

NEWSLETTER

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Chaplain's Message

This will be our first Christmas in Switzerland. I wonder how it will differ from the ones we were used to in Britain. As I write, the shops are gearing up for Christmas but it does seem to be more restrained than what you would see in Britain by this time.

If an advertising agency was asked to come up with a slogan to remind people about the Christian message at Christmas they might try "Not genuine without the baby in the manger" and added that well-known warning "Beware of imitations".

Churchpeople and others do indeed talk about "the real Christmas" as something different from the consumerist festival that invades our shops and TV adverts as soon as the nights start to draw in. We know that the "real" Christmas is about Jesus and not about buying presents or over-indulging in food and drink. All the same, we do not stand aloof from this "other" Christmas. In fact it is right that we should be there in the thick of the Christmas rush, just as Jesus was born amidst the bustle of a busy, overcrowded town.

It seems to me, the job of Christians is to start where people are, caught up in the commercial Christmas, and to make connections with the genuine Christmas that we know through the Bible and our worship. Like the giving of presents, for instance. For the most part we do not restrict this to people who have earned our gifts in some way. We give to them simply because they are who they are and they mean something to us. That too is why God sent his Son into the world. We did not earn or deserve this. It was an act of unselfish love, given because we mean something to him.

And the over-indulgence? Think of the twelve baskets left over after the feeding of the five thousand. Or the water poured out at baptism. A whole jugful when a few drops would suffice. God is indulgently generous with his love. Many people also try to give their generosity a sense of purpose – by sending charity Christmas cards and so on. As we know, concern for the poor and the stranger is at the heart of the Christmas story.

So, the commercial Christmas actually contains quite a lot of Christianity. Often, though, it is unrecognised, as Jesus was when "he came to his own and his own received him not". When we gather for Christmas worship (the real Christmas party), people can find a purpose and a meaning in all they have been doing during the previous months. Unless those connections are made, Christmas dominated by crowds and hassle can indeed seem rather pointless.

So – go for the real thing. Come and worship.



PS – Shareene has crossed snowboarding equipment off her Christmas list for this year.

**Calendar of Services
for
December 2008
and
January 2009**



Dec. 7 Second Sunday of Advent

10.00 Eucharist
Isaiah 40: 1 – 11
2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a
Mark 1: 1 – 8

Dec. 10 19.30 Carol Service at Epiphanie Church, Biel

**Dec. 11 19.30 Service of Lessons and Carols
(in English) at Heiliggeist Church, Berne**

Dec. 14 Third Sunday of Advent

8.30 Holy Communion (said)
10.00 Nativity All Age Service



Dec. 18 19.00 Carol Service at Göttibach Church, Thun

Dec. 21 Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.00 Eucharist
2 Samuel 7:1 – 11, 16
Romans 16: 25 – end
Luke 1: 26 – 38



17.00 Neuchâtel Carol Service



Christmas Services

Dec. 24

23.00 First Eucharist of Christmas

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-4
John 1:1-14



Dec. 25

Christmas Day

10.00 Christmas Family Communion

Isaiah 62:6-end
Luke 2:8-20



Dec. 28

First Sunday of Christmas

The Holy Innocents

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Eucharist with Carols

Jeremiah 31:15 – 17
1 Corinthians 1: 26 – 29
Matthew 2: 13 – 18

Jan. 4

Epiphany

10.00 Eucharist

Isaiah 60: 1 – 6
Ephesians 3: 1 – 12
Matthew 2: 1 – 12

Jan. 11

First Sunday of Epiphany (the Baptism of Christ)

8.30 Holy Communion (said)

10.00 Service of the Word with Holy Communion

Genesis 1: 1 – 5
Acts 19: 1 – 7
Mark 1: 4 – 11



- Jan. 15 19.30 Thun Eucharist
- Jan. 18 Second Sunday of Epiphany
 10.00 Ecumenical Service at the Münster
 (NO Service at St Ursula's)
- Jan. 25 Third Sunday of Epiphany
 Conversion of Paul
 8.30 Holy Communion (said)
 10.00 Eucharist
 Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10
 Acts 9: 1 – 22
 Matthew 19: 27 – end
- Feb. 1 Fourth Sunday of Epiphany
 10.00 Eucharist
 Deuteronomy 18: 15 – 20
 Revelation 12: 1 – 5a
 Mark 1: 21 – 28

Please note that not all the readings appointed for a particular Sunday will necessarily be used.

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Neuchâtel Services

Sunday 14 December – 17.00

Sunday 21 December Carol Service – 17.00

Wednesday 24 – Christmas Family Communion – 17.00

Sunday 4 January – 17.00

Sunday 25 January – 17.00

† †

Rotas for December /January

READERS

Dec.

- 7 A Masciadri + B Morgan
- 14 Nativity
- 21 A Chittazhathu+
- 24 E Pfyffer+HELP
- 25 B Morgan+J Davie
- 28 B Winfield+D Hoag



Jan.

- 4 B Morgan+I Jordan
- 11 C Hodler+M Täuber
- 18 (Münster Service)
- 25 E Pfyffer+Y Chittazhathu

SIDESPERSONS

Dec.

- 7 S Klein+L Eigner
- 14 Nativity
- 21 B Winfield+L Romberg
- 24 B Morgan+Helper
- 25 H Davie+Helper
- 28 S Faillettaz+J Gusset



Jan.

- 4 S Klein+M Wenger
- 11 Y Chittazhathu+E Sovilla
- 18 (Münster Service)
- 25 S Higson+G Masciadri

INTERCESSIONS

Dec.

- 7 M Täuber
- 14 Nativity Play
- 21 B Morgan
- 24 P Hawker
- 25 E Hutchison
- 28 S Faillettaz



Jan.

- 4 D Low
- 11 I Jordan
- 18 (Münster Service)
- 25 A Chittazhathu

COFFEE & TEA

Dec.

- 7 Köniz Housegroup
- 14 A Carrick+S Faillettaz
- 21 A&E Funkhouser
- 28 R Fenner+E Stewardson



Jan.

- 6 Köniz Housegroup
 - 13 M+S Brawand
 - 18 (Münster Service)
 - 25 Ittigen Housegroup
-

Flowers

Dec.

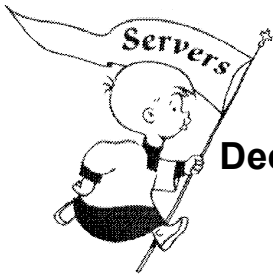
- 7 Advent
- 14 Advent
- 21 Advent
- 24 Christmas Flowers
- 25 Christmas Flowers
- 28 Christmas Flowers



Jan.

- 4 Y Bomonti
- 11 V Hawker
- 18 (Münster Service)
- 25 R Schelker

Flower Donations for special days e.g. wedding anniversaries, memorials will be accepted and announced in the Sunday notices. Please contact Church Office ☎031 352 85 67 or ☎031 829 16 31 for more information.



Server

- Dec. 7** L Robb
- Dec. 21** M Wildhaber **Dec. 24** G Güntert **23.00**
- Dec. 25** L Robb **Dec. 28** A Thomas
- Jan. 4** J Hutchison



Chalice Assistants

- Dec. 7** D Hoag+R Freiburghaus
- Dec. 21** B Morgan+E Hutchison
- Dec. 24** D Goepfert+P Hawker
- Dec. 25** A Funkhouser+H Davie
- Dec. 28** S Zysset+K Chittahathu
- Jan. 4** R Freiburghaus+P Perrett



Duty Council Officer

- Dec. 7** M Wildhaber
- Dec. 14** Z Balogh
- Dec. 21** P Perrett **Dec. 24** G Güntert
- Dec. 25** H Davie **Dec. 28** H Wenger
- Jan. 4** B Morgan **Jan. 11** J Eze
- Jan. 18** Münster Service
- Jan. 25** T Carrick



Silent Night ?

Every politician knows that kissing babies wins votes. Magazines, newspapers, television programs know that stories about children are sure of a good audience. No wonder, then, that Christmas has become the most popular of the church's festivals. Even without the fond parents at the Nativity Pageant, the children opening their gifts, the "sweet and silly Christmas things", there is something about the season which appeals to our minds and our hearts.

But do we really take it all seriously? Or has Christmas been invaded by snowmen, Santa Claus, Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, robins, plum pudding and sprigs of holly, to the extent that we have lost sight of the Good News - that God had come to share our human nature, with all its burdens, and by sharing it, to open the way for those "who believe in God's name" (John 1:12) to share in God's own nature?

If we look in our Bible, we will see that those who forget are in good company. Consider Mary, who foresaw how "all generations will call me blessed". Yet despite her hearing from Gabriel that she would be the mother of a saviour, the Son of the Most High, whose kingdom would have no end, despite her listening to the report from the shepherds, "treasuring their words and pondering them in her heart", she showed no sign of this twelve years later when she scolded her son for staying behind in the temple in Jerusalem. And if she treasured his reply, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" in her heart, she showed little sign of acting on what she knew until after her son's resurrection. Luke's Gospel mentions Mary again only at 8:19, and only at Acts 1:14 does Luke show her coming to an active realization of her son's work.

And those shepherds, whose words Mary treasured. Everyone who heard from them about the message of the angels "was amazed". And after seeing Jesus lying in the manger, the shepherds returned "glorifying and praising God." But what did they do about their experience? Nothing.

Matthew's Gospel records the visit of the magi: astrologers bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant king. We get the impression of people dropping everything to follow the message of a star. And yet what did they do about their experience? "They left for their own country", and we hear no more.

Even Herod's mass infanticide seems to have left little impression. Did the people of Bethlehem write it off as just another atrocity by a notoriously cruel ruler? We are left with the impression that an event that changed the world was seen at the time as a six-day wonder - rather like some of the news that we see on our televisions and then forget.

"Knowing the story" is not enough. We may attend countless nativity plays, read and re-read the narratives in our Bibles or hear them at our festivals of lessons and carols, we may know Handel's *Messiah* off by heart, but if we are

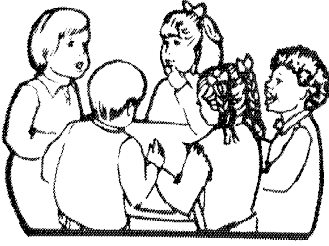
not changed by the realization that in Christ God has achieved reconciliation with a fallen and broken world (2 Cor 5:19), then we are in the same state as the disciples who, even after listening to Jesus throughout his ministry, "listened but did not hear" - until their ears were unstopped and their eyes were opened.

Christ's birth gives us, if we accept and believe, "power to become children of God." (John 1:12) We are Christ's body now (1 Cor 12:27). May our own ears and eyes be opened this Christmas, so that we not only hear the message of the angels, but take the message to heart and act upon it. May we be a source not just of tales about stars and mangers, shepherds and magi, but of real peace and goodwill - God's peace.

-Hector Davie -



*...no I don't think you're the real Father Christmas!
I think you're up there pinching lead off my roof!!*

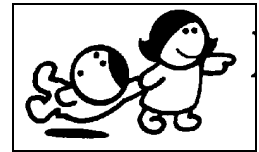


JUNIOR CHURCH

If you would like more information about the Junior Church, please contact Donna Goepfert at 031 931 27 42 or Kelly Sovilla at 031 921 55 92, or refer to our website www.anglican.ch/berne

NURSERY ROTA DECEMBER 08

- 07 Querida & Olivia Long
- 14 Karla Romberg & Rebecca Giulini
- 21 Claudine Aeberli & Walther Bisig
- 28 Rebecca Eze & Blanca Piper



NURSERY ROTA JANUARY 09

- 04 Isabel Jordan & Astrid Tomczak
- 11 Allison Masciadri & Cecily Klingler
- 18 **MÜNSTER SERVICE**
- 25 Sue Faillettaz & Sara Hutchison



