



St Catherine's Church  
Katharinenplatz 5  
Stuttgart

**Chaplain:**

**Rev. Ken Dimmick**

**0151 57989140**

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(Until the phone line is  
connected at the Parish Centre  
please contact Ken on his  
mobile if the matter is urgent).



# CROSSROADS

The newsletter of St Catherine's Anglican Chaplaincy Stuttgart  
Advent 2008 - [www.stcatherines-stuttgart.de](http://www.stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

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## The Vicar writes ...

Transformation: Sacrament: Pilgrimage : A theological reflection

Question: Which of these theological words best fits St. Catherine's Anglican Church just now?

a. Transformation: This word fits St. Cat's well just now because we are in a process of transforming an old Bakery into our new Parish Centre. (If you've not heard the news read more about the parish centre on p4) What was once a place where people came to buy Brötchen und Bretzeln is now being transformed into a church office, multipurpose classrooms, kitchen, and vicar's apartment. What was once something is now becoming something else. That is what transformation means. In some ways it is still a bakery, but it is also becoming something more. We see changes daily. First there is the ripping out of the old, outdated and unserviceable bits, such as old linoleum, mildewed wallpaper and poor wiring. Second there is installation of new systems, such as new heaters, new lights, and new floors. Finally there is utilization of the new space, such as children's classes, Choir practice, and expanded fellowship. This transformation is already happening, and it is exciting to see.

b. Sacrament: This word also fits well just now, as our focus has shifted dramatically from the Church on Olgastrasse to the old bakery on Alexanderstrasse. While we still worship in beautiful St. Catherine's Church, the rental of the old Hochstetter Bäckerei/ Konditorei has given our parish life a new "outward form". The classic definition of a sacrament is: An outward and visible form of an inward and spiritual grace. If our congregational fellowship and common life is the "inward and spiritual grace"... then this old bakery, soon to be our Parish Centre must be the "outward and visible form". Hence the pressure to get it renovated as soon as possible. Who wants his or her outward to look like a construction zone, dusty, broken, with debris and garbage stacked about? While we know this is just an interim stage in the process, we look forward with delight to the day not too far in the future when someone can walk into the Parish Centre and feel the power of the sacramental link between the building and the people of the parish. One day, I promise, the building will be as inviting, as friendly, as helpful, and as grace-filled as are the people of St. Catherine's. When that day comes, the sacrament will be fulfilled.

c. Pilgrimage: This word also fits our situation. We are pilgrims on a journey. It began with birth, and it carries us forward toward a destination which is God. This mystical explanation of life certainly rings true for St. Cat's just now. We can tell there is movement happening. We are not standing still. We are not stopping to rest. We move ever more forward, step by step, into a future not yet seen, but clearly in the direction of our

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final destination. I see this project of renting, renovating, and utilizing a Parish Centre as a series of steps toward the destination God has called us to. No longer a chaplaincy interested only in the membership, we have been called to be a church, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the members, the potential members, the neighbourhood, the city, and the whole world. St. Catherine's Anglican Church must move forward to avoid the stagnation which can kill a church. We move forward to avoid the self-satisfaction which can kill the soul. We move forward at the invitation of a God who invited us to a nearer relationship with Him. We move, step by step by step toward our goal, God.

My answer to the above is: Sacrament

All three words fit well, when viewed theologically, but for me the most important is not transformation, as we were good at that already, yes, we'll be better, but we were not bad. Nor is it pilgrimage, as my experience at St. Cat's has been that we have been moving forward for a lot longer than just my time here. Looking back over the history of the church I see such a parade of faith that makes me think that pilgrimage is a long tradition here.

For me the most important word is sacrament. I want the world to see St. Catherine's as more than just a Gästegemeinde. I want St. Catherine's to be, act and look like a church. This outward form cannot be ignored. Those who pass by will know that we are here. We are here for a purpose. We are here for God's people. We are here for God.

The place where once we bought the bread  
 which fed our human bodies,  
 has been transformed  
 into a place  
 where grace  
 and the Living Bread  
 can feed our hungering souls.  
 Come in,  
 all you who pass so quickly by.  
 Come in and share  
 the Bread of eternal Life.

## Activities at St Catherine's

### Adult Bible Study

The Adult Bible Study group has now moved to meet in the new Parish Centre. We meet each Wednesday starting with supper at 19:30 and beginning the study at 20:00. Newcomers are welcome at anytime. We will be studying the coming week's gospel passage using the African method of Bible study. This is inclusive and does not require a great knowledge of the Bible or theology; it's a chance to come together for a light supper and to learn, pray and deepen one's faith.

### Toddler Group

The next playgroup meeting will be on Thursday 4th December at 3.30pm at the new Parish rooms where we will have a small Christmas Party / Nikolaus Celebration. We will have some Christmas music and a Christmas Narration.

The first meeting of the New Year will be on the 15th of January and our theme will be Growing Up.

For more details speak to Sarah Lepschy or e-mail [toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de).

