

Wilden with Colmworth & Rabensden St Mary Keysoe with St Dunstan Bolnhurst

www.wcrchurches.org

NEWSLETTER

December 2021 & January 2022

Angels unawares

This newsletter covers both December 2021 and January 2022 – so even before Christmas I wish you all a very happy new year! But actually I'm not too early as Advent (that begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas) is the beginning of the Church's year – so again Happy New Year!

Whilst Christmas itself is only 12 days, 'The Christmas Season' takes in Advent, Christmas and Epiphany which takes us right through from the end of November to the beginning of February as the Christmas season officially ends 40 days from Christmas Day which is 2nd February – Candlemas.

Some very important characters that feature throughout our celebrations are often forgotten. They don't even feature in most nativity scenes. And they are the Angels.

The Christmas story in the Bible – especially as Luke's Gospel tells us – starts with a flurry of God's action often through His angels. An angel appears to the aged priest Zechariah to tell him he and his barren wife Elizabeth will have a son called John the Baptist who will also be the cousin of Jesus.

Mary and Joseph are both separately told by the Angel Gabriel that they will have a baby son called Jesus, and the shepherds are told by the Angel Gabriel to visit the new-born saviour. But by not just one angel but a huge heavenly choir of angels! Joseph is later warned that King Herod wants to kill the new baby Jesus after the Wise Men have visited, so the holy family escape as refugees and migrants to Egypt.

But what are angels and why are they so important? They are simply 'messengers' as the word means. And used by God to take His word and also to guard, protect and defend as God's heavenly beings – and sometimes to destroy evil. God also uses ordinary people who are just in the right place at the right time with the right words. The Bible talks of us entertaining angels unawares.

Much has been written about angels, and people whom God uses for His purposes. The famous poem the late King George VI used many years ago in his new year broadcast runs 'And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way." So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. (Minnie Louise Haskins, 1908)

May you know God's presence and guidance by His Angels this Christmas and New Year as we celebrate the birth of His Son Jesus Christ - the Saviour of the World.

Timothy Wilson