Children and Communion

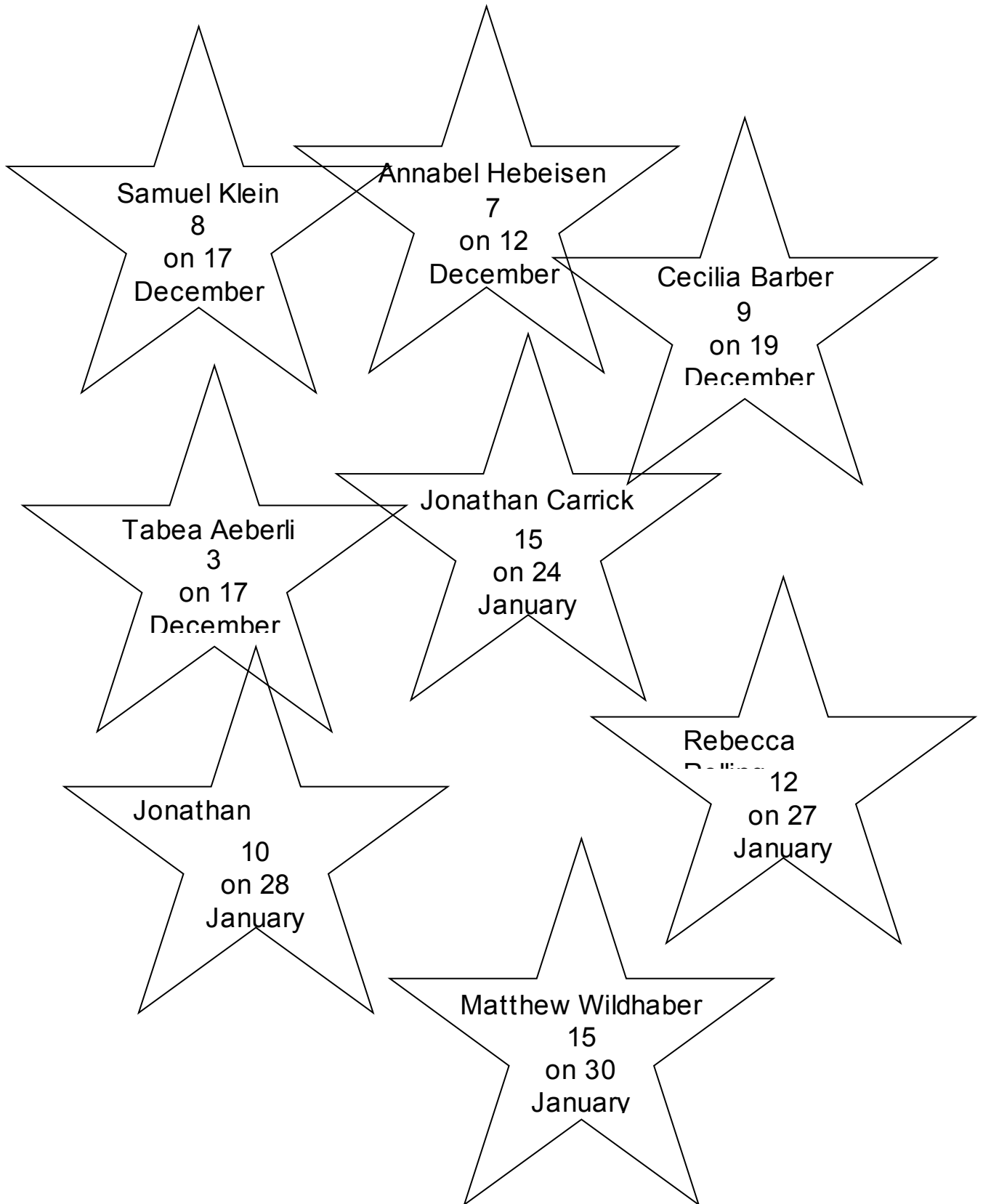
As in previous years, we shall soon be starting a course to prepare children to receive Communion with their families. The course will consist of eight sessions, some on Saturday mornings and some during the Sunday service, starting in January 2009. The sessions will be led by the Chaplain and the Junior Church team.

This will be an important part in the children's growth in faith and as part of a Christian community. Their parents and the wider congregation will therefore be involved in their preparation through their encouragement of the children and their prayers for them. The intention is that the children's Christian journey in the Church will then continue, to their profession of faith as a young adult at Confirmation and beyond.

Please let the Chaplain know by 14 December if your children would like to join this group.

P M Potter

**Congratulations
to our Junior Church Children with Birthdays
in December and January**



For Your Diary

December 2008

Wednesdays	PARENTS AND TOTS 9.15 – 10.00 not 24 or 31 Dec.
Fridays	PATCHWORK 9.00 not 5, 19, 26 Dec. or 2 Jan. BIBLE STUDY 18.00-20.15 not 26 Dec. or 2 Jan. YOUTH GROUP 19.00 not 26 Dec. or 2 Jan. SPIRITUAL CLASSICS
Tues 2	CHURCH COUNCIL FELLOWSHIP 19.30
Sat 6	CHOIR PRACTICE 9.30 – 11.45 NATIVITY PLAY REHEARSAL 9.00 – 12.00
Wed 10	BIEL CAROL SERVICE, Epiphanie Church 19.30
Thurs 11	BERNE CAROL SERVICE, Heiliggeistkirche 19.30
Sat 13	NATIVITY PLAY REHEARSAL 9.00 – 12.00
Thurs 18	THUN CAROL SERVICE, Göttibach 19.00
Sat 20	CHOIR PRACTICE 9.30 – 11.45
Sun 21	NEUCHÂTEL CAROL SERVICE 17.00

January

Sun 11	COPY DATE
Tues 13	CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING 19.30 CHARITY COMMITTEE MEETING 18.00
Sun 18	ECUMENICAL SERVICE at the Münster 10.00 (NO service at St Ursula's)
Thurs 22	COLLATING MAGAZINE 9.00 – 11.00
Fri 23	ECUMENICAL RACLETTE EVENING, Kramgasse 10

Quote

God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. - *C S Lewis*

The God who took a motherless woman out of the side of a man took a fatherless man out of the body of a woman. - *Matthew Henry*

He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find Christmas under a tree. - *Sunshine Magazine.*

News from Neuchâtel Church

Regular Services: 2nd and last Sunday of each month at 5 pm
Chapelle des Charmettes, Rue Varnoz 1, Neuchâtel
2nd Sunday : Family Communion Service
Last Sunday : Communion service (During the sermon and liturgy, children leave to follow their own programme in Junior Church.)