### Choir

Do you enjoy singing? If you would like to be part of our developing St. Catherine's Choir please get in touch with Marva Farrington ([choir@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:choir@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)) The choir is currently rehearsing for the Carol Service on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### Nativity Play

On the 21<sup>st</sup> December the children will be performing a nativity play at the 11:15 service. If you have children who would like to be involved please contact Kathy Friedenreich – [nativity@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:nativity@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

### Women's Group

The Women's Group will meet again on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January to celebrate the Vicar's Birthday - if you are interested in joining them please e-mail [women@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:women@stcatherines-stuttgart.de) or talk to Alison Seyerle.

### St Catherine's L.E.G.S.

The next L.E.G.S meeting will be on Monday the 26<sup>th</sup> January. The venue has yet to be decided but will be an eatery in central Stuttgart as usual. If you haven't been to L.E.G.S before why not join us – we are a mixed bag of nationalities, in countless different stages of life and situations but all drawn together in fellowship and mutual support by our connection to St Catherine's and our being Ladies! For more information contact [legs@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:legs@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

### St Catherine's Cook Book

The second edition of the St Catherine's Cook Book is here – fully revised, updated and with a host of new recipes reflecting the growing diversity of our congregation. The cookbook costs 10 € and all proceeds will be used to support the work of St Catherine's Church. Cookbooks will be on sale at the Christmas Bazaar but if you can't wait until then please contact Frances Buttle on [crossroads@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:crossroads@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

### Baptisms

On the 16<sup>th</sup> November babies Stella Klein and Aaron Roberts were baptized and welcomed into the church family at St. Catherine's.

There is a baptism coming up in December and another in January.

If you and anyone you know is interested in baptism either personally or for your / their child please contact Ken to discuss possibilities. [vicar@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:vicar@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

### St Catherine's Christmas Bazaar – are you prepared?

Last year the St Catherine's Carol Service was followed by one of the most successful Christmas Bazaars in memory and possibly one of the most crowded! This year the bazaar working group has started early to make the 2008 Bazaar the best ever.

The bazaar has been divided into the following areas, each with its own contact person – if you would like to get involved with a particular area please get in touch with the relevant person. Volunteers young and old are sought!

A plan has been drawn up and the following areas still require items – if you plan on contributing in anyway and haven't already told us please let us know so we can plan the stalls and don't end up with 50 Christmas puddings and no mince pies!!

**Refreshments** – Alison Seyeler  
women@stcatherines-stuttgart.de

Could you make mince pies (see the new cook book for the recipe), bake Christmas biscuits or Plätzchen? Would you like to be part of the team taking the trays round and ensuring all are made welcome?

**Craft Stall** - Ann Funk – crafts@stcatherines-stuttgart.de Christmas decorations, homemade gift tags and cards, craft items that would make good stocking fillers or Christmas presents. Let Ann know what you would like to bring along.

**Baked Goods Stall** – Barbara Crandall – cakes@stcatherines-stuttgart.de Home made cakes, biscuits, cookies, Christmas Puddings, Christmas Cake, bags of sweets, ... nicely packaged up and ready to take home or possibly to open and eat straight away. Small cakes, biscuits and muffins etc can be packaged in appropriate quantities in food bags.

**Raffle** – Three large baskets have been prepared for the raffle. If you would like to contribute a small runner up prizes please contact Julie Faust before the bazaar.

**Home Produce Stall** – Hilary Norman – jams@stcatherines-stuttgart.de Chutney, jams, pickles, preserves, bottled fruit, herbs ...

**Children's Games** – Frances Buttle – junior-warden@stcatherines-stuttgart.de Guess where the shepherd's lost lamb is hiding, a bran tub, drop a penny in a bucket, guess the weight of the cake ...  
If you would like to run a game to part children young and old from their money this is the place for you.

Otherwise just bring your money and come ready to spend! All proceeds will support the work of St Catherine's Church.

## **The Würzburg Trip**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October at 8:30am we all met in Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof. There were a lot of people with us. At 9:00 am we took the train to Würzburg. It was the most entertaining train ride of our lives, but it was long. We got to Würzburg at 12:00 with enough time to explore. On the way to the cathedral of St Killian we saw the old and new Residence of the Royal Family. We also saw a hospital where, in the middle ages, sick people went when they were about to die. They could go and pray there. There was also a small chapel built by the Franciscans. We saw Tilman Riemenschneider's house. He was a sculptor of church sculptors and we saw one of his works in the cathedral. At 1:00pm we had eaten and were ready for our Cathedral tour. We saw some things which you wouldn't normally see if you were without a tour guide. At the end of our tour we had our own small service in the crypt.

Some of us stayed in Würzburg, but some went back straight away.

*Sabrina Glaser & Grace Friedenreich*

## **All Saints – All Nations – An International Celebration!**

Although every Sunday at St. Catherine's is an international celebration, the November 2nd service was a celebration to remember. A visiting choir from Christ Church Cathedral in Sendai, Japan, acolytes dressed in traditional Nigerian garb, children and their parents in colourful Indian garments, multi-lingual Prayers of the People led in languages from France, Russia, Nigeria, America, India and Germany, and an international feast fit for kings of every nation, St. Catherine's was alive with the flair and spirit that only such a diverse congregation of believers can create.

