas eve at The Good Shepherd we celebrated our family crib service. Over 100 people joined us as we retold the story of the first Christmas with carols, storytelling and prayers.



Christmas events at St Andrew's

Over 160 attended the Lessons and Carols at St Andrew's on December 22nd. A big thank you to all those involved.

And another big thank you to all those involved at the Tree Carols event on 8th December and the Crib Service with Christingle on Christmas Eve.

Christmas in the Parish

Christmas is a hugely busy time for many of us, and we're very grateful to everyone who has helped to enable all our Christmas events and services, and to those who have invited their friends, family and neighbours to join us, and to those who have prayed that the love of God would be shared in our community this Christmas.

Community Cupboard

Community cupboard with COGS café continues to meet at The Good Shepherd every Thursday from 3.30pm, and relationships continue to grow, we now often have over 25 households finding a warm welcoming community space and collecting surplus food each week.

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