Minister in charge: The Rev. Roy Farrar Tel : 032 730 51 83
Chemin du Chasselas 11
2012 AUVERNIER www.neuchatelchurch.ch

From Roy and Mieke

So much is changing in the world around us. Financial markets are behaving like yo-yos, and the housing market in many parts of the world is in turmoil. People's lives are becoming more and more uncertain, shops are desperate for our trade, and economies that have experienced explosive growth are now in contraction. Where then is there stability and in the words of Charles Dickens's character, *Oliver Twist* "where is love"?

The Sovereign Lord from the beginning of time has sought to bring his creation back to his plan. If He created us, then surely His plans must be perfect; His pattern for our lives must be the ideal.

But as we are so aware in our own lives, we forget His ways and His pattern for our living; we feel that we can do so much better than him.

As we come again to this special time of Christmas, it provides all of us with the opportunity to stop running around trying to catch the latest news or crock of gold at the end of another rainbow, and realise the God has already acted.

Christmas is that time willing, stop and look at come back to the place God. Adam and Eve heard the Lord in the with Him and listen to



when we can, if we are what has happened and where we can meet with were delighted when they garden, they loved to be His voice.

Jesus Christ is called the 'Second Adam' and in the Christ-child the Lord wants to meet with us and speak with us and again reveal His love for us.

So please this year STOP and be STILL and SEE what God has done in Christ. His plan for the restoration of Creation has happened.

Once again the way is open for us to be God's people in God's place under God's rule.

Looking forward to seeing you at the different Christmas services.

DECEMBER DIARY REMINDER



7 December : Usual service at 5pm
21 December : CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE at 5pm
24 December: Christmas Eve service at 5pm

NO SERVICE on 28 December

Housegroups

Tuesday 16 December 8pm (at Roy and Mieke's home)

Tuesday 13 January 8pm (Venue to be arranged)

Echo of the Harvest Festival

Many, many thanks to all who made the wonderful result of our Harvest Festival possible. Fr1571 have been sent to Beryl in Paraguay where they will be rapidly spent on treatment and medication so desperately needed by the population in the Chaco.



Laughlines

If you MUST speed on the road during this Christmas season, at least sing these hymns loudly as you go:

at 45 mph.... "God Will Take Care of Me"

at 55 mph.... "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

at 65 mph.... "Nearer My God to Thee"

at 75 mph.... "Nearer Still Nearer"

at 85 mph.... "This World is Not My Home"

at 95 mph.... "Lord, I'm Coming Home"

at 100 mph.. "Precious Memories"



Christmas Bazaar 2008 – Food Stall

The food stall has continued to operate successfully at every booksale in 2008 and for ensuring that I get food to sell on such a regular basis, I owe an **ENORMOUS THANK YOU** to my main shoppers; Jackie, Andrew and Margaret & Jon, who often demote their suitcases to the back seat in order to accommodate the huge quantity of shopping they bring back with them. **THANK YOU** also to those who regularly either bring food back themselves or commandeer their visitors' suitcases as well as those I accost when I hear a rumour of travel abroad! A **BIG THANKS** is also due to all those who've made jam, marmalade and pickles for the stall, always keeping us incredibly well stocked throughout the year. Finally, a thank you to my daughters, Georgina and Eleanor, who uncomplainingly (mostly!) travel back to Switzerland with their feet resting on boxes of cider, a mound of banana boxes between them and a few multipacks of crisps in the gap by the door, whilst having to catch the odd packets of Quavers that find their way in from the back. I appreciate every single one of you and without you **ALL**, the food stall wouldn't be possible.

I would also like to give a **HUGE** thanks to all the people who help move the boxes & boxes of food from and back to the attic at every sale, also to those who help me set up the stalls each time and not forgetting much heart felt thanks to the fantastic friends I coerce into helping me on the food stall throughout the year - I can only hope you enjoy "playing shop" as much as me and will continue to do so in 2009!

.....and, almost, finally thanks to all of those who bought things from the stalls and for supporting St. Ursula's. I hope you enjoy the consumption of all that you bought and I look forward to meeting you all again in 2009.

Finally, as ever, we need more shoppers **throughout the year**. If you can help at all, please contact me for a list of the things we need. You will be fully reimbursed for the things you buy; the only thing you need to donate is time and suitcase space!

Hoping to see you at **BOTH** the Christmas Bazaar **AND** the food stall on 7 March 2009. Wishing you all an excellent Christmas and 2009.

Jana Kutesko - Tel 031 809 47 37

Weekend Away 2009

The next **Weekend Away** for the whole church family – yes, that includes you: whether you are a family with children, a couple, or on your own; whatever your age – will be 4-6 September 2009 at Aeschi.

We will be starting preparation work in January, so if you can do something to help – catering, looking after children, preparing a game/quiz/other activity, planning an excursion, helping with music, or anything else – please let Jana or Jennifer in the church office know (they will pass on the information to the planning team).

If you haven't already done so, note this date in your diary today!

- Tricia Carrick -

Using the Projector

In response to feedback from the congregation, council have decided to use the projector more often during the 10.00 service.

In particular, we will experiment on three of the four Sundays in Advent (not including the Nativity Service on 14 December) with having all the material projected. Of course, there will be a few paper copies for those who cannot see the screen.

If this is to be a real possibility for the future, we need your help:

- with preparing the slides to be used – in particular, finding appropriate illustrations for words of some of the hymns and songs and putting all the elements together.
- with operating the beamer and laptop during the service.

If you can help with either or both of these tasks, please contact the chaplain or Tricia Carrick. If you have other comments, please pass them on to a council member. (Contact details at the back of the magazine).