The highlight of the day was truly the beautiful music from the Japanese guest choir. Miku, the violinist, and Yumiko, the organist and choir director led the small, but mighty choir, whose magnificent harmonies of worship moved many congregation members to tears, and brought smiles of delight as they performed traditional Japanese folk songs in the bakery

during the luncheon, which included more food than the tables could bear – aromatic Indian dishes, British puddings and scones, French pastries, American salads, African specialties, and special Japanese dessert treats, as well as beautifully-wrapped chopsticks for each table – a gift from the Sendai choir.



Our Japanese guests had a whirlwind week of events and activities during their time in Germany, led by Father Dimmick. They visited Esslingen's wonderful old town, guided by new parishioner Annette Kiefer, and got to sing a couple songs for long-time parishioner Pauline Hauptmann, originally from Hong Kong, now living in a senior residence in Esslingen.

The next day they were off to Tübingen, where the Reverend Heidi Abe, who preached at St. Cat's a few weeks back, fixed lunch for them at the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Church: a delicious turkey-fruit curry over rice. They sang for her, too.

Wednesday was a day for shopping in downtown Stuttgart, but all the fun came to a screeching halt when one of the teenagers announced that he had lost his wallet and passport. They searched the Schlossplatz area and then contacted the police, who gave them little hope of finding it. They decided to make an official report, and went with the policemen to the local station, where the wallet was waiting for them... with all the money and documents inside. A Turkish woman had found it and turned it in to the police. Thanks be to God!

Wednesday evening the choir attended the Bible Study at the church. Twenty-three people

participated in a buffet supper and bi-lingual [Japanese and English] Bible Study and sing-along. The church rang with both international and musical harmony and fellowship as favourite hymns were sung simultaneously in Japanese and English. Only the necessity of train schedules brought the evening to a close!

Thursday they made a trip to Heidelberg, and Friday found them in Strasbourg. A farewell dinner on Friday evening included gifts of gratitude from the choir for their hosts, as well as a heart-felt thank-you presentation from Yumiko on behalf of the choir. It was an emotional farewell to our new friends from around the globe; friends we all hope to see again very soon!

*Celine Collins*

### **Liebfrauenberg Weekend 2009**

Have you already bought your 2009 calendars and diaries? The shops seem to be full of them, although there is still more of 2008 to go. Or are you one of those persons, who likes to get one year out of the way before even contemplating the next? Whatever your thoughts on the subject, one date has been fixed for 2009 and that is March 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, when the Heidelberg and Strasbourg chaplaincies have asked us to join them for a weekend of reflecting and relaxing, worship and walking, eating and entertainment at the beautiful church centre of Liebfrauenberg, in the northern Vosges, France.

We want to make this weekend a parish event and hope that people living on their own and families alike, will be willing to try something new, taking a short break during Lent, getting to know people better from within our parish and meeting new faces from other parishes. This is not a theological conference, neither is it a silent retreat. The emphasis is on thinking about various issues in our Christian lives with a speaker from England giving us some guidelines. There is plenty of time for eating and drinking in the truly, leisurely French style, opportunities for getting some fresh air in lovely surroundings and enough breaks for making new acquaintances or spending quiet time alone. The Strasbourg chaplaincy will be

offering a children's programme, so this is a wonderful break for all parents. No cooking or washing up either! The highlight is certainly celebrating Holy Communion in this chapel, which pilgrims have been using since the 14th century.

Further details of the weekend will be circulated before Christmas. St. Catherine's has been allocated one third of the reserved places. For those parishioners working on shifts or flexi-time, Friday afternoon, March 27th is a good time to keep free. However, if Friday is a problem, come on Saturday!

So whether you want to note this now in your diary or prefer to remember the parish weekend is the last one in March, when the clocks go forward, the church calendar is looking good for Lent next year.

Let's accept this kind invitation from our fellow worshipers to our north and west and show them what an enthusiastic and active parish we are, here at St. Catherine's.

*Susan Jüptner*

## A new beginning ...

Over the last two years St. Catherine's Church has grown, at least in numbers of people and in numbers of ministries. Unfortunately the physical building of St. Catherine's Church is limited in its growth options. The Old Catholics who graciously let us worship in St. Catherine's Church have plentiful ministries of their own, the Gemeindesaal isn't huge and isn't always free for our use - so it was felt that the time had come to start looking around for a space near the church which could serve as a church centre. A place where weekday activities, church socials and Sunday school could take place. A place near the church so that worship can continue there but a place where we can expand.

In November the Church Council took a leap of faith and signed the lease on a former bakery to be converted into a Parish Centre. The space consists of a former café, toilet facilities, an entrance area where the church office will be established, two store rooms which will be knocked together to form a kitchen, two larger

rooms which will become meeting places and a small flat which will become the vicar's apartment.

The new centre offers many opportunities and challenges – a large amount of renovation work has to be carried out before the space will be as we would like it but with "Christ as the corner stone" of our building we trust that the labour, resources and vision will be found to transform the bakery into a place where the bread of heaven is available feed us all.

If you haven't visited the centre yet here's how to get there!



On foot from St. Catherine's church turn left out of the door, cross the road using the pelican crossing - remember to wait for the Green Man! Go straight a head up a series of shallow steps. The last building on your right, on the corner with Alexanderstr. 70 is the Parish Centre.

If you are coming by car programme Alexanderstr. 70. into your navi we're not sure if they all recognise the Lorenzstaffel as a street you can't drive down!

The Centre's address for post is:

St. Catherine's Anglican Church  
Lorenzstaffel 8  
70182 Stuttgart

If you are handy with a paint brush, drill, have a secret talent as a plasterer, floor layer, wall paperer, sewer of curtains etc please speak to Joachim Zeller [facilities@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:facilities@stcatherines-stuttgart.de) as all volunteer help renovating the centre will be gratefully received!

## Outreach projects

### Give a Romanian Orphan a Reason to Smile this Christmas!

Some of you may know that St. Catherine's has been supporting a Romanian Orphanage via an American here in Stuttgart. Gary Kelb has personal contact with the orphanage and goes there regularly. This means we are lucky enough to have a charity which we can support in a direct way. We know that 100% of the donations we send are used for the children, for example, for their medical expenses.

Some of you may also be familiar with the Christmas Shoe box campaign. In previous years we have packed shoe boxes with presents and sent them, via a large organisation to children all over the globe, who would otherwise not get anything for Christmas.

Although this is a great cause, last year we felt that we could help in an even more direct way by sending our shoe boxes to "our" orphanage in Romania. This year again, Gary will be going to Romania just before Christmas. So if you wish, you can send a Christmas present to a child there. It doesn't have to be packed in a shoe box. But Gary tells us that:

- Most of the boys and girls are aged 8 to 12
- Some are younger, some older, up to 16 or 18
- There are more boys than girls
- Socks and underwear are always welcome
- Plus maybe small toys or candy / sweets

Remember the gift must transport well!

If you would like to send a present, please pack it well, label it so it is clear if it is for a boy or girl and of what age and bring it to Church by 14th December at the latest. Alternatively you can bring it to my house. I will collect the presents and get them to Gary. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me. [shoebboxes@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:shoebboxes@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)

*Jackie Wellhäußer*

### Café Stichpunkt

One of the outreach projects St. Catherine's supports is Café Stichpunkt, a drop-in service for male prostitutes in the church side room.

I am a founder member and former board

member of the charity (Verein) that co-runs the café, streetwork and related activities, so it's naturally close to my heart. St. Catherine's Website has more information about the project under Outreach, and German speakers can find out more at [www.verein-jugendliche.de](http://www.verein-jugendliche.de).

The good news: the Verein has helped young men get out of prostitution and into a more mainstream lifestyle. Befriended them. Given them hope and new perspectives. In 2001, it won a national prize for innovative social work and since then it hasn't stood still. For example, it now helps run a much-used Web service that offers information, advice, and anonymous counselling online.

The bad news: obtaining sufficient funding has always been a struggle -- despite tremendous efforts on many fronts. We originally hoped to gain around 100 members whose contributions would provide a steady basic income. Sadly, the number has never risen much above fifty. Begging, lobbying, and trying to manage on a shoestring budget consumes a lot of energy that could be put to far better use.

The main problem: male prostitution is a topic few people care to think about, much less talk about. But as Christians, we can take our cue from the One who ate with sinners and touched lepers. We can step in where others hold back. Please, please consider supporting the Verein in any way you can: either through a one-time donation or by becoming a member. Your money will be well spent.

Account details (or pick up a flyer in church)  
 Verein zur Förderung von Jugendlichen mit besonderen sozialen Schwierigkeiten e. V.  
 Bank: Evangelische Kreditgenossenschaft Stuttgart,  
 Acct. no. 41 44 17, Code/BLZ 520 604 10  
 Thank you!

*Anja Hübel*

### Poppy Appeal

May I thank everyone who purchased a poppy in November. A total amount of €125 was raised, which I know will be much appreciated by the British Legion.

*Hilary Norman*

## News from former members and current members overseas

Our former Chaplain **Bishop Surya** and his wife **Vindhya** send their greetings and all good wishes to everyone at St Catherine's.

**John Brownlie** and **Alvin Ho**, former members of St Catherine's, were thinking of us as they met up in Singapore for the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

**Kay & Jim Wilkinson** who lived in Stuttgart between 1990 and 1993 send their best wishes. "We thoroughly enjoy reading the newsletter, although we know fewer and fewer people. It is exciting to see so much activity there, and we rejoice that things are going well."

## News from our warden in absentia

Many of you who are new to St. Catherine's will not have meant our "absent" warden. Those who do know him will be pleased to hear news of John Thompson, who is currently serving as a chaplain's assistant with the US Navy Reserves. The extract below from the US Forces *Family Gram* tells us a little of what he has been up to whilst we have been missing him.

[...] for those of you who do not know us, let me introduce our First Naval Construction Regiment (NCR) Religious Ministry Team (RMT). It consists of Chief Religious Program Specialist (RPC) John Thompson of Stuttgart, Germany and Capt. Robert Young, an Anglican priest from Grand Prairie, Texas. Both are new to the Iraqi desert, however, Chaplain Young completed four annual training periods in the region serving in Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and on shipboard in the north Arabian Gulf.

The team of two is serving the regimental headquarters and supporting the RMT's of our subordinate units which consist of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 7 and NMCB 27. Marine Corps' 9th Engineer Support Battalion (Active) and the Army's 341st Bridge Engineering Company.

The FIRST NCR entered Iraq just in time for the holy month of Ramadan on the Islamic

calendar. As long as Americans have been engaged with the Arab world we have heard of Ramadan and it's important to understand it.

Long before the Islamic religion was started by Mohammed, the month of Ramadan was regarded by the Arab peoples as a holy month. They considered Ramadan to be a time for taking stock spiritually.

Muslims believe, before his commission as a prophet, Mohammed was in the habit of retreating to Hira, a cave outside the city of Mecca during Ramadan. Islam holds that it was during Ramadan that Mohammed received his first revelation. Later these revelations were combined into the Quran, the holy book of Islam. Muslims naturally continued the ancient Arab tradition of dedicating the month of Ramadan to religious pursuits. Mohammed proclaimed Ramadan as a time of fasting through the day time as a form of self-discipline and commiseration with the hungry of the earth.

For many Muslims, the fast of Ramadan is the most scrupulously observed of all religious duties. Everyone must fast except children, the sick and aged, pregnant women and those undergoing the heavy burden of desert travel. The days are meant to be spent in prayer and meditation. Trade and public affairs slow markedly during the daylight hours. At sunset a cannon traditionally signals the breaking of the fast known as "the awakening." The nights of Ramadan are times for family. [...]

Aside from Ramadan, the regiment will serve in the desert through a number of major holidays. FIRST NCR will have the opportunity to observe the same special days that you do at home. We will do so as a Seabee (Construction Battalion) family. This helped by the fact that we are blessed in having the main chapel in Al Asad near the regimental headquarters building, where Chaplain Young presents a daily Anglican Mass. Please keep our RMT in your prayers as we seek to serve the needs of your Seabees, for you are certainly in ours.

*Chaplain Robert Young*

## The Bishop's Christmas Message

St Luke tells us at the end of his story of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem that his mother Mary 'kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.' (Luke 2.19) This is what as Christians we do year by year, as, in the familiar words of Bishop Phillips Brooks' much loved Christmas hymn, 'the dark night wakes, the Glory breaks, and Christmas comes once more.' The Greek word which St Luke uses to speak of Mary's deep and reflective meditation is *sumballo*, from which we get our word 'symbol'. Mary both keeps and holds on to the amazing and overwhelming reality of God's action and presence in and through her motherhood, and imaginatively reflects upon it, going deeper and deeper into the meaning of what this birth and this child, of which she is so intimately a part, is about. She 'ponders in her heart', and the heart in the Bible is not primarily the place of feeling, but of willing and of choosing. Her deep reflection is to shape her life, and brings her to the foot of the cross, and to be part of the worshipping and expectant community, as Luke tells us in Acts, awaiting the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The angel had said to Mary in the moment of annunciation that 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you' and therefore the child she was to bear would be called 'the Son of God.' And so Mary became, in the words of another ancient Christian hymn, 'the gate of Heaven's High Lord, the door through which the Light has poured.' When Jacob in the ancient story in Genesis lay down in a desert place and dreamed of a ladder set between heaven and earth with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, he woke up exclaiming, 'this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' if this was true of the place of Jacob's dream, even more is it true of the Mother of the Lord and Christian devotion has not hesitated to speak of Mary as the temple of God, the ark of the covenant, and the gate of heaven.

Mary, the 'Christ-bearer' reflected deeply and imaginatively on what Jesus meant, and she has been seen as an image, a picture of the church, which likewise reflects on and lives out the meaning of the God who so comes among us. The great movements of renewal in Christian history have come about through a return to what the Scriptures tell us. We have to realise over and over again how great and how overwhelming is the reality of God's love which always comes down to the lowest part of our need, as it came in Mary's child at Bethlehem.

Many years ago J.B. Phillips, one of the first translators of the Bible into contemporary English, wrote a book with the title, *Your God is too small*. He was right then, and is right now. Our human tendency is to domesticate God, to make God in our own image, to shape him by the culture and expectations of our own day, But the Gospel message of Christmas – and of Good Friday and Easter from which that Christmas message is inseparable – is of a love that goes to the uttermost and will never let us down and will never let us go. This is the 'amazing grace' of Evangelical conversion; this is the same grace which we receive and adore in the holy and blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. As John Betjeman put it simply, 'God was man in Palestine, and lives today in Bread and Wine' – and so in our hearts, in our willing and our choosing, in our transformed lives as we like Mary live out our vocation as 'Christ-bearers'. St John said of the Word of God who became flesh, that the light shone in the darkness and the darkness was not able to overwhelm it, to snuff it out. The light of Christ in us is to shine in the darkness – the darkness of human fear, and violence, and the sinful distortions of deception and betrayal. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, God with us, God in the muck and the mess (and the stench) of a stable at Bethlehem; God as a fragile, new-born child laid in the pricking straw of a rough feeding-trough; God in the mess of our world, a world both beautiful and distorted. At Christmas also we celebrate our own new birth, the Christ born in us. And so

we rightly sing and pray:  
 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
 Descend to us, we pray;  
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
 Be born in us today.

May the God who came to us at  
 Bethlehem to take us by the hand, surround  
 you and renew you with his love, and light,  
 and grace, that you, like blessed Mary, may  
 know his peace and joy this Christmas and in  
 the year ahead. With every blessing,

*+Geoffrey Gibraltar*

## Saint of the Month

### 1<sup>st</sup> December - Charles de Foucauld



Despite many prominent saints being honoured in December, I decided to focus on Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916), the little known French founder of a religious order.

**Biography:** de Foucauld was born into a French aristocratic family in Strasbourg. He pursued a career in the military and joined the French army in Algeria, then a French colony. He left the army in 1882 and spent time as an explorer in Morocco (also a French colony) before entering into the Trappist order as a monk in 1890. He left the order in 1897, with a feeling that he had a special religious vocation but one that he could not define at that time. While serving as a gardener to a group of nuns in the Holy Land (near Nazareth), he was encouraged to put himself forward for ordination as a priest.

In 1901, after his ordination, he returned to Algeria to live as a hermit among the local Tuareg people. His hermitage soon evolved into a fraternity, offering hospitality to everyone with no regard to their ethnicity, religion or social status. He discovered that his vocation was to simply share the harsh life of the local Tuareg tribes, showing compassion and solidarity with them.

He described his vision as living "the hidden

life of the poor and humble worker of Nazareth". In 1907, he began a scientific study of the Tuareg culture and language, publishing a renowned dictionary of the Tuareg dialects and compiling their songs and poetry. His friendship with the Tuareg was reciprocated when, during a severe illness, the Tuareg saved his life. During several visits to France between 1909 and 1913, he tried to find support for his idea of a monastic order the "Union of Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart". After returning to Algeria in 1914, he was suspected, by some militant groups, of being an agent of French colonial rule. He was assassinated in a shoot-out in 1916 (It is not quite clear whether his assassination was politically motivated or a mere criminal act).

**Significance and spiritual legacy:** de Foucauld managed to define his religious vocation rather late on his spiritual journey. His vision was of "...Fervent Christians from all walks of life, able to make known, through their example, what the Christian religion is, and to make the Gospel 'seen' in their lives". Although he started a "fraternity" in his hermitage in Algeria, this was not a well-organized and officially recognized religious order. Although he later tried to find support for his "Union of Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart", it was not until after his death that this idea was realized in the monastic orders of "The Little Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" and later "The little Sisters of Jesus".

What is remarkable and admirable about de Foucauld is that, unlike other monastic orders, who define their mission by an activity, e.g. preaching the gospel (Dominicans), or "praying and working" (ora et labora; Benedictines), he saw as his mission to simply live with the ordinary people, sharing in their hardships and poverty, and thereby giving an example of Christian life. It reminds us that, even if we have nothing to give, and even if people are not receptive to traditional religious messages and preaching, we can make the presence of Christ felt by living our lives, showing sympathy and demonstrating solidarity with the powerless and lowly.

## 11<sup>th</sup> January - "Ma" Slessor

As the Christmas holidays approach, we naturally start to think about the baby Jesus and his mother Mary. For this edition of Crossroads, we turn our thoughts for a moment to another Mary, Mary or "Ma" Slessor, a Scottish missionary who served in Africa.

Mary Slessor was born into humble beginnings, a family made poor by her father spending most of his earnings on "strong drink". From the age of eleven, Mary worked in a factory for twelve hours a day, six days a week, trying to bring a bit of bread to the family table.

At the age of twenty-nine, Mary was appointed to a new profession, missionary teacher in Africa, by the United Presbyterian Church. She was sent to the Calabar region of Africa which was known as the "White Man's Grave," filled with killer lions, swarms of insects, witch doctors, and cannibals. Life in Calabar wasn't only tough for a missionary. Among the Africans, slavery was common, unwanted children were left to die in the bushes (especially twins, who were thought to be cursed), and a man's honesty would be tested by giving him poison. Apparently if he was honest, the poison wouldn't kill him!

Mary's days were spent treating the sick, teaching the Bible, and visiting her neighbours. She became known throughout the area for her wise, fair counsel and her excellent command of the local language.

Mary could never stay in one place for too long. She had a heart for remote tribes that even other Africans were deeply afraid of. One such tribe, the Okoyong tribe, had never heard the gospel. As Mary had the respect of a local tribal leader, he gifted her his special canoe and twenty paddlers to make the trip up-river to the Okoyong. Several times the frightened paddlers tried to turn back, but Mary urged them on. Finally, she made it to the village, and was the first outsider ever allowed to live there. Although many Okoyong eventually accepted the gospel, Mary had quite a few harrowing experiences while living with the tribe. On one occasion two opposing groups were drinking

and became upset at each other. They dressed up in their war paint and were whooping wildly, preparing to fight to the death. Mary stood between the two groups and argued with them until they were too tired to fight.

Mary kept up this pace and her fight to convert the people she loved so dearly until she was very old and quite feeble. Some of her Scottish friends even sent her a cart so that she could be pulled to new villages when she could not walk. In January of 1915, "Ma" finally succumbed to one of the tropical diseases that had plagued her during her entire mission. The group which gathered at her funeral was a testimony to her life. High government officials, a young man that Mary nursed through a fever, twins who would have been killed at birth if she had not saved them and a dignified tribal chief (once a cannibal) all bowed their heads to pay their respects to a woman who fought for forty years to claim Africa for Christ.

