

No. 4
Advent/Christmas
2014

FOR THE COMMUNITY
OF SANTA
MARGARITA



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MENORCA ANGLICAN



Beginnings and Endings

December is the time when the secular calendar draws to its end, as days grow noticeably short, with the celebration of Christmas giving a peaceful point of punctuation to the conclusion of the year. Or at least, that is how it is supposed to be! In other parts of the world any “peace on earth” is increasingly preceded by a period of increasing frenzy, at the end of which children (and a lot of adults) descend upon wrapped presents, which are torn open in scenes reminiscent of sharks feeding upon their prey. The impression of

This newsletter is offered to help regular and intermittent members of the Anglican community in Menorca to keep in touch.

Christmas in Menorca that Kate and I have formed, based upon last year, is of a somewhat more tranquil approach to the season.

In the church, December is different. For one thing, the church year begins with the first Sunday of the season of Advent. Normally, this is the first Sunday of December; occasionally (as this year) on the last Sunday of November. Advent, derived from a Latin word that means “coming,” is a short season of about four weeks during which followers of the Christian faith are supposed to prepare themselves to celebrate the incarnation, the birth of Jesus in the flesh.

A little while before the ending of the church year we pass through the days of All Saints and All Souls (and Halloween, which is the eve of All Hallows, or All Saints, and which now tends to overshadow it). It is a time to celebrate the lives of those who have inspired us in our lives, and challenged us, and helped us to grow. Some of those we celebrate are well-known, public, saintly figures; others may be the quiet, everyday saints who are known to us alone. All Souls, in particular, offers an occasion to come, to remember and to give thanks for those whom, to quote the prayer for the day, we love but see no longer. Next year, we will offer a special service at the beginning of November, probably on a Sunday evening, to allow those who wish to do so to come and quietly remember in worship loved ones who have died (and not just those who have died within the preceding year, although such losses are especially fresh).

Beginnings and endings tend to go together. The beginning of the new church year in Advent is preceded by the end of the old church year at the end of November. This can be a time to review all the preceding seasons, and the story that they tell. This year, on the last Sunday before Advent, Santa Margarita will have celebrated with a special service that draws upon readings and music for each season of the year. A friend in Canada made a special priest's stole for the occasion, with colours

JaFfA: Hanukah



JaFfA meets monthly, led by Dianne Carter, and provides an opportunity for children (and some parents!) to learn about the Christian faith through art, craft, play and fun.

In November, we learned about the Jewish festival of Hanukah, with dreidels and menorahs. And there were birthdays.

representing each season. It is a reminder that as seasons roll around in a cyclical manner, we can either simply follow a recurring pattern without paying attention to it, or we can add fresh layers of interpretation and understanding, building from year to year. We can do this in the seasons of our life; and we can do it with the seasons of our faith. For example, in the ancient Jewish tradition, it was expected that each generation of teachers, or rabbis, would add a fresh layer of interpretation to those of previous generations, so that the wisdom of faith would be something dynamic and alive, not static and ossified.

If we apply this to Christmas, then along with the comfort of following tried and true customs within our families and communities, we can add something new each year. And we can ask ourselves this question: What have I learned that is new about Christmas, or through Christmas, this year?

Christingle



What is a Christingle? It is an orange wrapped in a red ribbon, into which is inserted a candle, together with sticks on which are placed fruits and nuts, or sweets.

Christingles have been made popular in England by The Children's Society, since the first Christingle service, held in the Church of England in 1968. The custom has spread and is one of the most popular Christmas services in the UK, especially among children.

What is "Christingle?" The idea of Christingles originated in a Moravian Church in Germany in 1747. At a service at Christmas time, the minister, John de Watteville, gave children a lighted candle with a red ribbon around it. This represented Jesus being the light of the world and the

final prayer of that first service was: "Lord Jesus, kindle a

flame in these children's hearts, that theirs like Thine become."

Missionaries took the Moravian Church to England in the 1700s. Over the years the symbolism of the Christingle grew into its current form. The different parts of the Christingle represent various aspects of Christian faith:

- The orange is round like the world.
- The candle stands tall and straight and gives light in the dark, like the love of God.
- The red ribbon goes all around the 'world' and is a symbol of the blood Jesus shed when he died for us.
- The four sticks point in all directions and symbolise North, South, East and West – they also represent the four seasons.
- The fruit and nuts (or sometimes sweets!) represent the fruits of the earth, nurtured by the sunshine and the rain.

The word Christingle could have come from several sources. It might be an 'English' version of 'Christkindl' (meaning 'little Christ child'); the present-bringer, who in some parts of Germany and other European countries, represents the baby Jesus. It could be the putting together of the words Christmas and ingle. Ingle is an old Scots word for fire and so that would make it mean the 'Christ Light'. As Christingles originally came from Germany, the first theory is more likely.

This year, we are going to try something a little different: multiple Christingles. We will offer Christingle celebrations at Ciutadella and Cala en Porter as well as two in Est Castell. The first Christingle took place in Es Castell, at Santa Margarita, for the JaFfa Club families on 6 December; subsequently, we will be in Ciutadella on Sunday, 21 December, at 16:00 (Carmelite Chapel, Cami de Maó); in Cala en Porter on Tuesday, 23 December, at 16:00: (watch the web site for location); and at Santa Margarita, in Es Castell, on Wednesday, 24 December, 16:00.

Advent Feedback

On the cool second Sunday of Advent, I visited Santa Margarita with a friend. The door opened to reveal light, warmth and the customary friendly welcome. The church looked and felt inviting and welcoming. To me, this is the spirit of Advent - one of openness. My friend and I found it at Santa Margarita on that day.

Jill Tracey

To receive future copies of this newsletter via e-mail, please send a message to info@anglicanchurchmenorca.com.

Christingle at JaFfa



JaFfa had its own special Christingle celebration on 6 December. As well as Christingles, there were crowns for Jesus and angel biscuits.



Caring For The Community

The Alcalde (Mayor) of Es Castell challenged us to think of ways in which we can contribute to the life of the community in which we live. We may not yet have come up with anything involved with the infrastructure of Es Castell, but we have made contributions in other ways.

For a couple of months, the congregation of Santa Margarita has been quietly contributing to a community project organised by the Ayuntamiento Des Castell, to collect bottle tops which are recycled. Funds are raised which are used to support medical needs, especially for children, not otherwise covered by social and medical services. There is a tall, glass container by the door of the church into which people can drop their plastic “tapones.” By mid-November, we had collected a large sack full of tops, which were duly added to the rest of Es Castell’s contribution. We will continue to offer a local collection point for as long as this programme continues.



In the last newsletter, and in the September edition of the Roqueta, I described the efforts made to date to collect non-perishable food items for distribution to the needy of Es Castell in conjunction with the local Social Services department. As a result, Sandra Berresford organised a coffee morning in Cala en Porter that raised an impressive €500 for our food and gift parcels. Pictured are Sandra and some of her team.

After our Harvest Festival, we prepared and distributed 30 bags. The next distribution of food and gift parcels will on 19 December, again in conjunction with Es Castell’s social services group.

Congregational Life

After the excitement of the fiestas, life in Menorca returned to its steady, autumnal pattern - well, almost.

At the end of September, Menorca was graced by a visit from the Red Arrows of the RAF. In addition to giving a spectacular display of aerobatics, the pilots came to a special service in Saint George’s Chapel on the Isla del Rey to mark ten years of restoration and to commemorate the life of David Bainbridge, who was instrumental in bringing the Red Arrows to Menorca in the first place. The Very Rev. Michael Higgins and the Rev. Wendy Izod both assisted the chaplain, and George Anson read from the prophet Isaiah. Several presentations were made, especially a plaque presented by Vinod Budhathoki of the

Brigade of Ghurkas, which prompted retired General Luis Alejandro to write a column uplifting the presence of this courageous double-amputee in the *Menorca Diario*.

On the day before, 21 September, Harvest Festival was celebrated at Santa Margarita, in worship, and with a lively lunch at El Picadero restaurant afterwards.



Following

two concerts earlier during the summer, on 1 November we were graced by the Coral de Mitjanit (Midnight Choir), who sing a variety of music *a cappella*. The choir, one of whose members is Deborah Hellyer's husband, Carlos Coll, greatly impressed the audience. Afterwards, we enjoyed a reception with drinks and snacks.

Remembrance Sunday, on 9 November, was as well-attended as ever. This year was marked by special attention to the centenary of the outbreak of the first world war.

The annual Christmas bazaar took place on 15 November. Once more, we were blessed with a break in otherwise dubious weather: for the duration of the proceedings we were spared from any rain, which came before and afterwards. The bazaar raised about €1850, not counting proceeds from coffee or raffle sales.



On Wednesday, 10 December, about 30 people gathered in the Bar España in Es Castell for a pre-Christmas lunch celebration at which we also honoured those amongst us of more advanced years (80+).

We now have a full collection of more than 100 of the "New Ancient & Modern" hymn books, including large print versions, and the organist's edition, thanks to donations from the congregation. Also, at the beginning of December, a new figure appeared at the organ. Georgina Masanes is a young student of Tomé Olives, the



renowned organist on the island, and she has been practising for several months in anticipation of her debut.