- Tricia Carrick -

□ □

Laughlines

Mother decided that ten-year old Cathy should get something 'practical' for Christmas. "Suppose we open a savings account for you?" she suggested. Cathy was delighted. "It's your account, darling," mother said as they arrived at the bank, "so you fill out the application." Cathy was doing fine until she came to the space for 'Name of your former bank.' After a slight hesitation, she put down 'Piggy'.

From the Treasurer

This is to thank you all sincerely for your response to October's pledge appeal. It is only through your constant support that we can make plans for the future - extending our ministry to be more embracing, more effective and bringing us closer to our full potential. Thank you for your support in money, but also in prayer, and in the talents we all have and which we all bring to our life together.

I shall be acknowledging your gifts individually in January, sending certificates for your tax declarations at the same time. Please check them. Even if my accounting programme is infallible, the information has been keyed in by your fallible treasurer!

And at this time of financial crisis, please remember those for whom interest rates and derivative markets mean nothing - the poor and the hungry, and those who hunger and thirst not for wealth, but for a square meal and for God's righteousness.

-Hector Davie -

Church Council Report

The last council meeting was held on Tuesday 4 November. There were a lot of items on the agenda but we worked efficiently and closed at 21.50. This was mainly because of the preparation done in advance by all members and because of the discipline shown in handling each item. It was a very good atmosphere to work in.

The financial situation (reasonably healthy), the response to the pledge appeal (too early to say) and the formal approval of the budget for 2009 were some of the most important items handled – but nothing really new there. In addition our charity giving for 2008 was approved, as recommended by the committee.

There are a number of building and maintenance projects ongoing or foreseen. The light bulbs in the church “chandeliers” have been replaced with energy-saving ones. The painting of the church will commence on 17 November and should take about 3 days. The “bulge” in the carpet in the aisle will be repaired immediately, but Council will also consider replacing all the carpet in the church, which is over 20 years old. As this is only one of many ideas being discussed, the building committee will prepare a list of all projects and attempt to estimate the cost of each, so that council can set priorities.

Kelly Sovilla reported about the new youth group that has started under the leadership of two young people from YWAM (Youth With A Mission).

However, this is only a temporary solution so we all need to think and pray about the future. A small group will meet and prepare some ideas for the next council meeting. If you have comments or questions please contact Kelly.

The feedback about the use of the beamer in worship was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. Council decided, in principle, to move in this direction – assuming the technical problems can be resolved and enough people are willing to help. Council authorized the purchase of a new beamer, as well as a laptop, for this purpose – total cost should be around 2500Fr.

The decision about the use of the beamer means that we probably won't go ahead with the production of service booklets, as previously agreed. Instead, service sheets will be available each Sunday for those who cannot see the screen. This will be reviewed in 2009.

A small group will meet soon to discuss welcome and make some proposals for the next council meeting.

Various other topics were discussed and agreed (e.g. to buy Fair Trade tea in future). If you would like more information about this meeting or about council in general please contact a council member – list at the back of this magazine.

- Tricia Carrick –

Pilgrimage in the Spring?

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land? Interested? Why not join the pilgrimage being organised by St Andrew's, Zurich? Please see the notice and brochures in the hall (near the front door).

Please tell us as soon as possible if you are interested.

Please contact Vivian Nind on private number 044 984 5174 or email: vivian.nind@ggaweb.ch

An Invitation

Churches do not live in isolation. So several of us were very happy to receive a proposal from our Old Catholic friends at St Peter and St Paul to join them in a communal raclette evening.

FR 23. Januar 2009, 19⁰⁰ Uhr
im Kirchgemeindesaal, Kramgasse 10
Raclette-Abend mit Anglikanern
Ein Abend zusammen mit der
anglikanischen Kirchgemeinde in Bern.

There will be more details in the church notices and on our website nearer the time, but note down the date in your diary: Friday 23 January at 1900. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Charity of the Month for December/January – Cecily's Fund

Cecily's Fund is a UK-registered charity enabling Zambian orphans and other vulnerable children to go to school. We provide shoes, uniforms, books, pens, equipment and school fees, without which these children would not be able to go to school. We also help them to train as Peer Health Educators and Teachers.

We make a commitment to support each child throughout his or her school career. We work in close partnership with Zambian organisations who help identify children in need and run the education programmes. We regularly visit the schools and compounds ourselves to support them and ensure the money is going exactly where it's needed.

Many of these children were orphaned or made vulnerable as a result of AIDS. Without school they have little hope or support. But at school they

- Get support from adults and other children
- Gain the knowledge and confidence they need to stay healthy and avoid getting HIV
- Gain the skills they need to get further education or earn a living.

All this is possible only with the help of our loyal supporters.

The following is an excerpt from the latest Cecily's Fund Annual Report and is from the Chairman, Basil Eastwood.

Our 10th Anniversary year has been one of challenges but also of solid progress and a growing and exhilarating sense of the success of our work. This 2008 Annual Report marks a milestone in our development.

There is always more that we could be doing, and resources have been a worry, but we have achieved all the objectives we set for ourselves last year. There is also a growing strength and confidence in our enthusiastic little organisation, which we have reinforced this year with valuable new trustees and staff.

Our work is really paying off. My wife Alison and I, with William our Treasurer and his wife Fiona, saw for ourselves what this means in human terms when we visited Zambia in July. The high point was our session with the young people we supported through school who are now working for us as volunteer health educators. We were all bowled over by their sheer quality and the enthusiasm they bring to their daunting task. They are the best possible advertisement for our efforts to ensure that orphans and other vulnerable children can go to school. Some of them feature in our latest documentary telling us how their lives have been changed.

I am delighted to report that our online report and accounts for 2006/07 again received an award from the Charities Aid Foundation and the Institute of Chartered Accountants – a testament to the high standards of governance and accountability that we set ourselves.

Cecily's Fund is now a resilient and durable organisation. After ten years I feel that the time is right for me to stand down to avoid what the Charity Commission calls the "founder chairman syndrome". I shall resign in January 2009 both as chairman and as trustee. The Eastwood family connection will remain strong; Alison and our daughter Philippa will still be trustees, and I will remain very involved, particularly with our sister organisations in America and Switzerland.