## A helping hand

### Toys for the toddlers

The Toddler Group would like to organise a church toy box that the children can use every time they meet. If you have any old toys that your children don't need or don't play with any more and you feel like donating then all offers will be gratefully received!! Also if anybody has any ideas where we can get a play rug from then that would be great too.

Contact [toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de) if you can help.

### Stair gates

Do you have a stair gate from when your children were small that you no longer require? The Lepschy's new home has more sets of open stairs than their old flat and Anna is finding them very interesting. If you are able to lend them a stair gate her Mummy and Daddy would be very thankful. Contact [toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:toddlers@stcatherines-stuttgart.de) if you can help.

## Puzzles and fun

If you have visitors that need to be entertained whilst you get on and cook the Christmas dinner why not set them to work deciphering the riddles on the next page or finding all 50 Christmas Carols hidden in the acronyms below.

### The Carol Challenge

1. AFTROG      Angels from the Realms of Glory
2. WTTOTSDB
3. SNHN
4. OIRDC
5. OLTOB
6. IWOASN
7. TSBMDD
8. ISTSCSB
9. WSWTFBN
10. WTKOOA
11. GRYMG
12. GCMR
13. ICUTMC
14. WCTROWA
15. HTHAS
16. OCAYF
17. LJSS
18. TFNTADS
19. ITBM
20. ESSSAC
21. AIAM
22. SATWS
23. JTTWTLIC
24. IHIL
25. IDJ
26. LDLD
27. AWHHOH
28. LLTLTC
29. HWCAW
30. DDMOH
31. SHLOABOS
32. TASTS
33. ALYB
34. GWK
35. DTHWBOH
36. NTHBAB
37. OCNACS
38. OTFDOC
39. AGAMW
40. AWGMOO
41. LCDAC
42. TTRWT
43. OCT
44. THATI
45. BABOTSOTM
46. OTFLB
47. UUACIB
48. TKFPLA
49. TAGFHC
50. CCCTTM



**Brain teasers**

Don't let to old grey cells go to sleep over the holidays! Find the phrases hidden in these riddles!

T R N	INILT	EYEBROWS	R I D N S K HOUSE	EVER EVER EVER EVER
AMUOUS	POLMUMICE	YYY MEN	AGB	AT THE • OF ON
STEP & PETS PETS	B A E D U M R	J YOU U ME S T	ONE T S	TIMING TIM ING
DdD DWESTd dDd	ON THE THE	 ANIMATION	HAIR_____	GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET GIVE GET
SYMPHON	FAREDCE	PING WILLOW	CYCLE CYCLE CYCLE	VAD ERS
DNA4TH	NE1410S	ECNALG	M CE M CE M CE	WEAR LONG
OWHER	1D 5U 2R 6L 3A 7A 4C	HOROBOD	12345678 9 SAFETY 9 87654321	TONE TONE
DIAL	FEW FEW MENTION MENTION	ABCDEFGH HIJKLMNO PQRSTUV WXYZ	HOUSE _____ PRAIRIE	TEKCIT

Answers will be in the Candlemas Edition of CrossRoads!



## The Loving Husband...

A man and his ever-nagging wife went on vacation to Jerusalem. While they were there, the wife passed away. The undertaker told the husband, 'You can have her shipped home for \$5,000, or you can bury her here, in the Holy Land, for \$150.' The man thought about it and told him he would just have her shipped home. The undertaker asked, 'Why would you spend \$5,000 to ship your wife home, when it would be wonderful to be buried here and you would spend only \$150?'

The man replied, 'Long ago a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance.'

## Contributions for CrossRoads

Please send all contributions, reports on church activities, prayers, photos, announcements, matters of general interest, children's items etc. for the Advent edition of CrossRoads to [crossroads@stcatherines-stuttgart.de](mailto:crossroads@stcatherines-stuttgart.de) or hand them to Frances Buttle by the 25<sup>th</sup> January.

## Pledges for 2008

A word from the stewardship team ... remember that all pledges for 2008 must be received before the end of the year if you wish to receive a tax receipt for 2008. Thanks to all who have been so generous this year. Your unselfish giving has enabled this year to be a time of growth and expansion. Together our pledges and gifts have made our work here possible.

## STOP PRESS Confirmation Class

The vicar is collecting names of people who are interested in a Confirmation Class. Teens, adults, long time Anglicans seeking a refresher course, Christians from other denominations interested in learning more about Anglicanism ... all are welcome and encouraged to talk to John Friedenreich, our Parish Council member in charge of Christian Education, or the vicar to express an interest. A series of classes will begin after the New Year. The bishop will be coming in June to confirm or receive any and all who desire this sacrament.

## Local directory

If you are a member of an English language organisation in the Stuttgart area why not publicise it here? In return maybe your organisation could hang up a St Catherine's poster or mention us in their newsletter.

## The International Women's Club of Stuttgart e.V.

New to the Stuttgart area or have an interest in activities in English? Come join us at our monthly meeting at Cafe Merlin, Augustenstr. 72, 70178 Stuttgart-West (entrance in the back). The closest S-Bahn stations are Schwabstrasse and Feuersee. The number 44 and 92 buses also stop close by. Contact the club for more information at their website [www.iwcstuttgart.org](http://www.iwcstuttgart.org)



Children's English Library e.V.