Details of events taking place at Santa Margarita can always be found on the church web site: <http://anglicanchurchmenorca.com>, where there is a "News" section (top, right-hand corner). You can also follow us on Twitter: @anglicanmenorca.

Baptism at Santa Margarita

The last newsletter mentioned the baptism of Jamie José Sanchez-Griffiths on 24 August.

Baptism (or christening – they are the same thing) is the sacrament through which people become members of the Christian church – not just a local parish, but the world-wide Church. Baptism can be administered to adults who wish to join the church, or to children. At baptism, membership of the church is observed by making a profession of faith and a commitment to live as a faithful Christian; it is marked through the use of water as an outward and visible symbol of the internal presence of God's grace. The candidate is also marked by the sign of the cross, and symbolically anointed with holy oil. It is something that is intended to be a public celebration, with a profession of support from the rest of the community. Christianity is at heart a communal religion, even if it also has its dimensions of quiet, personal spirituality.

Parents often wish to have their children baptised, and infant baptism is part of the Anglican tradition. In this case, parents and godparents, who sponsor the candidate, make commitments on behalf of the one being baptised. While there are good reasons why parents choose to have their children baptised, not everyone feels that they should impose a commitment upon their children, preferring to allow them to choose for themselves when old enough to do so.

As a result, some parents choose to celebrate the gift of a child in a different way, without the commitment that baptism involves. There is the opportunity for a Thanksgiving service, during which parents and families can give thanks for the birth or adoption of a child, with prayer for family life. There are no promises to make about the Christian faith. The child can be blessed and prayed for, and family and friends will commit to support the parents in bringing up their child. This can take place in church, with the congregation, or with just family and friends gathered, or elsewhere such as home, or even in hospital.

Baptism is not the end of a process, and not necessarily the beginning, except in the case of very small children. It often marks the start of a new chapter in a quest of discovery that can also be a life-long journey of celebration. Few people choose to come for baptism without some sort of spiritual motivation to do so: there is a spark within that lights a flame; in many cases, it is simply the acceptance of an empty place within that can only be filled by the divine.

But this is not the end point in a spiritual quest. We travel through life with our own emotional and spiritual burdens and uncertainties, and as life unfolds its unpredictable and mysterious twists and turns, we have to confront the questions and doubts that arise as we journey onwards. The Archbishop of Canterbury acknowledged this recently, when he mentioned in an interview that he often asks himself questions and confronts his doubts while exercising with his dog. The headline writers, quick to sensationalise, had a field day, of course: "Archbishop Doubts Existence Of God," screamed at least one, with many variations on that theme. However, that is not actually what he said, and it is a pity that an honest expression of the doubt that marks the boundary of faith could not receive more

measured and sensible attention. It is arguable that to be certain about matters of faith is not to have faith at all, really, because until we acknowledge the difficult questions of life, and the challenge that any system of belief, religion, spirituality, or faith faces in answering them, we have not really understood what we believe.

There is a blessing that I occasionally use that includes the phrase: "Voice your words of doubt and question; they are the making of faith." I posted this on our church web site and received more hits than any other posting so far! It must have resonated with people at some level. All growth occurs at boundaries, and to understand where our boundaries lie is to begin to explore what we really believe. This is what baptism is meant to be, apart from a mark of membership: an invitation to a life-long process of growth, facing questions and doubts, and growing in faith as we honestly tackle the difficult issues that are so challenging to answer.

As it happens, at the age of eight, Jamie Sanchez-Griffiths decided to persist in asking his mother why he was not baptized, or christened, and so embarked upon this quest. He might have been a little younger than many who choose baptism for themselves, but his choice is one that we respect and which we celebrated on 24 August, a significant milestone on what should be a life-long journey of spiritual exploration.



Caring for the Church

The church that we are privileged to occupy presents a bright, cheerful and welcoming face to those who come to worship or visit. We owe thanks to the diligence of many members of the congregation, and good stewardship on the part of successive PCCs, culminating in the repainting of the church in 2013. Recently, however, a crack has appeared above the stained

glass window over the organ loft. At first inspection, it appears that this is largely cosmetic in nature, and the result of previous water ingress that occurred before repairs were made to the roof. We have received an estimate of about €150 to correct this defect, assuming that no further structural damage is revealed as repairs proceed.

Meanwhile, more cheerfully, I can report that the statue of Santa Margarita, which was showing signs of wear, has been professionally restored, thanks to a generous, anonymous donor.

Regular Worship in Menorca

At Santa Margarita

Sunday (Holy Communion): 09:00 & 11:00;
Wednesday (Book of Common Prayer): 11:00;
Friday (Communion & Healing): 11:00

Worship in Sant Francesc church, Ciutadella,
last Sunday of each month: 17:00



**Santa Margarita,
before and after restoration.**