The trustees have decided that my successor should be William Powlett Smith. William has been our Treasurer for many years and has made a major contribution to our development. Cecily's Fund will go forward with confidence under his leadership.

We have come a long way since we signed our trust deed in a little ceremony in Stonesfield in September 1998. In a decade of great achievement we have supported over 10,000 children through school and to do so we have raised nearly £2.1 million from our faithful supporters. We have much to celebrate. With the help of our supporters we hope to give education and thus hope to many, many more children in the years to come.

Basil Eastwood



"I am so grateful to Cecily's Fund. Other NGOs come and go but Cecily's Fund supports children throughout their schooling. It is unique." Gertrude, Peer Health Educator. Read Gertrude's story in our latest Annual Report (available online at www.cecilysfund.org).

What You Can Do

Donate!

CHF 15 buys a school uniform

CHF 25 buys school shoes

CHF 60 pays to put a child through primary school for a year

CHF 115 pays to put a child through secondary school for a year.

CHF 600 Peer Health Education (pays for one of our school-leavers to train as a health educator and run awareness-raising sessions for a whole year).

CHF 800 buys a year's Teacher Training

Get involved - Fundraise!

Make Music, Give Hope!

All next year we will be inviting our supporters to sing, play, dance, rap, drum, sell your old CDs, hold a disco, a concert, a karaoke evening, a salsa night... do anything to raise musical (and monetary) notes for Cecily's Fund! Zambia has a great tradition of music and dance and we want

to inject some of that rhythm and warmth into our fundraising activities next year. There'll be concerts, competitions, musical workshops, celebrity hot spots and lots more. Plus we'll be showing your musical video clips online! Of course, if music's not your thing, all other forms of fundraising are also more than welcome!

Get your company involved!

Make Cecily's Fund their Charity of the Year, set up a payroll giving scheme, get staff involved in teambuilding fundraising events.

Get your school involved!

Kids can learn about life in other countries, and have a great time while fundraising for kids in Zambia.

Give while you shop!

Buy your friends and family gift cards representing shoes, uniforms and education which will go directly to orphaned and vulnerable children.

Give time!

Volunteer at our office, at fairs, festivals and fun events.

Email us at community@cecilysfund.org.uk for more information.

And for those of us at St Ursula's Church, Pray for Cecily's Fund!

- Pray for all the loyal supporters (old and new) gathered together at the annual Opera fundraiser in Neuchâtel on 7 December.
- Pray for all the children who receive an education thanks to Cecily's Fund and that children around the world, no matter how rich or poor they may be, will understand and appreciate the light and hope that the season of Advent brings
- Pray for all the people who have worked or volunteered for Cecily's Fund in the last 10 years and for all they have brought to the organization
- Pray for the Eastwood family at Christmas time
- Pray for Basil Eastwood who is stepping down as Chairman and for William Powlett Smith who will be his successor
- Pray for new volunteers to come forward to organize fundraising events, and for more people to give regularly to Cecily's Fund as a result of being touched and impressed by the charity set up in remembrance of Cecily
- Pray for all those who have died from AIDS in Zambia, and for their families, and for all those caring for the sick and suffering
- Pray for the teachers in the primary, secondary, and peer health education programs

For more information, go to www.cecilyfund.org where you can download the latest annual report, order Christmas cards, read Sabita's blog from Zambia, and read about how the 10,000 mile target was reached in this the 10th Anniversary year for Cecily's Fund.

On behalf of Alison and Basil Eastwood, and all the children in Zambia who benefit from your donations, we thank you most sincerely for your ongoing support.

Jennifer Hockley and Linda Bisig



The image is based on an original by Mella Shaw, a school friend of Cecily's. The striking image of a vibrant flame tree and a dove in flight, in red, black, green and gold reflecting Zambia's national flag, represent Cecily's vitality and the hope that education brings to Zambian orphans and vulnerable children. The cards come in packs of 6 at £2.99 per pack. Order up to 10 packs online.

A Night to Remember

On 7 November, a large number of people came to events in Berne to celebrate a "Night of Religions". The idea behind it was to allow people of different faiths, or of no faith, to get to know the ways people of different cultures experienced God. The evening began at the Jewish synagogue - appropriately, for it was the 70th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, and ended with prayers for peace and blessing outside the Heiliggeistkirche. In between, the churches, mosques and temples of Berne opened their doors, and people came to "taste and see".

We joined with our Old Catholic friends at St Peter and St Paul's Church in the old town, more accessible than Kirchenfeld! At eight in the evening, a choir of St Ursula's members, ably accompanied and trained by Hans and Elisabeth Pfyffer, led quite a large congregation in a 1662 Prayer Book Evensong., with a well-judged sermon (*auf Deutsch*) from Peter. At nine, some twenty people joined in a round-table discussion about the nature of private and public prayer, and the place of silence in our encounters with God. At ten there was a sung Old Catholic service of Compline - the night prayer. Meanwhile, down in the crypt, there was a lot of additional activity, with organ music, English church music and the Old Catholic youth group singing praise songs.

Importantly, many of the "churchy" things in the church were labelled, with short descriptions in German and English explaining what they were for or what they meant. But just as importantly, downstairs were books and refreshments. Here Andreas and Yvonne Bomonti, and Esther Hutchison Funkhouser, worked tirelessly until late at night providing coffee and cakes for all who dropped by. (One should also mention the other helpers in the choir, Cecily Klingler's part in ushering the congregation at Evensong, and the people who just came along and participated!)

We are called to make Christ known, and we should also learn from others. (As General Booth remarked, why should the Devil have the best tunes?) The *Nacht der Religionen* was a step along this path, and many of us felt it was a concept worth repeating.

-Hector Davie -

FAQs

I find the language used in church difficult to understand sometimes. How can I make sense of it?

This is actually a good place to start. We are after all worshipping God and God is beyond our understanding. In fact, if we could understand everything about him, we would be as clever as he is and he would no longer be God.

