

December 2024 Edition 106

*There were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch  
over their flock by night. Luke 2:8*



## Christmas Socks

I wonder what Christmas presents you are hoping to receive this year? And, indeed, what presents you are going to buy for loved ones?

Choosing the right gifts is not always easy. For one thing, everyone has so much these days and there is only a certain amount of smelly stuff for the bath, or posh aftershave, or jewellery we can wear, or really need. In fact, many unwanted gifts end up being donated as raffle prizes!

Yet a gift voucher or money never seems to be quite personal enough and is almost an admission that choosing the perfect present has eluded us.

It wasn't so long ago that I remember that a good, universally acceptable present was a pair of socks. In fact, the recipient would often smile and say 'Oh, just what I wanted!' while all the time realising that this was a choice of last resort!

And socks can, of course, be a good stocking filler.

Yet there may be more to socks at Christmas than at first meets the eye. For socks remind us very powerfully of the Christmas story. How?

Well ...

**Woolly socks** remind us of the shepherds tending their woolly sheep. I'm sure I wasn't alone at school in being taught the alternative version of "while shepherds watched their flocks by night..."



The version I learnt was:

“While shepherds washed their socks by night  
All watching ITV  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And switched to BBC.”

Or an alternative:

“While shepherds washed their socks by night  
All seated round the tub  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And gave them all a scrub.”

I have to say that I cannot watch Charlie when we sing that carol because I know he will sing ‘washed their socks’!

But whatever version might appeal to you, the gospel account reminds us that the shepherds were very ordinary men who worked on the hillsides tending sheep. Their work would have been hot work, cold work, wet work, freezing work and - from time to time - very dangerous work, on account of the lonely locations and the hungry, non-sheepy animals lurking suspiciously near the sheepy ones.

And by the nature of their job shepherds rarely went to Church! But that did not prevent God from knowing them and them from knowing God.

Wolly socks remind us that God is good and comes to ordinary people in ordinary places.

And then we have:



**Holy socks** – holy socks remind us of the angel of the Lord bringing good news of great joy for all people. For you. For me. For everybody. That a Saviour has been born. Jesus Christ, who is the Messiah, the Lord. The Saviour of the world.

**Smelly socks** remind us of that Jesus comes to us in the mess and muck of life. Jesus wasn't born in a palace or a private hospital but in a stable or a cave, and placed in a manger. A food trough for animal feed.



And he meets us in the mess of our lives.



**Baby socks** ... remind us that God came into the world as a tiny baby. In Jesus, the baby born at Bethlehem, we encounter nothing less than God's decision to become human. God becomes one of us. Because he loves us and wants us to love him.

In the little baby born at Bethlehem, God shares with us all that is vulnerable. All that is weak. All that is powerless in our lives. And it gives us confidence that whatever the circumstances or situations of our lives – God's loving presence is with us too and will never let us go.

### **Socks for every day of the week**

These remind us that our Saviour is with us constantly, not just on Sundays or when we feel particularly good or holy, but each day of our lives. Jesus walks with us each day, our companion along the way.



So next time you give or receive socks at Christmas may they remind you that God comes to ordinary people in ordinary places. As a gift, freely given. All we have to do is to open our hearts to receive the gift, in the same way that we open our presents on Christmas morning. And hopefully with the same anticipation. For we are receiving the gift of the Saviour – born for us. It is the best gift we could ever have.

Whatever our Christmas stockings contain, may we all have a peaceful Christmas and a holy one!

I know that John and Jason join me in wishing everyone every blessing for Christmas, and indeed in the year ahead.

*Maggie*

# December Services and Events

Sunday 1	-	Gift Day for Quinquennial Expenditure
	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
	19.00	Epsom & Ewell Silver Band Concert
Monday 2	19.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Friday 6	-	Our Advert appears in the Church Times
Sunday 8	09.30	Sung Communion
	18.00	Advent Reflection in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 15	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
	18.30	Service of Readings and Carols
Thursday 19	14.30	Afternoon Club in the Cuddington Hall
Saturday 21	10.00	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 22	09.30	Sung Communion
Tuesday 24	16.00	Christingle and Blessing of the Crib
	23.30	Midnight Communion
Wednesday 25	10.00	Christmas Family Communion with Carols Bishop Paul Leads Our Worship
Sunday 29	09.30	Sung Communion

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome

