Clergy Letter: ‘And the Word became flesh and lived among us**’**.

I think we all enjoy receiving a gift to unwrap at Christmas. I include myself in this respect. The greatest gift I am given each Christmas is to have the amazing experience of reading, at some of the Christmas services, the first few verses of John’s Gospel.

As follows.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

The ‘Word’ is that tiny baby, Jesus. God made man. Jesus is the light for all people, for everyone.

Christmas is a time when all of creation paused, when heaven met earth. When a baby was born to a young girl in a stable. This is why we celebrate Christmas. **God coming to earth** in glory **as a baby**. The shepherds saw the glory of God in that baby, the wise men saw the glory in that same baby.

So we try to celebrate Christmas with this in mind. Sometimes we may lose sight of the reason for the celebration, of the immense glory, of the light coming into the world. It does take a little effort to find Christian themed Christmas cards.

We should of course celebrate Christmas in a way that we are comfortable with. This may well exclude any thoughts of Jesus and the incredible gift of love that God gave us of his only Son, that tiny baby in a manger. I hope and pray that this is not so. We may go and help at a homeless shelter. We may have a great party with friends and family. We may spend the time quietly on our own.

But there are many opportunities to come and celebrate Christmas with your friends and neighbours in our churches. When Christmas comes up in conversation people sympathize with me saying it must be a busy time for a priest. I agree that it is a busy time, but I will start celebrating the Advent and Christmas Season here in Effingham with Little Bookham with the Advent carol service on Sunday 1st December. I will continue with my celebrations until the Christmas Day 10.00 a.m. service at All Saints, Little Bookham, fourteen services later. Then I will pause, have a cup of tea and a mince pie and probably go for a walk Paddy before enjoying a quiet meal reflecting on the Word made flesh, of creation pausing and of the love that that tiny baby represents, a love that is here for everyone. Quite a celebration!

Your Rector,

Reverend Mandy

PS It would be wonderful if you can join in the celebrations too. Please look on our Website for a list of our Advent and Christmas services.