It follows, then, that we cannot expect to understand everything in the Bible. Although it contains guidance on how to live in the world today, it is mainly a collection of encounters with God in many different circumstances stretching over many centuries and cultures. Many of these encounters were mysterious events for the people involved and they are mysteries for us now.

The same applies to some of our traditional hymns and prayers. They are written in (to us) old-fashioned language and some of them are very rich in their references to scripture. We cannot expect to recognise and understand them all at once.

Does that mean we should drop them – or do we need to be taught what everything means before we can say it? No, definitely not. For two reasons – (1) it would be impossible anyway, as I have explained above; and (2) that would be to confuse the Church with a driving school. Obviously you need to learn the rules of the road and to have driving lessons before you can take a car on the road. But the Christian faith is not like that. You learn it as you go along and, importantly, as you make mistakes.

The thing is, when you repeat words and phrases from the service, they get tucked away in your mind. Then one day, when you hear something or you are in a certain situation, they will pop out again and make sense.

PMP

* * * * *

Across

8, Their garments. 9, Pit. 10, Spiritist. 11, Range. 13, End than. 16, Scented. 19, Began. 22, Repayment. 24, Ewe. 25, Such knowledge.

Down

1, Stupor. 2, Beaten. 3, Prospect. 4, Famine. 5, Omri. 6, Enrich. 7, Eshton. 12, Arc. 14, Do battle. 15, Asa. 16, Stress. 17, Expect. 18, Die for. 20, Greedy. 21, Needed. 23, Yoke.

A Word for the Month - Incarnation

Every trade has its jargon. We can happily watch television without knowing about colour encoding, image resolution or frame rates. We can drive cars without understanding Bernoulli's principle or the venturi effect. Christians can fall into the same trap as television engineers or car mechanics, and sometimes use language that outsiders do not understand - or use common words in unusual ways!

Incarnation is an illustration of this. To start with, the word does not appear in the Bible. It does not even exactly correspond to the Greek word in the original Nicene Creed. But this is splitting grammatical hairs. For incarnation literally means "becoming flesh", and the writers of the New Testament certainly asserted this. "The Word became flesh" (John 1.14).

Paul goes into greater detail. It takes careful reading to follow his closely-argued description in the first seven chapters of his letter to the Romans, about the weaknesses of the Old Testament law. But the eighth chapter is easier to read. Here, Paul concentrates on the positive aspect of God's relationship with us. "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh..., he condemned sin in the flesh."

The root behind the word incarnation means "flesh" (think of *carne* in Italian). So what does flesh mean? How can Paul talk of "sinful" flesh?

It is easy to give a simple answer: we have a body and we have a soul. The body is made of flesh, the soul is made of spirit. But this is not the whole story. In the first place, the Hebrew writers of the Old Testament did not make this sort of clear-cut distinction. Their language was much more concrete: they talked of our breath, of our heart, of our flesh, even of our kidneys. And although the New Testament writers expressed themselves in Greek, they did not share the "dualistic" Greek view, that we consist of two parts, spirit (good) and flesh (evil). (Nor, indeed, did the Greek philosophers!)

In the Old Testament, "flesh" is part of our created nature, formed in God's likeness. Only occasionally is it mentioned that flesh is weak ("The Egyptians are human, and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit." (Isaiah 31:3)), never that flesh is sinful.

Paul shared this wholesome Jewish view. Whole books have been written about his use of the word "flesh" (not to mention "body", "spirit", "heart", "mind", "conscience", "soul" and "inner being!"). But Paul also used "flesh" as a shorthand way of saying "lower desires" - the classic example is "the works of the flesh" in Galatians 5 ("fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, 'and things like these'").

As the list makes clear, these are not bodily functions - some, like sorcery or envy obviously not, and others only when our minds are involved, too! Normally when Paul mentions flesh, it lacks this specialized sense of something base and sinful.

Jesus himself said that "the flesh is weak." Yes, but not sinful. It is what we do with it that may be good or may be sinful. This is part of the message of Christmas. In Jesus God shared - and shares - our weakness, the weakness of our human flesh. The way to life lies in sharing in the humility and service of the incarnate Christ. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." In the events at Bethlehem, God came to us, came to give us new life, and came to give us abundant life - in the flesh!

-Hector Davie -

The Christ child lives

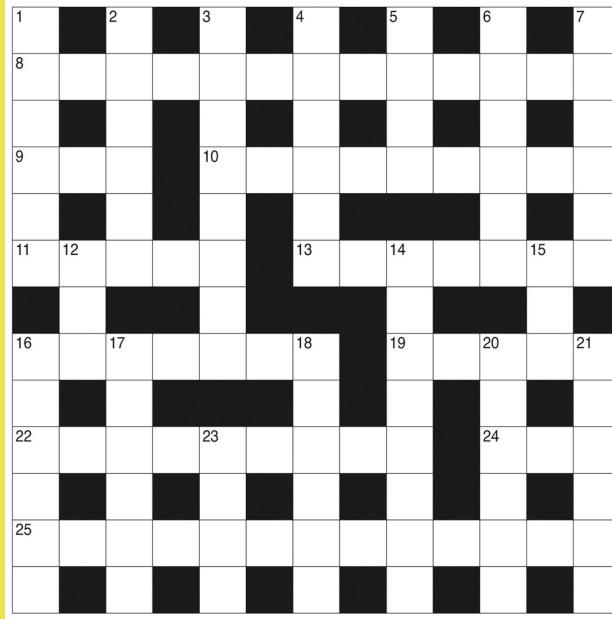
Cradled then in a manger,
cradled now in our hearts,
the Christ child lives.

He is our light,
we his shepherds and kings;
drawn from all walks of life,
we come to worship him.

No gaudy lights
or festive music
take from him
his special gift.

There are no presents
to surpass his presence;
he is ours
as we are his.