## Children's English Library e.V.

The Children's English Library provides a source of English language books and activities for native and non-native speakers in the Stuttgart region.

The library is run by volunteers and funded through membership fees and donations. Family membership costs 50 Euro per year. Members may borrow up to 15 books at a time for four weeks and have free access to various English language activities including Rhyme Time singing sessions for toddlers, Friday Fun readings for 3-6 year olds, workshops for school age children and a youth club for 10-13 year olds. New members and volunteers are always welcome.

Opening times:

Wednesday 15:00-17:30

Friday 10:30-11:30 & 15:00-18:00

Saturday 14:00-17:00

For more information e-mail [info@celstuttgart.de](mailto:info@celstuttgart.de) or visit [www.celstuttgart.de](http://www.celstuttgart.de)

**What's on at St. Catherine's**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
Sun 30th Nov	10:30	<i>Advent Sunday</i>	St Catherine's	Joint Bilingual Service of Holy Communion
Wed 3rd Dec	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	Mark 1:1-8
Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	15:30	Toddler Group	Parish Centre	see p3
Sun 7th Dec	11:15	<i>Advent 2</i> Holy Communion with Baptism	St Catherine's	OT: Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm: 85:1-2, 8-13 NT: 2 Peter 3:8-15a Gospel: Mark 1:1-8 Post Service: Sunday School – Gifts, giving and St. Nicholas in the Parish Centre
Wed 10th Dec	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Sun 14th Dec	09:00	<i>Advent 3</i> Holy Communion	St Catherine's	OT: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm: 126 NT: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> Dec	16:00	Holy Communion	St Catherine's	OT: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm: 126 NT: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Gospel: John 1: 6-8, 19-28
Sun 14th Dec	17:00	Nine Lessons and Carol Service	St Catherine's	Traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols Post Service: Christmas Bazaar see page3 for more details.
Wed 17th Dec	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	Luke 1:26-38
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10:00	Nativity Play rehearsal	St Catherine's	Children of all ages are welcome to take part in the many roles involved in this play. Come along to rehearse and try out your costume. To sign up please contact Kathy Friedenreich nativity@stcatherines-stuttgart.de

Sun 21st Dec	11:15	<i>Advent 4</i> Holy Communion with Nativity Play	St Catherine's	OT: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16 Psalm: 89:1-4,19-26 NT: Romans 16:25-27 Gospel: Luke 1:39-55 Post Service: Fellowship
Wed 24 Dec	14:00	Christmas Eve Family Service	St Catherine's	A special service for families with small children, simple carols, a short children's sermon, a visit to the crib and communion.
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	19:30	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	St Catherine's	Welcome in Christmas with a candlelit Communion Service – not quite Midnight Mass but as near as we can get.
Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12:00	Christmas Communion	Ulm	A Christmas Communion for the new mission group in Ulm followed by a community meal at the home of CathyLynn Dresser.
Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> Dec	18:00	Boxing Day Party	TBC	More details to follow
Sun 28 <sup>th</sup> Dec	10:30	Joint Bilingual Christmas Service <i>1st after Christmas</i>	St Catherine's	Fellowship time and guided tour of the new Parish Centre with the Old Catholics.
Sun 4 <sup>th</sup> Jan	11:15	Holy Communion <i>2<sup>nd</sup> after Christmas</i>	St. Catherine's	OT: Jeremiah 31:7-14 Psalm: 147:13-21 NT: Ephesians 1:3-14 Gospel: John 1:10-18 Post Service: Fellowship
Wed 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	John 1:10-18
Sun 11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	09:00	Holy Communion <i>Baptism of Christ</i>	St. Catherine's	OT: Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm: 29 NT: Acts 19:1-7 Gospel: Mark 1:4-11 Post Service: Fellowship
Wed 14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	Mark 1:4-11
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	10:00	Women's Group	Parish Centre	See p3
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	15:30	Toddler Group	Parish Centre	See p3

Sun 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan	11:15	Holy Communion <i>Epiphany 2</i>	St Catherine's	OT: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 Psalm: 139:1-5, 12-18 NT: Revelation 5:1-10 Gospel: John 1:43-51 Post Service: Fellowship
Wed 21 <sup>st</sup> Jan	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	John 1:43-51
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan	09:00	Holy Communion <i>Epiphany 3</i>	St. Catherine's	OT: Genesis 14:17-20 Psalm: 128 NT: Revelation 19:6-10 Gospel: John 2:1-11 Post Service: Fellowship
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan	11:00	Council Meeting	Parish Centre	
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan	19:30	St. Catherine's L.E.G.S.	TBC	See p3
Wed 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan	19:30	Bible Study	Parish Centre	John 2:1-11
Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb	11:15	Holy Communion <i>Epiphany 4</i>	St Catherine's	OT: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm: 111 NT: Revelation 12:1-5a Gospel: Mark 1:21-28 Post Service: Fellowship

Volunteers are always being sought to help with various tasks around the church and parish centre. You are never too new to get involved, so if you are interested in being a reader, coffee maker, usher, cleaner, acolyte, washer-upper, choir member, decorator, musician ... contact Frances Buttle (junior\_warden@stcatherines-stuttgart.de)