Shareene Potter



Across

- 8 'Then Aaron and his sons and — — will be consecrated' (Exodus 29:21) (5,8)
 9 'He lifted me out of the slimy — , out of the mud and mire' (Psalm 40:2) (3)
 10 Such a person should be put to death (Leviticus 20:27) (9)
 11 Chain of mountains (Numbers 27:12) (5)
 13 'They are worse off at the — — they were at the beginning' (2 Peter 2:20) (3,4)
 16 Descent (anag.) (7)
 19 'But they all alike — to make excuses' (Luke 14:18) (5)
 22 Reimbursement (Luke 6:34) (9)
 24 Female sheep (2 Samuel 12:4) (3)
 25 ' — — is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain' (Psalm 139:6) (4,9)

Down

- 1 Alcohol-induced oblivion (Psalm 78:65) (6)
 2 'Three times I was — with rods' (2 Corinthians 11:25) (6)
 3 Future outlook (Proverbs 10:28) (8)
 4 It caused Joseph's brothers to journey to Egypt to buy grain (Genesis 42:5) (6)
 5 See 15 Down
 6 'You care for the land and water it; you — it abundantly' (Psalm 65:9) (6)
 7 Son of Mehir and descendant of Judah (1 Chronicles 4:11) (6)
 12 Car (anag.) (3)
 14 Engage in warfare (Isaiah 31:4) (2,6)
 15 'In the thirty-first year of — king of Judah, — became king of Israel' (1 Kings 16:23) (3,4)
 16 Excessive strain or tension (Jeremiah 19:9) (6)
 17 'The Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not — him' (Luke 12:40) (6)
 18 'Very rarely will anyone — — a righteous man' (Romans 5:7) (3,3)
 20 Avaricious (1 Peter 5:2) (6)
 21 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is — ' (Luke 10:41-42) (6)
 23 'For my — is easy and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30) (4)
 (Answers Page 25)

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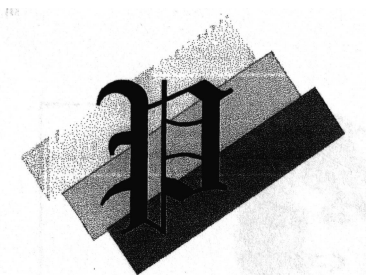
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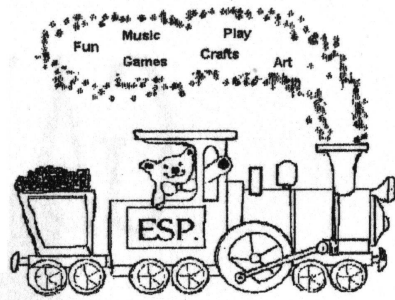
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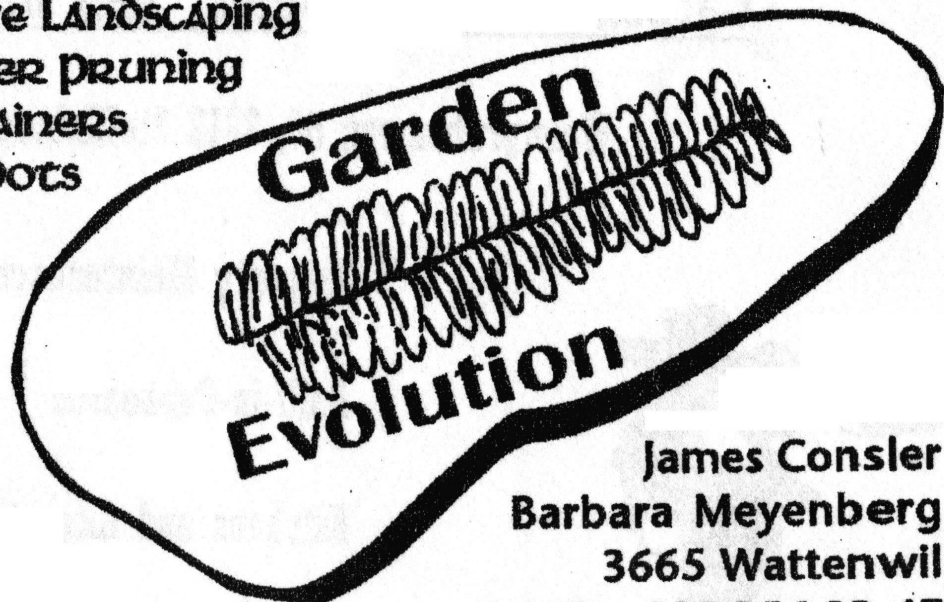
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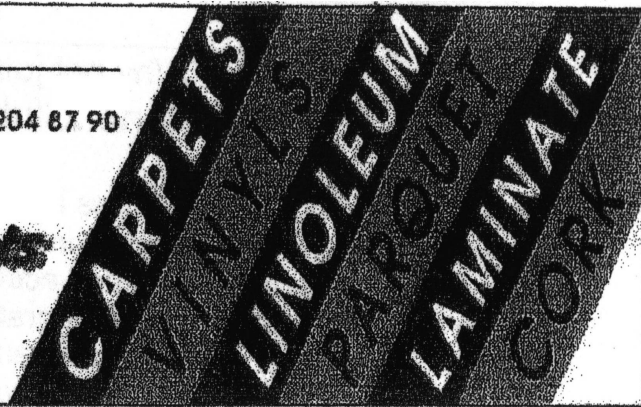
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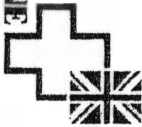
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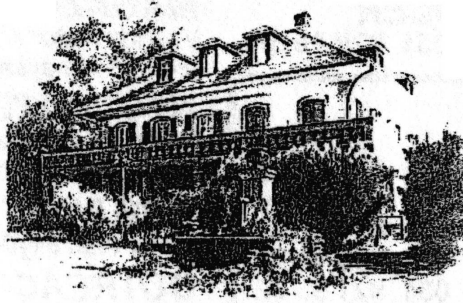
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Once in royal David's city

by Cecil Alexander (1818-1895)

Once in royal David's city
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from Heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

And, through all His wondrous childhood,
He would honour and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden,
In whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern;
Day by day, like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless,
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love,
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in Heaven above,
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in Heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high;
Where like stars His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.